Support Services

Policy Statement

The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 require Meerilinga Training College (MTC) as an RTO to ensure that learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs.

Meerilinga is committed to ensuring that all learners are given every opportunity to be successful in their chosen course of study. Providing learners with access to a range of educational and personal support services is an important way in which MTC can demonstrate this commitment.

Policy Purpose

To ensure a systematic process occurs by implementing support measures that are responsive, adequate and appropriate to individual learners and their specific needs. This is consistently applied across the organisation.

The *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTO's) 2015* state:

Standard 1. The RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices are responsive to industry and learner needs and meet the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses.

Learner Support

1.7 The RTO determines the support needs of individual learners and provides access to the educational and support services necessary for the individual learner to meet the requirements of the training product as specified in training packages or VET accredited courses.

Scope

This policy applies to all nationally recognised qualifications in Meerilinga's scope of delivery and assessment.

Exclusions

Policy Review

Biennial or from time to time when the organisation makes changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operations.

Policy Reviewed	**9 April 2024**	**By**	**Advisor Policy and Compliance**
Approved By	**Chief Executive Officer**		
Previous Review	**21 October 2023**		

Implementation

MTC acknowledges every learner is unique and strives to maximise opportunities for access, participation and outcomes for all learners.

MTC ensures the provision of access and equity services to learners and will undertake to identify barriers to learning prior to enrolment, through application and prospective learner interview process.

At a minimum, individual learning support includes identifying specific requirements such as learning, reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy, health or physical capabilities. The strengths and interests of the learner is established and learning support strategies are developed. Assessment accommodations are determined as required. This information is recorded on the *MTC Learner Support Plan T1096* for individual learners.

The following support will be available to learners:

Cultural Support

Meerilinga Advisor Cultural and Community Engagement will work with individuals from different cultural heritages and identities. Evaluate the cultural needs for individuals and provide necessary support, resources, introductions and reconciliation.

Language, Literacy & Numeracy (LLN) support

Based on the outcome of the prospective learners application and interview, if deemed applicable the online LLN assessment will be conducted. A meeting can be arranged to discuss the LLN assistance that MTC may be able to provide for a learner, with a view to developing an learner support plan at enrolment that best addresses a learner's LLN needs. Please note: Learners who are training to become Educators require a sufficient level of Literacy (including digital literacy) to be able to perform tasks such as researching online and reading standards and regulations, writing observations and completing workplace forms and perform the assessment tasks.

MTC will make every reasonable effort to accommodate a learner's needs, however sometimes those needs are beyond the assistance that can reasonably be provided by MTC (for the purposes of LLN assistance, "reasonable allowance" is defined as the provider being able to accommodate the learners' needs without significantly disadvantaging other learner's involvement in the course, or without causing the training provider significant financial disadvantage).

Individuals who require additional help with their literacy and numeracy can access information about their nearest LLN provider by calling The Reading Writing Hotline on 1300 655 506 or refer to their website at *www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au*. Any costs incurred for these services will be the responsibility of the learner.

The types of assistance MTC will be able to offer:

Language difficulties

Learners may access an interpreter to explain and interpret more complex issues at their own cost unless publicised by MTC. MTC has staff with diverse language and may seek assistance from a Western Australian Resource Centre.

Listening difficulties

- Provision of seating close to trainer
- Family/friend to ‘sign’ course content
- Ensure course materials are in 'clear' easy English
- Additional training and tutorials

Reading difficulties

- Provision of seating closer to the trainer
- The trainer may read the content on a one-to-one basis
- Ensure course materials are in 'clear' easy English.
- Learners may access interpreter to explain and interpret more complex issues at their own cost unless publicised by MTC.
- Increase use of graphics
- Additional training and tutorials
- Every effort, within reason, will be made by MTC personnel to ensure a successful outcome for its learners.
- Additional training and/or tutorial may be negotiated. Note: some options may incur additional costs.
- Reading and Writing Hotline 1300 655 506

Reasonable adjustment

To help establish competency, trainers may interview the learner and/or allow learners to demonstrate their skills or knowledge through reasonable adjustment.

Where learners are unable, due to extenuating circumstances, physical or mental disabilities, ill health or family emergency, to undergo assessment as outlined in the schedule, alternative forms and times of assessment may be negotiated with a trainer prior to the assessment date. In the event that illness is the reason why an assessment cannot be completed, a doctor's certificate must be supplied. Reasonable adjustment must be mapped to the elements and performance assessment criteria in the training package and approved by the CEO.

At risk

The following processes will be applied for learners considered to be "at risk". MTC is at all times concerned with the welfare of our learners and will as appropriate, refer them to appropriate support services. Personnel are required to respond to and attempt to alleviate any signs of distress or discomfort by learners, and to actively render appropriate first aid assistance.

Meerilinga’s Commitment to Child Safe Organisation

Meerilinga enables a strong commitment to child safety and establishing and maintaining child safe and child friendly environments. All children and young people who come to our organisation have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our services and this will always be our first priority. Trainers and Assessors will hold and maintain a current Working with Children Check at all times.

