



Course Handbook

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All information contained in this handbook is accurate at time of printing. However, Home Economics Victoria policies, fees and details are subject to change without notice. Course commencement is dependent on sufficient enrolments, accreditation and registration requirements.

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1. Introduction

Home Economics Victoria is a not-for-profit charitable institution in the form of a Public Company Limited by Guarantee. Since 1958 our organisation has supported educators in empowering young people to live sustainably and take responsibility for their own physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Our purpose is to promote skills for life to achieve optimal and sustainable wellbeing for individuals, families and communities. We believe this is achievable by engaging and educating young people in a variety of home economics contexts such as: food, nutrition and health; consumerism and resource management; human development and family studies. We achieve our purpose via our objectives which are to:

- Provide quality professional learning and accredited training
- Provide information and support through resources, publications, advocacy and consultancy
- Support research and development including the provision of awards and scholarships
- Work in partnership with relevant education bodies, government departments, organisations and industry.

Home Economics Victoria is overseen by a voluntary board and managed by a full-time Chief Executive Coordinator with a team of professional staff. The office is open from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm, Monday to Friday during school term.

Home Economics Victoria is a unique professional subject association as we are able to offer nationally recognised training in our capacity as a Registered Training Organisation. Our aim as a registered training organisation is to offer a solid program of accredited and non-accredited training programs that assist in building existing teacher capacity by providing teachers with professional development and nationally recognised industry endorsed training that is responsive to the needs of home economics teachers and teachers delivering VET Hospitality, the largest VET in schools subject. In parallel, student learning is enhanced as teacher delivery is relevant, current and based on best practice.

In 2008 Home Economics Victoria was accredited by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) to deliver its own Vocational Graduate Diploma of Home Economics Education.

Home Economics Victoria's vocational postgraduate teacher training qualification in home economics teaching has been developed in response to the large number of unqualified home economics teachers presently working in Victoria and the overall shortfall of home economics teachers in Victoria. The Vocational Graduate Diploma has been accredited by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and is endorsed by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) to address the skill requirements for qualified teachers who would like to add home economics as a teaching method.

Home Economics Victoria is also accredited to deliver SIT2027 Certificate II Hospitality, SIT20307 Certificate II in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations) and SIT30707 Certificate III in Hospitality.

In partnership with Service Skills Victoria we deliver five of the core units from the SIT07 Tourism, Hospitality and Events Training Package in a course called Introduction to Hospitality. Home Economics Victoria also delivers tailored accredited courses for teachers and kitchen assistants and provides accredited training programs in schools to secondary students.

2. Academic policies and procedures

As a Registered Training Organisation, Home Economics Victoria oversees course development, training and assessment and monitors the continuous improvement of course programs. It provides advice to the board of Home Economics Victoria on policies and procedures regarding training courses and continues to ensure through the provision of its courses the development of high standards of teaching.

At Home Economics Victoria, course participants can expect:

- to receive course materials, assessment tasks and assessment criteria within published timeframes;
- that courses are consistently delivered;
- that consideration is given to the diverse range of backgrounds and learning needs of participants. All participants receive parity in terms of learning resource provision and guidance to support their learning;
- that trainers will provide consistent learning and teaching experiences, particularly in relation to the moderation of assessment;
- that both formative and summative kinds of assessment be regarded as central to the process of learning;
- that at commencement of the semester, participants are provided with a clear description of assessment requirements, standards of performance and assessment criteria;
- the conduct of participant assessment be transparent and fair, and follow approved assessment standards for all assessment activities which are provided to students;
- assessment activities to be reviewed on an annual basis;
- trainer and assessor feedback to be provided to participants on completed assessment activities which addresses how performance might be improved in the subject of study.

3. Enrolment

Enrolment into a course is based on your completion of the Home Economics Victoria enrolment form (available from www.homeeconomics.com.au) and your subsequent successful acceptance into the course and payment of the prescribed fees. It is important that you complete all sections of the enrolment form, including your current address and date of birth. Payment of the prescribed fees must be sent in with the completed enrolment form.

Once your enrolment is received and processed, you will be allocated a position in the course. You will receive in writing confirmation of your enrolment and a receipt for the fees paid.

Once your enrolment is processed by Home Economics Victoria it is considered as a commitment to undertake the course and or units enrolled in. Should you wish to withdraw from the course, fees will be subject to the conditions stipulated in the refund policy (refer to the refund policy).

4. Course pre-requisites

Evidence of current enrolment or completion of the pre-requisite/s must be forwarded with enrolment form.

5. Course induction

A course induction is held for some courses and is conducted on the course commencement date. The induction session includes:

- introduction to Home Economics Victoria
- introduction to trainers
- course outline and submission dates
- evidence guide and assessment agreement
- competency based assessment and learning
- course handbook

- policies and procedures relating to Home Economics Victoria as an RTO
- nominal hours
- workplace assessment requirements
- coursework requirements
- recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- complaints and appeals process

6. Study mode

Study modes can include:

- self-paced learning - learner guides will be provided and will guide the learner through a sequential learning process with activities and workplace tasks relevant to the course;
- on-the-job training;
- face-to-face training.

