

**Online Horse College .com**

*Your Pathway to Working in the International Horse Industry,  
from Complete Beginners to Qualified Professionals*



## **Student Workbook**

*SISOEQO305A 2/5*

**Prepare for Trail Rides**



Student Name: .....

USI (Unique Student Identifier) : .....

(For further information, please visit [OnlineHorseCollege.com/usi](http://OnlineHorseCollege.com/usi) )

Email: .....

Phone: .....

Other Personal Information

**Students are to follow all recommended safety considerations at all times.**

**[www.Onlinehorsecollege.com](http://www.Onlinehorsecollege.com)**

(Ausintec Academy P/L ATF Ausintec Academy Trust T/as)  
Ausintec Academy

Mailing Address:-  
392 Bribie Island Road,  
CABOOLTURE QLD 4510  
(between Brisbane & Sunshine Coast)  
AUSTRALIA

Registered Training Organisation No:31352  
Centrelink Approval No: 4P530  
CRICOS Provider Code: Pending

Phone within Australia (07) 3102 5498  
Outside Australia + 61 7 3102 5498  
[Teacher@Onlinehorsecollege.com](mailto:Teacher@Onlinehorsecollege.com)

## Contents

Unit Information	Pg. 4
Prepare for Trail Rides Introduction	Pg. 6
Selecting Horses	Pg. 7 & 8
Selecting Equipment	Pg. 9 – 11
Personal Equipment	Pg. 12 & 13
Food & Water	Pg. 14 & 15
Catching	Pg. 16 & 17
Leading	Pg. 18 & 19
Saddling	Pg. 20
Bridling	Pg. 21
Extension Lesson	Pg. 22
Recommended Reading	Pg. 23
References	Pg. 24

## ***Prepare for Trail Rides Workbook***

Students are to complete all previous online assessments prior to attempting any practical activities in this unit and to follow all recommended safety considerations.

Assessments for SISOEQO305A are as follows:

- 1) Plan Trail Rides
- 2) Prepare for Trail Rides
- 3) Riding on Trails
- 4) Evaluate Trail Rides
- 5) Practical and Q&A Assessment

These assessments incorporate the following unit from the SIS10 Sport, Fitness & Recreation Training Package which include the listed elements

SISOEQO305A Ride horses in tracked areas

- Plan for the riding activity
- Select and prepare horse and equipment
- Demonstrate horse riding skills in a trail ride situation
- Evaluate the ride

*Further information about this assessment is available at [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au)*

## Prepare for Trail Rides Introduction

Appropriate horse and equipment selection is important to maintain the safety and comfort of everyone partaking in the trail riding activity including the horses. The selection of personal and horse gear should be influenced by the terrain that will be encountered on the ride, weather and climate conditions, length or duration of the ride and the level of skill of the riders.

### Activities and Extension Lesson

Through-out this workbook you may find various activities and an extension lesson towards the end of this workbook. Unless specifically requested, you are not required to submit these results to your assessor. The extra activities and extension lesson are included in this workbook to support your learning.

### Completed Assessment Information

Information about your completed assessments in your course is available on your Training Plan. If you do not yet have the link to your online training plan, you may not have submitted your completed Enrolment Form.

Enrolment Forms are available on the link below

Please send your completed enrolment form to [Teacher@OnlineHorseCollege.com](mailto:Teacher@OnlineHorseCollege.com)

## Selecting Horses

An important part of preparing to go out on a trail ride is matching horses and riders. Good matches can assist in the ride running smoothly without incident. Bad matches can result in the loss of control of the group, loss of rider confidence, enforce bad behaviour in the horse and put other riders in the group at risk.

When deciding on horse and rider combinations you need to consider:-

### **The size of the rider and horse**

The severity of injury sustained is greater if a small rider comes off a big horse (i.e. 6 year old on a 16h horse) and because they are smaller they may have trouble in finding the strength to give the necessary aids to a large horse. This is not to say that a small experience rider cannot effectively ride larger horses but for riders with little or no experience in riding they are generally unsuitable and can be frightening. Tall or large riders on smaller horses may have difficulty balancing and giving leg aids (usually because their legs hang past the horses' sides) and may be too heavy for the horse.



### **The rider's level of ability & the horse's level of education/training**

It is important to choose a horse which is in the range of ability and fitness of the rider. Over facing riders with horses which they are not ready for can result in loss of confidence in the rider and behavioural problems in the horse. For example horses which are younger or more forward moving on trail rides will be unsuitable for beginners. Riders with more experience are likely to be bored and frustrated with older plodders whom need continual encouragement to keep walking.