Documented Policies:

- Show members, students, volunteers, parents, guardians, carers and children that our organisation is committed to the safety of children
- Set out appropriate standards of behaviour and practices for people working and volunteering with children
- Increase members and volunteer awareness of risks to children and the strategies in place to minimise them
- Build members and volunteer knowledge of how to identify suspected child abuse or neglect and respond appropriately
- Set out compliance to have assessed and maintained checks and licences as required by law at all times
- Enable children and young people the right to complain, appeal and have matter dealt with in accordance to policy and procedure in a way that is lawful and developmentally appropriate. This may include the child's nominated representative, parent or guardian

Documented policies and procedures set out the steps our organisation takes to promote the safety and wellbeing of children to include;

- Consultation with children, families, members and volunteers
- A risk management plan
- Procedure for conducting Working With Children and National Police Clearance
- A code of conduct document
- A code of ethics document
- Procedures for dealing with personal and sensitive information
- Members and volunteer recruitment processes
- Members and volunteer supervision and professional development
- Procedure for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect
- Procedure for dealing with breaches of policy
- Procedure compliance for reporting to third parties
- Procedure reporting to supervisors, CEO/Board of Governors

Counselling/Personal support

- Lifeline - 131114 or *www.lifeline.org.au*
- Relationships Australia - 1300364 277 *http://www.relationships.org.au*
- MensLine Australia - (For men of any age) 1300 78 99 78 *https://www.mensline.org.au/*
- Kids Helpline (For young people aged 5-25) 1800 551 800 https://kidshelpline.com.au/
- Derbarl Yerrigan Health Services Counselling (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander)
- 1800RESPECT 1800 737 732 *https://1800RESPECT.org.au*
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

Mental Health Websites

- *www.mindhealthconnect.org.au* - Launched as part of the Australian Government's National E-Mental Health Strategy, this site is a trusted gateway to issues surrounding mental health care and a first step to finding relevant support and resources to meet mental health needs.
- *www.beyondblue.org.au* - Beyondblue's work is aimed at achieving an Australian community that understands depression and anxiety, empowering all Australians, at any life-stage, to seek help.
- *www.mentalhealthonline.org.au* – Mental Health online provides information and materials for common mental health problems and related issues, such as Panic

Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, Generalised Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Depression

- *https://headspace.org.au* - Headspace provides mental and health wellbeing support, information and services to young people aged 12 to 25 years and their families.
- *https://headtohealth.gov.au* - Head to Health can help you find digital mental health services from some of Australia's most trusted mental health organisations. Provided by the Australian Department of Health, Head to Health brings together apps, online programs, online forums, and phone services, as well as a range of digital information resources
- *http://www.sane.org/index.php* - SANE Australia is a national charity helping all Australians affected by mental illness lead a better life – through campaigning, education and research. SANE conducts innovative programs and campaigns to improve the lives of people living with mental illness, their family and friends. It also operates a busy Helpline and website, which have thousands of contacts each year from around Australia. 1800 187 263
- *https://www.womenshealth.gov/mental-health* 1800 994 9662 - Office on Women's Health - Good mental health means you're able to cope with daily stresses and accomplish personal goals. Many things, such as trauma, stress, and sleep problems, can affect your mental health. You may not be able to prevent a mental health condition, but you can take steps to protect and support your mental health throughout your life.
- *https://www.mumspace.com.au/about-mumspace /* MumSpace is Australia's new one-stop website supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of pregnant women, new mums and their families. MumSpace is designed to connect you quickly with the level of support you need, from advice and support in the transition to parenthood, to effective online treatment programs for perinatal depression and anxiety. The resources on MumSpace will help you 'step-up' to whichever level of support suits you best. MumSpace is also a resource for your healthcare professional.
- *https://www.panda.org.au/* - PANDA National Urgent Helpline 1300 706 306 PANDA continues to operate and remains committed to supporting the mental health of expecting and new parents, including those worried about the coronavirus, via our National Helpline and through our exp

Learning needs identified
Learners will have opportunity to identify needs through pre-enrolment, enrolment and induction process, including self-assessment and RPL as determined. This is especially relevant for those currently working in the industry and/or hold a unit of competency equivalent issued by another RTO.

This will enable training to be focused on gaps and needs. Subsequently individual learning needs will be identified through observation of participation in learning and assessment activities and third party reports.

Individual Learning Support Plans
Individual plans may form part of the training plan when supporting learners with learning difficulties. The extent of the learners' difficulties will determine which of the processes are used.

It is advisable when developing the plan to follow a specific planning and implementation sequence.

Table 1 - Stages in an individual Learning Support Plan

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Identify disability / learning difficulty and strategies to assist with learning	Determine adjustments to be made to the learning and assessment	Complete and implement the Learning Support Plan	Monitor and evaluate

- Goals should build upon the strengths and skills of the learner
- Long and short-term goals need to be differentiated
- Goals must be achievable and able to be monitored and evaluated

Stage 3: Completing and implementing the Learner Support Plan
The plan defines what support needs are required for the learner, priorities for the content to be taught and appropriate andragogy. Training strategies can be used to support learners with difficulties. They need to identify when, where, by whom, and with whom the training is to be delivered.

Table 2 Organisational strategies

Key questions	Considerations
When	When the learner learns best Time required for teaching and learning
Where	Most appropriate environment (e.g. class, workplace)
By whom	Team-teaching drawing on teaching strengths Sharing of human and physical resources between RTO and employer or specialists

With whom	Flexibility to allow for a variety of learning. Individual learning, small group learning, peer tutoring and cooperative learning arrangements

The classroom: Literacy or language support. Only available to ATSI target group.	Attendance sheets signed by trainer and support staff Signed support plans for participating learners. Service and employment records for support staff * *Please note that the support staff role:* **Cannot also be the trainer** *Does not include a CAVSS teacher*
Service Provider employs designated Disability Support Staff	Support person as note taker and for guidance. Only available to Disability target group.
Provision of designated staff member, who works with learners to produce a support plan for each learner.	At enrolment, learner is made aware of and chooses to use a designated service provider support throughout their training program.

Provision of psychological services or counselling	This is provided to the client by a referring external organisation or can be provided from a qualified independent person within a training organisation.	Statement from the external agency or internal officer of the number of learners from each class that have used the service.