7. Methods of assessment

Training is competency based and participants will be expected to complete a range of assessment methods including work-simulated demonstrations, on-the-job assessment, responses to written and oral questions and structured activities. Participants will be assessed as either competent or not yet competent. All participants have the opportunity of re-submitting assessments if they have not met the competency standards required.

Assessment methods will emphasise the demonstration of skills and will include:

- direct observation;
- questioning – written and/or verbal;
- case studies;
- evidence sources from the workplace;
- research projects;
- third party reports.

Assessment will adopt a holistic approach where units of competency are grouped together where possible.

A course outline is provided to each participant and provides a timeline and due dates for completion of course requirements. It is strongly recommended that participants submit work on or before the due date to avoid falling behind during the course. Participants will have access to their trainer during the semester for support and guidance.

Participants not completing assessment by the end of the course will need to re-enrol and pay the associated enrolment fee (refer to course re-enrolment).

8. Submission of coursework

Participants must remain up to date with their submission of work to satisfy course requirements. Submission dates are provided upon course commencement.

Participants must submit work in electronic form to the trainer. It is your responsibility to ensure you keep a copy of the submitted work for your own records.

All work must be clearly presented with the learner guide section and activity number clearly identified. Page numbering must be used and your name should appear in either the header or footer of the document. Hand-written work must be presented in a similar format. All assessment must be submitted with the task cover sheet.

In the event of being awarded a 'not yet competent' result, participants will have the opportunity to provide further evidence and resubmit. This applies for a one week period only, dated from the return of the assessment activity. Participants are also eligible to appeal an assessment result (refer to complaints and appeals policy).

9. Academic honesty

Participants must ensure the authenticity of their work. In all written work submitted for assessment you must acknowledge the sources of your material appropriately. As a general rule, wherever work is submitted that is not your own original work, it must be acknowledged. Quoted passages should be placed in quotation marks (or presented as an indented paragraph if longer than three lines) and their source referenced within the text (author, date and page number). A list of references should be provided at the end of the work (where appropriate) to acknowledge the resources used in the completion of the task.

Plagiarism is a serious issue and participants must ensure that all information is acknowledged appropriately.

10. Extension requests

Requests for extensions due to illness etc. are only to be negotiated with the trainer at least three (3) working days before the submission date. No extensions will be granted past the final submission date.

11. Deferment

Deferral is the postponement of study. In the event of unforeseen personal circumstances, an application for deferment must be made in writing to the Training Coordinator at Home Economics Victoria for consideration. Course fees are non-refundable and deferment from the course does not warrant a refund (refer to course deferment policy).

12. Course withdrawal

An application for withdrawal from a course must be made in writing to the Training Coordinator at Home Economics Victoria. If a participant requests to withdraw from the course on or after the commencement date of the course, there will be no refund of fees (refer to refund policy). Home Economics Victoria understands that unforeseen circumstances can arise which require the withdrawal from a course or unit by an enrolled participant. However, Home Economics Victoria incurs costs, staffing and logistic responsibilities once a course commences.

13. Change of enrolment

If a participant wishes to change their enrolment to another course, the fees paid will be transferable to the new course and a change of enrolment fee will be charged (refer to schedule of fees).

Change of enrolment is subject to availability and will not normally be considered after course commencement unless there is a compelling reason for the change. Change of enrolment must be applied for in writing and may occur if the Training Coordinator and participant agree on the benefits of the change. Home Economics Victoria reserves the right to enrol participants into the appropriate course.

14. Assessment results

Results will only be provided to the course participant. All participants will receive regular updates on their progress and requests for results must be received in writing. Results will not be provided over the telephone or to other parties. Should you require a Transcript of Results or evidence of course completion prior to the issuing of formal certificates please contact the Training Coordinator at Home Economics Victoria via email training@hev.com.au

15. Award requirements

Participants who exit the course without completing all requirements will be provided with a Statement of Attendance for their professional learning records. A Statement of Attainment or Certificate listing those units that were successfully completed will be issued upon successful course completion.

16. Course re-enrolment

Participants who have been awarded a 'Not Yet Competent' result at the conclusion of a course will be required to re-enrol and pay the prescribed fee.

17. Access to training records

Participants' progress and records are carefully maintained and updated to ensure that an accurate and complete record of their academic program becomes a part of their permanent record. Participants may request access to their records by completing the *Application by student for access to personal records* form and providing proof of identification. Third party access cannot be approved unless the *Application for student records by third party* form is completed and signed by both the student concerned and third party. Forms can be obtained by contacting the Training Coordinator training@hev.com.au

18. Support

Detailed information on participant support including language, literacy and numeracy, welfare and disability services is available from the Training Coordinator training@hev.com.au. Additional support information will be provided to participants upon enrolment.

19. Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process where a participant may be granted credit or partial credit towards a qualification in recognition of skills and knowledge gained through work experience, life experience and/or formal training.

Participants must enrol in the course/units and pay the enrolment fee for the units of competency/course as usual while the RPL process is undertaken. Participants must complete the RPL application and pay a non-refundable administration fee (refer to schedule of fees). To assist you with your application, it is strongly recommended that you discuss the completion of your RPL application and the course contents with the Training Coordinator via email at training@hev.com.au. If your application is successful the unit and or course fee relating to your enrolment will be recalculated excluding the component you have been granted RPL in. A refund will then be made where necessary. Refunds will not exceed more than 50 per cent of the course or unit fee for which RPL is granted.

20. Participant feedback

As part of our ongoing review and monitoring to assist Home Economics Victoria to continue to improve the effectiveness of our training programs and RTO services, participants are requested to complete at least one evaluation form each year.

All responses are anonymous (if desired), and are used to review processes and implement change if necessary as well as continue to ensure Home Economics Victoria provides a high standard of training and assessment.

21. Additional information

All courses are subject to cancellation if minimum numbers are not reached. It is a participant's responsibility to ensure that the Training Coordinator is advised of any change of address, telephone number, email address, or any other relevant details in writing prior to the move or change. It is also compulsory for a participant to retain a current email address and to advise Home Economics Victoria of any subsequent change as trainers use this as a communication tool.

22. Schedule of fees

Requests must be made in writing and include current address and contact details to the Training Coordinator at Home Economics Victoria. Fees are payable at the time of application.

All fees are GST inclusive.

Change of enrolment	\$110.00
Deferral	\$110.00
Application for recognition of prior learning	\$110.00 per unit
Re-issue of a qualification	\$66.00
Re-issue of Statement of Attainment or Certificate	\$55.00
Re-issue of transcript of results	\$55.00

Policies and procedures

23. Home Economics Victoria Code of Ethics

RATIONALE

The objective of the Home Economics Victoria Code of Ethics is to identify fundamental values and principles for members and staff.

POLICY STATEMENT / STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Ethics are values and principles that are used in making decisions. They help to decide whether actions are right or wrong. Ethical standards help to ensure consistent approaches and high standards. They indicate what is expected, and assist everyone in making decisions in difficult situations. Our Code of Ethics indicates to the community, the values, which our members hold.

PROCEDURES / GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Home Economics Victoria subscribes to the principles and aspirations of the:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and other international conventions derived from the declaration
- Other professional organisations whose mission, values and goals are closely aligned to those of Home Economics Victoria such as the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) and the Home Economics Institute of Australia Inc (HEIA)
- Other professional organisations whose mission, goals and values are compatible to those of Home Economics Victoria and who have been declared by resolution of the board to be considered as partner organisations.

Values and principles

- Act with integrity and honesty
- Cooperate fully in issues of professional conduct
- Act within the letter and spirit of the law and accept the standards of Home Economics Victoria
- Avoid and report corruption, fraud or maladministration
- Foster public awareness of the importance of educating about home economics, health and technology studies and their relevance to everyday life of families
- Support representation on peak bodies of relevance to the Association to promote home economics, health and technology studies
- Communicate and advocate for home economics, health and technology studies
- Co-operate and liaise with industry, media and education bodies within scope of home economics, health and technology studies
- Uphold and/or lobby opinions and views of Home Economics Victoria in a variety of forums
- Protect Home Economics Victoria principles and information
- Act with economy and efficiency
- Support Home Economics Victoria approved research into areas related to home economics, health and technology studies.

Be honest and fair

- Be honest
- Be impartial
- Avoid conflicts of interest.

Respect other people

- Respect individuals' values and culture
- Respect confidences and privacy
- Create and maintain supportive environments that develop cooperative working relationships encouraging each other as educators of home economics, health and technology studies within the scope of continuing quality education
- Recognise the need to update knowledge and skills
- Promote an ecological, social and economic environment, which supports health and wellbeing.

24. Occupational health and safety policy

This policy recognises that Home Economics Victoria is responsible for the health and safety of all staff and participants involved in training. In fulfilling this responsibility, the board and the Chief Executive Coordinator have a duty to provide and maintain a working and learning environment that is safe and without risks to health.

The objectives of our policy are:

- To achieve an accident-free workplace;
- To make health and safety an integral part of every management and supervisory position;
- To ensure that health and safety are considered in all planning and work activities;
- To involve staff in the decision making processes through regular communication, consultation and training (where applicable);
- To provide a continuous program of education and learning to ensure that staff and participants work in the safest possible manner;
- To identify and control hazards in the workplace through hazard identification and risk analysis;
- To ensure all potential accident/incidents are controlled and prevented;
- To provide effective injury management and rehabilitation for all staff and participants.

To meet the objectives of this policy, management is committed to regular discussions with employees to ensure that health and safety issues are regularly reviewed. Health and safety is most effective when a joint approach is used to identify and solve problems.

