



## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. When will the USI initiative commence?

The Australian Government has re-introduced legislation to support introduction of the USI and the scheme will now commence on 1 January 2015.

The Bill provides for a statutorily appointed Registrar to oversee the implementation and ongoing management of the USI Scheme nationally. Once the Bill is passed by the Parliament and receives Royal Assent, the Minister, in consultation with the Ministerial Council will move quickly to appoint the Registrar with a view to the full implementation of the USI Scheme from 1 January 2015.

On current indications, we anticipate the Bill to pass through Parliament during the Winter sittings of 2014.

If you have further queries please [email the USI Taskforce](#).

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## **2. What difference will the new initiative make to students and training providers?**

For the first time, every student who undertakes nationally recognised VET in Australia (or overseas from an Australian-registered provider) will be able to access his or her enrolment and achievement record from a single online source.

After the new initiative is implemented, students will be able to get a transcript of the accredited VET training they undertake. The transcript will include the VET training a student does from the time the USI initiative is implemented.

There will be significant benefits to training providers from the introduction of the USI, especially around assessing students for admission to courses. Training providers will have better access to student VET records which will simplify the process of assessing pre-requisites, credit transfer, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and entitlement to funding for training.

In the longer term, training providers will benefit from longitudinal data on course completions which will inform the development of future VET sector policy initiatives.

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## **3. Is this new initiative just for the VET sector?**

Initially, the new initiative will only apply to VET students. COAG has indicated an interest in extending it to other education sectors, although any such extension would be subject to future decisions. A phased approach is being adopted because of the complex issues involved in setting up and testing new systems.

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## **4. How will the USI work?**

Once the USI initiative is implemented, a student or a training provider (with the student's permission), will be able to log into the USI System, enter some personal details and receive the USI back in real time.

The USI is a randomly generated alphanumeric code which will act as an account or reference to link together each individual's future training records. New and continuing VET students undertaking nationally recognised training onwards will need to have one.

To ensure privacy, the personal information collected at the time the USI is issued will be

stored separately from future education and training records. The USI will provide a data link between the two.

The personal information will be linked to the educational information when a student asks to see his or her own records or when a student authorises someone else to do so (such as a training provider) or as otherwise authorised under the Commonwealth legislation.

A key principle underpinning the initiative is that individuals will have control over their USI and can determine who can have access to their personal and educational records. The protection of an individual's USI – and the personal and educational data that it links to – is of paramount importance. The legislative framework for the initiative includes safeguards in relation to the storage, access and use of student information.

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## **5. Will the new initiative be linked to other student numbers?**

The USI Taskforce is working with jurisdictions to maximise the interoperability of the USI and local identifiers such as the VSN in Victoria, the LUI in Queensland and the Skills for All Student Number in South Australia. The taskforce is aiming to minimise the impact on those individuals who will require two numbers.

However, each of these existing numbers has been designed for a specific purpose. While the USI will overlap some of these purposes and target groups – it is not completely coextensive with any of them. Introducing a new identifier that is national from the outset, VET sector wide in scope and owned by all jurisdictions is more likely to achieve the objectives set by COAG, with less disruption to the existing functions of the existing numbers than attempting to retrofit the existing identifiers.

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## **6. Can training providers use the USI as their organisation's student identifier?**

No. A USI must not be used for any purpose other than those specifically allowed under the legislation.

The legislation does not allow for a USI to be used as an identifier on a student card provided by a training provider.

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## **7. Is there a charge to get a USI?**

No. A USI will be available free-of-charge for all individuals undertaking nationally recognised training whether they apply for the USI themselves or their training provider applies for a USI on their behalf.

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## **8. How long will it take to obtain and verify USIs?**

The application and verification processes in the USI System will take place in real time and results should be received instantaneously, depending on internet speed and the amount of traffic on the site at any particular time. An application for a USI requires an identity verification process which uses an external link to another system. If that system is unavailable, the processing of an application may be delayed. However, in such cases, the application is stored in the USI System, and relevant parties are advised once it is processed.

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## **9. Will training providers still issue a Statement of Attainment or testamur to students at the completion of training?**

Yes. The current requirements on training providers in this respect will remain the same. The authenticated transcript will not replace qualifications issued by training providers.

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## **10. How will the initiative work for enterprise RTOs?**

Further consultations with enterprise RTOs will help to identify any particular issues that these organisations might have so this can be incorporated into the development and implementation of the new initiative.

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## **11. What difference will the new initiative make?**

Presently only three states in Australia use student numbers to track education achievement: Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. Whilst these systems are effective, they differ in scope from the USI in that none of the existing numbers cover all students, who enrol in VET

training.

With the USI, for the first time, every student who undertakes nationally recognised vocational education and training (VET) in Australia (or overseas from an Australian-registered provider) will be able to access his or her enrolment and achievement records from a single online source. Students will be able to get a full transcript of all of the accredited VET training they will have undertaken from when the USI comes into effect or an extract of it if they wish to highlight particular achievements for particular purposes.

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## **Further information**

If you have any questions or need more information, you can [email the USI Taskforce](#).