

USI Guidance - Complete Hospitality Training

Canonical: <https://cht.edu.au/usi/>

Details:

A USI is not administrative box-ticking. It is a statutory precondition : without one, a registered training organisation is legally prohibited from issuing you a qualification or Statement of Attainment.

This page sets out the law behind that, the narrow exemptions, and the protections that apply to your records.

The short answers

Do I need a USI?	Yes , to be issued any VET qualification or Statement of Attainment in Australia
What happens without one?	The RTO must not issue the certificate. This is a prohibition on the RTO, not a preference
Is it free?	Yes. You create it yourself through the official USI Registry
Can I get an exemption?	Only in narrow circumstances, by determination of the Student Identifiers Registrar or the Commonwealth Minister
Do I need a new one for each course?	No. One USI covers your whole VET life. Applying again when you already hold one carries a civil penalty

The legal basis

The requirement comes from section 53 of the Student Identifiers Act 2014 (Cth) , which provides that a registered training organisation:

must not issue either of the following to an individual unless the individual has been assigned a student identifier — (a) a VET qualification; (b) a VET statement of attainment.

Note the direction of the obligation. It binds the RTO , not the student. An RTO that issued a certificate without a USI would itself be in breach. That is why providers will not release results until a USI is supplied — it is not obstruction, it is the statute.

The same requirement is reinforced through the 2025 Compliance Requirements for RTOs, so it sits in both the Act and the regulatory standards.

The exemptions, and how narrow they are

Section 53 admits two routes to exemption, and neither is available on request to an ordinary student.

Ministerial exemption. Under s 53(3) the Commonwealth Minister may, by legislative instrument, specify an issue to which the prohibition does not apply — by reference to the RTO doing the issuing, the qualification being issued, or the individual receiving it. This is a general instrument, not a case-by-case decision.

Registrar determination. Under s 53(4)–(7), an individual may request the Student Identifiers Registrar to determine that the prohibition does not apply to them. The request must be in the Registrar's approved form and include the information the Registrar requires. The Registrar must then, in writing, either make or refuse the determination.

In practice these exist for genuinely exceptional cases — for example where creating a USI would conflict with a person's safety or religious observance. They are not a way around the ordinary requirement.

Verification: how the RTO checks it

Division 3 of the Act governs verification. Under s 14, an RTO may request the Registrar to verify a student identifier or to give one. Under s 15, the Registrar verifies or provides it.

The practical consequence for you is that a mistyped USI, or one whose details do not match your identity documents, will fail verification. The most common cause is a name mismatch — the USI Registry matches against a government identity document, so the name on your enrolment should match the name on that document exactly.

Protection of your records

The Act carries specific protections that constrain what an RTO may do with your information.

Section 16 requires records to be protected from misuse. Section 17 makes unauthorised collection, use or disclosure of protected information an offence.

Your USI links to an authenticated VET transcript held by the Registrar — a record of every nationally recognised unit and qualification you have completed, from any RTO. That transcript, not any individual certificate, is the authoritative record of your training history.

Civil penalties

Part 3A of the Act creates civil penalty provisions, enforceable under the Regulatory Powers (Standard Provisions) Act 2014, with infringement notices available.

Provision	Conduct	Civil penalty
s 29B(1)	An individual who already holds a student identifier applies again, or authorises someone to apply on their behalf	60 penalty units
s 29B(2)	A person applies for a student identifier for someone else without authorisation	60 penalty units
s 29C(1)	A person alters an authenticated VET transcript, or an extract prepared by the Registrar	60 penalty units

s 29C(2)	A person makes a document purporting to be an authenticated VET transcript or extract	60 penalty units
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The first row is the one that catches people out. If you have studied before — at any RTO, at any time since 2015 — you already have a USI. Applying for a second one is not a harmless duplicate; it is a contravention. Recover the existing one instead.

Where this connects

Your USI is what makes credit transfer work: a unit completed at any RTO appears on your transcript and can be credited when you enrol elsewhere. It is also how an employer or a regulator can verify what you actually hold, rather than relying on a certificate you produce.

See resources for the other government systems worth knowing about, and policies for the wider set of obligations an RTO owes you.

Common questions about the USI

Can an RTO issue my certificate if I do not have a USI?

No. Section 53 of the Student Identifiers Act 2014 prohibits it. The obligation falls on the RTO.

Does it cost anything?

No. You create a USI yourself through the official USI Registry, free of charge.

I studied years ago. Do I already have one?

Almost certainly, if you completed nationally recognised training from 2015 onward. Recover it rather than applying again — a duplicate application carries a 60 penalty unit civil penalty under s 29B(1).

My USI will not verify. Why?

Most often a name mismatch. The Registry matches against a government identity document, so your enrolment details must match that document exactly.

Can I be exempted?

Only by ministerial instrument under s 53(3) or a written determination of the Registrar under s 53(6), and both are narrow.

What is the authenticated VET transcript?

The Registrar's record of every nationally recognised unit and qualification you have completed, linked to your USI. It is the authoritative record of your training history across all providers.

Can someone else create a USI for me?

Only with your authorisation. Applying for a student identifier for another person without authorisation carries a 60 penalty unit civil penalty under s 29B(2).

Can I edit my transcript?

No. Altering an authenticated VET transcript, or creating a document purporting to be one, each carries a 60 penalty unit civil penalty under s 29C.

About the provider

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This page reflects the Student Identifiers Act 2014 (Cth) as at September 2026 and is general information, not legal advice.