Participants

- have a duty to take care for their own health and safety and of others affected by their actions
- must comply with safety procedures and directions
- must not wilfully interfere with or misuse items or facilities provided in the interest of health and safety
- must inform the trainer/assessor of dangers and accidents occurring at the workplace.

This policy will be regularly reviewed in the light of changes to the workplace and changes in legislation.

Management seeks cooperation from all participants in realising our health and safety objectives and creating a safe learning environment.

25. Privacy policy

RATIONALE

Home Economics Victoria is committed to protecting the privacy of its members and non-members by ensuring that the security of personal information is maintained within the organisation. Home Economics Victoria endorses the National Privacy Principles (set out in amendments to the Privacy Act 1988 which came into being on 21 December 2001) and has adopted them in its management of personal information.

The Privacy Act covers the collection, use, disclosure, quality and security of personal information and gives individuals the right to access and correct their information.

Under the Privacy Act, personal information means information or opinion, true or false, whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity can be reasonably ascertained from that information or opinion.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To ensure that all Home Economics Victoria members and non members have their privacy rights protected and to assist members and non-members in understanding:

- **what** personal information is collected by Home Economics Victoria, and how is it collected
- **how** and **why** members' and non-members' personal information is used and maintained by Home Economics Victoria
- **how** personal information is disclosed by Home Economics Victoria.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

To ensure that all Home Economics Victoria members and non-members have access to the Home Economics Victoria privacy policy via a privacy statement, this includes information about how to access our privacy policy. The following privacy statement will be included on the membership application form, professional development enrolment forms, order forms, mailing carrier sheets, email messages and other forms as determined.

Home Economics Victoria is committed to protecting the privacy of our members and non-members and to ensuring that the security of personal information is maintained within the organisation. If you would like a copy of our privacy policy, please visit our website at www.homeeconomics.com.au or contact the office on 03 9888 2240.

What personal information is collected by Home Economics Victoria and how is it collected?

- We receive information, which includes names (preferred and previous if applicable), addresses (including business, home, postal and email), telephone (including work, home and mobile) and facsimile numbers (including work and home), profile information including key teaching areas or areas of focus and areas of interest or involvement in Home Economics Victoria, collected from membership renewal or other application forms, professional development enrolment forms, order and booking forms and mailing carrier sheets.
- We receive information when you pay for membership, resources or Home Economics Victoria professional development activities or functions.
- We receive information when you contact us in person or via the telephone, send us a facsimile or email or attend our professional development activities or functions.
- We receive information from referrals and publicly available sources.
- We receive statistical information from browsers when you visit our website including server address, domain name, date and time of visit and pages visited.

How and why members' and non-members' personal information is used and maintained by Home Economics Victoria

- Home Economics Victoria will collect personal information only by lawful and fair means and not in an unreasonably intrusive way, and we will take reasonable steps to ensure that personal information will be accurate, up-to-date and secure. The personal information collected by Home Economics Victoria is essential to our organisational activities because it is required for the processing of membership applications and renewals, ordering of resources and participation in Home Economics Victoria professional development activities and functions. We maintain and use this information in written and/or electronic form in order to provide you with information, products and services that will be of personal and/or professional use.
- Home Economics Victoria uses personal information for marketing and sales initiatives connected with resources, professional development activities and functions, considered by Home Economics Victoria to be of professional benefit to members and non-members. Home Economics Victoria also uses personal information to forward information considered to be of professional benefit by organisations such as the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the Department of Education and Training.
- If you tell us that you do not wish us to provide you with information about membership, products, services, or information considered by Home Economics Victoria to be of professional benefit, we will comply with your request.

How we disclose personal information

- Home Economics Victoria will allow members and non-members the opportunity to access their own personal information if requested, and if two forms of personal identification are provided.
- As a general rule, Home Economics Victoria will not use or disclose personal information about an individual or organisation other than for its primary purpose of collection, unless:
 - The individual has consented to the use or disclosure; or
 - Home Economics Victoria has reasons to suspect an unlawful activity that has been, or may be engaged in, and may use or disclose this personal information as a necessary part of the investigation of the matter or in reporting its concerns to relevant persons or authority; or
 - The use or disclosure is required or authorised by or under law; or
 - Home Economics Victoria reasonably believes that the use of disclosure is necessary for a specified purpose by or on behalf of an enforcement body.

On occasion, Home Economics Victoria will disclose personal information:

- to organisations that perform services for Home Economics Victoria in connection with processing requests for products or services
- to corporate partners and joint venture partners to promote and/or market a service or product considered by Home Economics Victoria to be of professional benefit to members and non-members. Once an individual or organisation subscribes to a service offered by a corporate partner or joint member partner, that organisation takes responsibility for the management of any information provided as part of the member transaction.

