

To Senate Committee - Student Identifiers Bill 2013

This submission is made on behalf of Bluedog Training to present a training provider's view regarding the use of a Unique Student Identifier (USI).

Bluedog agrees in principle with the concept of training outcomes being recorded to ensure that training dollars can be allocated to appropriate delivery services through the use of a Unique Student Identifier (USI). However, there are a large number of students of short accredited courses who would be seriously disadvantaged by the need to apply for a USI.

All of the examples below are short courses that students require to enter employment. These courses are delivered face to face or online and are all delivered in approximately a half a day or less. While they are all accredited courses they are not necessarily part of a qualification

- Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA)
- Responsible Service of Gambling (RSG)
- General Construction Induction course (White Card)

My concerns on behalf of Blue Dog and our clients are twofold;

Firstly that it will become the responsibility of the RTO to inform potential students/clients that the government requires a USI before a result can be issued.

This will go one of a few ways:

1. The client says “Yeah no worries” and accesses their USI themselves and then provides it so results can be issued.
2. The Client says “What? Expletive!” then the RTO must have a lengthy conversation with the student explaining that it is a government requirement and that the RTO will have to apply on their behalf for the USI but this will require copies of licences etc.
3. The Client says “Forget it”

I would suggest that Response 1 will have limied up; the vast majority of people will adopt Response 2. Not to mention the people who can't be persuaded and become option 3.

For a second view of the process and the information that will need to be provided to the average construction worker about the USI, the following Questions illustrates the potential problem that would follow: How they can apply themselves online? How can they authorise the RTO to get it on their behalf? What documentation will they need to provide? Why do we need to provide this information as we cant se a benefit for us? This will not be a 5 minute conversation. It is important to remember also that the vast majority of these people are doing these short courses because it is a regulatory requirement to gain access to a job, not for professional development. Many have a job waiting that they cannot access without their Statement of Attainment.

To ensure that the implementation of the USI is user friendly, I recommend that there be a 24/7 service offered to assist students to gain their number.

Secondly this process will of course not facilitate itself. For example, our training organisation will require a minimum of 3 additional staff (this is if we speak to every second client and the conversation and accessing of the USI takes only 10minutes). However, more likely six staff will be required to provide information and support to our clients so they don't throw their hands in the air and walk before they begin. This additional expense is too large to be absorbed into the current fee structure and will require an increase to enrolment fees.

My suggestion is **when delivering short courses that are not attached to qualifications or certificates, there should be an exemption for one-off single competencies** particularly if they are funded by the individual. I cannot see how this change will diminish what the USI is trying to achieve?

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.