Security of information

- Home Economics Victoria will take reasonable steps to protect the personal information it holds from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.
- Home Economics Victoria will take reasonable steps to destroy or permanently de-identify personal information if it is no longer needed.
- Home Economics Victoria has set out in this document, its policies of management of personal information and will make this document available to anyone who requests it.

Anonymity

- Wherever it is lawful and practical, Home Economics Victoria will allow individuals the option of not identifying themselves when entering into transactions.

Complaint handling

- Before making a complaint to the Federal Privacy Commissioner, individuals or organisations should attempt to resolve the matter with Home Economics Victoria, firstly by writing to Home Economics Victoria, explaining the situation and how the matter could be resolved.
- Give Home Economics Victoria an opportunity to rectify the situation: thirty days is a reasonable time frame in which they should respond to your initial enquiry.
- If members are not satisfied with the outcome they can complain to the Home Economics Victoria office or the Privacy Code Adjudicator.

Contact details

Website: www.privacy.gov.au

Enquiries: privacy@privacy.gov.au

Hotline: 1300 363 992 (cost of a local call) Fax: 02 9284 9666 TTY: 1800 620 241

Mail: GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001

26. Refund policy

Home Economics Victoria maintains and promotes a fair and just refund policy.

- Cancellation of enrolment must be made in writing to the Training Coordinator at Home Economics Victoria;
- Application for a refund must be made in writing within 14 days of your cancellation of enrolment;
- An administration fee of 10 per cent applies for all cancellations;
- If a refund is requested 14 days before the course commences, a refund, less the administration fee will be given;
- If a refund is less than 14 days before the course commences, 50 per cent of the fee will be refunded, less the administration fee;
- Once the course has commenced no refund is available to participants who leave before finalising the course. Exceptional circumstances e.g. financial hardship, immediate family bereavement and/or serious illness will be considered on an individual basis at the discretion of Home Economics Victoria;
- If a participant wishes to change their enrolment to another course, the fees paid will be transferable to the new course and a change of enrolment fee will be charged (refer to change of enrolment policy);
- Home Economics Victoria will provide a full refund if:
 - the course is cancelled;
 - the course is rescheduled to a time unsuitable to the participant. Participants are entitled to transfer to the re-scheduled course should this be suitable;
 - the participant was not given a place in the course due to the maximum number of places being reached.

27. Course deferment policy

Deferral is the postponement of study. In the event of unforeseen personal circumstances, an application for deferment must be made in writing to the Training Coordinator at Home Economics Victoria for consideration.

For participants seeking deferral from a course or unit of study it is strongly recommended that you contact the Training Coordinator to discuss. A course deferral form is available from the Training Coordinator.

- Approval of deferment is at the discretion of Home Economics Victoria;
- Deferral will take effect from the date it is approved by Home Economics Victoria;
- Course fees are non-refundable, withdrawal or deferment does not warrant a refund.
Exceptional circumstances e.g. financial hardship, immediate family bereavement and/or serious illness will be considered on an individual basis at the discretion of Home Economics Victoria;
- Home Economics Victoria will apply the course fees as payment for the recommencement of studies for up to twelve months from the original commencement of study;
- Any increase in course fees during the deferment period (including tuition and administration) may be applicable upon recommencement of the course;
- Deferral to a particular course will only be possible if that course is offered after the period of deferment;
- If a participant does not resume the course or unit of study after the deferral period, a refund will not be applicable and all monies paid will become the absolute property of Home Economics Victoria.

Refer to schedule of fees for deferral application fee.

28. Access and equity policy

Home Economics Victoria is committed to the provision of education services for people of all cultures, age, gender and interests. To meet this commitment Home Economics Victoria has included access and equity principles within its Code of Ethics. This sets out for all members and stakeholders the organisation's intentions to:

- support diversity and inclusive work and learning practices;
- promote respect amongst all people in the workplace;
- encourage fair and equitable treatment of people in the workplace;
- allow redress against unfair and unreasonable treatment.

Home Economics Victoria will comply and promote its responsibilities with all relevant laws and regulations on matters of:

- occupational health and safety;
- equal opportunity;
- discrimination and harassment;
- sexual harassment;
- bullying and occupational violence;
- complaints and appeals;
- disability;
- code of ethics;
- privacy of members.

Home Economics Victoria will provide additional support and welfare services or refer participants to external agencies where personal difficulties are impacting on their training progress.

Home Economics Victoria will develop and implement learning programs, assessment tools and delivery strategies to assist with the identification of participant needs and provide programs of learning that are relevant to diverse groups of participants.

29. Equal opportunity policy

Individuals associated with Home Economics Victoria can expect to be treated with respect without regard to gender, disability, religion, race, age, marital or family status or sexual preference or other attributes as determined by law.

Home Economics Victoria will provide a suitable learning environment which:

- is free from harassment and discrimination;
- is stimulating and challenging;
- will operate fair and efficient complaints, disciplinary and appeals procedures;
- will provide the opportunity for participants to give feedback on their training program;
- is physically accessible to all participants. As has been identified, Home Economics Victoria has limited access (stairs only) to the conference room. This may present a problem for some participants with special needs (e.g. participants in wheelchairs). The course would be moved to an alternate venue under in these circumstances.

Home Economics Victoria embraces its obligations to provide equal opportunities for its members, staff, participants and the community.

30. Harassment policy

Harassment is unlawful behaviour and this policy applies to all people in the Home Economics Victoria community including employees, casual staff, contractors, participants, board members, directors, participants and other persons acting as agents or contractors of Home Economics Victoria.

Home Economics Victoria regards any type of harassment as an unacceptable form of behaviour that will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Should there be a complaint of harassment, formal procedures as detailed under 'procedures' must be followed to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

Harassment can be physical, verbal or visual and may include statements or transmissions by phone, fax, video conference, internet and email, and will vary in the degree and extent to which it causes affront and distress. Even if the behaviour is not intended to be offensive, it may still be unlawful.

31. Occupational violence policy

Home Economics Victoria is committed to providing a positive working and learning environment free from intimidation, ridicule and bullying. Home Economics Victoria believes that all staff and participants should be able to work and learn in an environment free of threatening behaviours. Any reports of bullying and or intimidating/violent behaviour will be treated seriously and investigated promptly, confidentially and impartially. Home Economics Victoria encourages all staff and participants to report bullying and or violence.

Workplace bullying, occupational violence and unreasonable behaviour directed towards an employee, a participant or a group of participants creates a risk to health and safety. Home Economics Victoria does not condone unreasonable behaviour and will act to address any issues as soon as they are identified. Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone found to have bullied or threatened any workplace person including staff and participants. Discipline may involve a warning, reprimand, counselling, demotion or dismissal, depending on the circumstances. Where bullying involves physical violence or the threat of physical violence the matter will be referred to the police.

Definitions

'Unreasonable behaviour' means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten.

'Behaviour' includes actions of individuals or a group, and may involve using a system of work and or learning environment as a means of victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening.

'Risk to health and safety' includes risk to the mental or physical health of the person.

The following types of behaviour, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, could be considered bullying: verbal abuse, excluding or isolating people, psychological harassment, intimidation, assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to the job, giving impossible assignments/tasks, deliberately changed work rosters to inconvenience particular employees, deliberately withholding information vital for effective work performance.

This list is not exhaustive. Other types of behaviour may also constitute bullying.

A participant who experiences harassment, bullying or any other threatening behaviour should inform their trainer/immediate supervisor and together attempt to resolve the problem. If this does not work, or the trainer/immediate supervisor is part of the problem, approach the Chief Executive Coordinator or the nominated complaints/appeals Coordinator from the board.

32. Complaints and appeals policy

Introduction

Home Economics Victoria acknowledges that staff, members and course participants have a right to raise concerns and have them addressed promptly and appropriately. Complaints are handled objectively and with sensitivity. The most desirable outcome in cases of complaints is:

- the determination about whether there has been any unsatisfactory/inappropriate practice or action, as early as possible and in the fairest and most objective manner possible;
- the implementation of any necessary changes designed to bring about better educational, or administrative outcomes, as appropriate;
- the achievement of reconciliation between the parties;
- the establishment of a renewed confidence in the relationship.

This procedure identifies the means of handling, in a fair, equitable and effective manner, the actions that are to be taken when any staff member receives a complaint, either internally or externally to Home Economics Victoria. The procedure applies to all staff, members and course participants of Home Economics Victoria in reference to any communication with the following exceptions:

1. Health and safety matters shall be dealt with in accordance with Home Economics Victoria's Occupational Health and Safety policy and procedures;
2. Discrimination, bullying and any issue relating to equal opportunity and managing diverse issues such as sexual harassment shall be dealt with in accordance with Home Economics Victoria's Equal opportunity policy, Sexual harassment policy, Bullying/Occupational violence policy and Access and equity policy
3. Situations relating to matters of staff misconduct shall be dealt with in accordance with Home Economics Victoria's Policy and procedures for staff warning and discipline and Code of Ethics;
4. Matters relating to course participant misconduct shall be dealt with in accordance with Home Economics Victoria's Code of ethics.

1. Policy

Complaints and appeals will be managed and settled, in a fair, equitable and effective manner using the procedures listed below.

1.1 Home Economics Victoria will ensure that:

- Each complaint or appeal and its outcome is recorded in writing;
- Each appeal is heard by an independent person or panel; and
- Each appellant:
 - a) has an opportunity to formally present his or her case; and
 - b) is given a written statement of the appeal outcomes, including reasons for the decision.
- It acts upon the subject of any complaint found to be substantiated.

It is the policy of Home Economics Victoria that receipt of complaints, whether received from within or externally, will be handled promptly and effectively and the complainant will receive a response within a reasonable timeline. Policy principles are listed below:

- 1.2 All staff, members and course participants are entitled to fair and consistent treatment, and prompt consideration and resolution of complaints;
- 1.3 No complainant shall be discriminated against for lodging a complaint;
- 1.4 All complaint processes shall be enacted to ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times;
- 1.5 All complaint processes shall be resolved as close to their source as practicable with the emphasis on conciliation;
- 1.6 The complainant has the right to withdraw the complaint at any time;
- 1.7 A staff member who is the complainant may request the assistance of another person nominated by them, or another staff member, at any time during the complaints process;

1.8 A course participant may request the assistance of a support person as nominated by them at any time during the complaints process. This could be a Home Economics Victoria staff member or other participant of the course;

1.9 Consistent with 1.7 and 1.8 above, any such assistance/representation will exclude the legal profession and family members;

1.10 All parties are treated equally and fairly, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice;

1.11 Written records of the outcomes, agreements and actions are to be kept at all stages of the complaints process;

1.12 During the complaints process, the Chief Executive Coordinator has a duty of care to identify and assess any foreseeable risks to the individuals involved and/or Home Economics Victoria and to take the necessary steps to communicate or to mitigate the risk(s).

2. Procedure

Note: It is essential that accurate records be maintained throughout each stage of the process.

2.1 Complaints may be received internally from staff or participants or externally from stakeholders or members of the public by a variety of means, verbally, in writing or by mail. The staff member receiving the complaint will:

- a) respond directly to the complainant, within five (5) working days, indicating that the issue will be investigated;
- b) forward the communication to the relevant staff member to investigate the issue, prepare response and organise a meeting to discuss the complaint;
- c) The relevant parties and complainant must meet and discuss the matter, and, if possible, resolve the dispute within 20 working days after the complaint has been received. If the complaint has been made directly to the Chief Executive Coordinator or her representative, the Chief Executive Coordinator must exercise judgement and determine whether to attempt an informal resolution or immediately commence the formal resolution procedure.
- d) Following the meeting, the relevant staff member will provide a written response to the complainant detailing any actions that have been, or will be, taken to resolve the issue.
- e) In the event that it is determined that there are no grounds for the complaint, the complainant will be advised in writing why no further action is to be taken. If the complainant is not satisfied with this decision, he/she may request an independent review as detailed below. This request must be in writing and must include: details of the complaint, actions that have been taken to attempt to resolve the matter, reasons why the complainant is not satisfied with the determination.

2.2 If the complaint has been resolved at this stage all records are to be retained, including details of the actions taken to resolve the issue completed using the Complaints and Appeal Record of Correspondence, and filed/archived according to Home Economics Victoria's Administration and Records Management Policy and Procedure.

2.3 Relevant staff member/s to identify any possible improvement/s or actions that may be taken as a result and advise relevant staff.

2.4 Home Economics Victoria will promptly rectify the subject of any complaint, which is found to be substantiated.

3. Formal procedures

Independent review

3.1 Where the complainant wishes to proceed with a formal complaint when the issue has not been resolved, he/she will address the complaint in writing requesting an independent review. The request in writing must also include: details of the complaint, actions that have been taken to attempt to resolve the matter, reasons why the complainant is not satisfied with the determination. The written request will be sent to the Chief Executive Coordinator.

3.2 The Chief Executive Coordinator and/or their nominee will organise an independent review of the issue and seek to resolve the matter. The nature of the independent review will depend on the circumstances of the

issue/s to be reviewed. The independent review may be conducted by an independent external person such as a representative from Service Skills Victoria, or a Training Recognition Consultant.

3.3 The Chief Executive Coordinator and/or their nominee shall ensure that the independent review is completed within 20 working days of receipt of formal complaint.

3.4 The Chief Executive Coordinator and/or their nominee shall determine their own procedures for the purpose of considering the independent review based on the principles of fairness, equity and natural justice.

3.5 The outcome of the independent review will be final, subject only to an appeal as detailed below.

Appeals

3.6 Where the complainant wishes to appeal the outcome of a decision made by an independent review, he/she will address this in writing requesting an appeal. The request in writing must also include: details of why the complainant is not satisfied with the findings of the independent review. The written request will be sent to the Chief Executive Coordinator.

3.7 The Chief Executive Coordinator and/or their nominee will organise an Appeals Committee to seek to resolve the matter.

3.8 The Appeals Committee shall consist of three nominees of the Chief Executive Coordinator. The nominees are to include a:

Staff member:

Home Economics Victoria President to act as Chair;

Representation from a Director of the board;

One other staff member, as nominated by the Chief Executive Coordinator.

Participant:

One Director of the board, to act as Chair;

One other staff member, nominated by the Chief Executive Coordinator;

One participant representative, nominated by the Chief Executive Coordinator;

And/or

One independent person external to Home Economics Victoria.

3.9 The Appeals Committee shall not consist of any person who has been directly involved in the complaint.

3.10 The Appeals Committee shall be serviced by a person who is nominated by the Chief Executive Coordinator. This person will keep a record of all proceedings, outcomes and documentation, including maintaining the Complaints/Appeal Record of Correspondence.

3.11 The Appeals Committee shall complete its review within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal by the Chief Executive Coordinator.

3.12 The appellant may be supported by a person of his/her choice during the proceedings of the Appeals Committee, provided that no representation for fee or reward by a legally qualified person or family member shall be allowed. A staff appellant may draw support from any other staff member. A Participant appellant may draw support from another participant, a member of staff or external person.

3.13 The Appeals Committee shall determine its own procedures for the purpose of considering the appeal based on the principles of fairness, equity and natural justice.

3.14 The Appeals Committee shall, prior to beginning its deliberations, receive copies of all documentation relating to the complaint.

3.15 The Appeals Committee shall ensure that:

- a) all meetings/hearings are conducted at times and venues which allow the opportunity for all persons entitled to be present to attend;
- b) all persons, whom the parties regard as relevant and in the opinion of the Committee can provide relevant information are heard and their submissions considered by the Committee;
- c) the complainant is provided with opportunities to make written submissions;
- d) the complainant is provided with opportunities to call witnesses and to be present while other evidence is being presented;
- e) all discussions are to be treated with the strictest of confidence;
- f) all parties have access to relevant information at least three (3) working days in advance of any meeting/hearing.

3.16 Decisions of the Appeals Committee shall be by consensus and are final. **There is no avenue for further appeal within any person within Home Economics Victoria.**

3.17 Within five (5) working days of the conclusion of the Committee's deliberations, the Chair of the Appeals Committee shall, on behalf of the Committee, prepare a written report for the Chief Executive Coordinator and a letter to the complainant.

3.18 The report shall include:

- details of any decision and reasons for the decision of the Appeal Committee;
- details of any settlement reached between the parties and the reasons, if any, for the settlement;
- recommendations concerning any process improvement that is required by Home Economics Victoria as a result of issues arising from the complaint.

3.19 The letter shall include:

- details of any decision and reasons for the decision of the Appeal Committee;
- details of any settlement reached between the parties and the reasons, if any, for the settlement;
- details of closure of the issue.

Appeals on procedural grounds

3.20 A staff member or participant who believes there have been procedural irregularities in dealing with the complaint may exercise his/her right by formally writing to the Chief Executive Coordinator, and request an appeal hearing. In the letter of appeal the staff member must clearly indicate why he/she believes that there has been procedural irregularity. **There are no other grounds for appeal.**

3.21 If the Chief Executive Coordinator is satisfied that there is no case of procedural irregularity he/she may reject the appeal and advise all parties in writing as to the reasons for this decision. If there is any doubt, or if there appears to be a case to be heard he/she shall convene an Appeals Committee.

3.22 External complainants who are not satisfied with the resolution of their complaint may take the matter through the relevant external agencies that are available to them.

33. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) policy

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and credit transfer (CT) is the process of equating an individual's prior learning and past/present experience to the learning outcomes of the units of competence offered by a training organisation. This recognition is available to all individuals enrolling in any nationally recognised course.

RPL and CT acknowledge the full range of an individual's skills, knowledge and experience, irrespective of how it has been acquired. This includes competencies gained through formal study, work experience, employment and other 'life' experiences.

Mutual recognition

Home Economics Victoria will recognise AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by other RTOs in line with the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) for mutual recognition.

Recognition guidelines

Home Economics Victoria will recognise competencies gained through work experience, employment and other 'life' experiences provided evidence submitted by the applicant to demonstrate competency complies with the rules of evidence.

Gathered evidence should be valid.

Evidence is valid if it meets the performance criteria and elements, underpinning knowledge and skills and critical aspects of assessment specified in the unit of competency applied for.

Gathered evidence should be current

Evidence is considered current if it relates to activities recently undertaken.

Gathered evidence should be authentic

Evidence will be considered authentic if it is the applicant's own work and verified copies of evidence of past employment/work activities.

There must be a sufficient quantity of evidence to demonstrate competence.

Procedure for applicant to apply for RPL

Applications for RPL/CT should be lodged with the Training Coordinator and contain all relevant documents (evidence). Examples of evidence to support RPL/CT application might include:

- samples of work completed
- third party reports
- testimonials from colleagues
- documentation of observation of performance under real (on-the-job) or simulated work conditions.
- interview questions and answers
- competency record books (need to be current)
- written accounts of discussions with workplaces
- work reports from supervisor
- references and testimonials
- documentation of current achievements
- completed projects.

A verification of the application will be undertaken. (Further information/documentation may be requested to be supplied.)

An application may be suspended pending the provision of further evidence.

Applicant is then notified of the decision.

Where applicable, credit will be given and recorded for identical units of competence completed elsewhere. Exemptions will be granted and recorded for achievement of the equivalence of a unit of competency.

Applicants may appeal a decision. Appeals should be lodged with the Chief Executive Coordinator in consultation with the Training Coordinator (refer to Complaints and appeals policy)

Appeals will be heard by an independent person or panel.