### **The type of trail ride**

Some horses may be better suited to longer rides or rides through different terrain. In an ideal world every horse could do both, but this is not the case.

Some horses will be fitter and more suited to doing rides through steeper terrain or where a faster pace is maintained due to be younger, fitter or having better conformation or soundness (i.e., hoof conformation, previous injuries etc.).

Other horses will be better suited to shorter, slower rides through easy terrain for example old or aged horses or horses returning to work may find these rides easier.



## Selecting Horses (cont.)

### Personality, attitudes and behaviour

Certain horses and riders just don't click. For example highly strung, nervous type horses don't respond well to highly strung, nervous type people.

Cheeky, challenging or lazy horses may be suited to riders with a calm and assertive disposition.

Occasionally an over-confident, cocky or even obnoxious rider will come along wanting to ride the fastest or most challenging horse available despite being barely able to manage a trot. It can be preferable to put these (overly confident) inexperienced riders on older, docile horses to help manage the safety of that rider and the trail riding group.





## Selecting Equipment

The equipment used for a trail ride will depend largely on the type of terrain being covered, how long the ride will go for and the anticipated weather conditions. When preparing yourself for a ride you will know your own preferences to what saddle you and your horse find the most comfortable to ride in. But when preparing horses for other riders you will need to take a few things into consideration.

Firstly the comfort of the horse is most important. Different types of saddles suit different types and shapes of horses. For example a western saddle may be better suited to a horse with a broader, rounder back than one with a narrower back and high wither.

Next, who will be riding the horse? Inexperienced riders can be better suited to saddles which will help 'hold them in' such as Australian stock saddles. Heavier riders may be better suited to ride in saddles which will evenly distribute weight across the horses back such as western saddles. English saddles are lighter and may be suited to riders with better balance. The size of the saddle is important for rider comfort; saddles which are too big will allow a rider too much movement in the saddle but saddles which are too small will cause discomfort and rubbing, particularly for men. The saddlecloths and padding should be selected to reduce rubbing of the saddle on the horse and to provide some protection to the horse from unbalanced riders.

Whatever saddle is chosen it is useful if you are able to attach a saddle bag to it for small items such as a water bottle. For short rides of an hour or two carrying water may not be high on the priority list but for longer rides it will be a necessity.

In large trail riding centres bridles are usually simple, with minimal buckles for quick and easy putting on and removing. Bits are also simple and soft because horses are ridden by many riders, most unskilled. A stockmans or barcoo bridle with a snaffle bit can be suitable for large trail ride centres. Bridles and bits should be chosen for each horse as an individual with mind to the skills and abilities of the person who will be riding.



The type of saddle used will influence the type of saddlecloth chosen. Saddle pads (image 1) are desirable for western or stock saddles as they are large enough to fit under the saddle, they also offer some padding for the horse under unbalanced riders. Saddle blankets (image 2) are also suited to western and stock saddles and are handy for large trail riding establishments as they can be turned inside out and the dry side used again in times of blanket shortages. They are woven out of a natural fibre which is good for the horse's back. Saddle cloths (image 3) and numnahs (image 4) are better suited to English type saddles which are smaller and more compact in size. Numnahs tend to require more cleaning due to the underside of fluffy sheepskin or cotton. See the following page for images of the discussed saddlecloths.

## Selecting Equipment (cont.)



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

At times you will need additional equipment other than a saddle and bridle. This extra equipment can be used to improve how other equipment, such as, saddles and bridles function or perform.

Martingales restrict the upwards movement of the horses head. The horse will still be able to move its head up and down but won't be able to lift it so high that it can avoid the rein action on the bit.

### Standing Martingale



One end attaches to the girth and the other to the noseband, a strap around the horses neck helps keep it close to the horse so if the horse brings its head down it can't stand on it. When fitted correctly you should fit one hand between the neck strap and the strap to the nose band should reach the horses' gullet before being attached.

### Running Martingale



Like the standing martingale one end attaches to the girth between the horses front legs, the other end splits into 2 pieces of leather with a ring on each end. The reins pass thru these rings, so that when the horse lifts its head up too high, the rings put downward pressure on the reins. This also has an attachment around the neck which you should be able to fit one hand between and the rings should reach halfway up the horse's neck.

Breastplates attach to the saddle around the shoulders and neck of the horse and helps prevent the saddle sliding backwards. Often used when riding on undulating country, jumping or on racehorses. They can be made out of leather, elastic or pvc. When adjusting breastplates to a horse you should be able to fit approx. one hand between the chest and strap and between the neck/wither strap.

## Selecting Equipment (cont.)



### **Stockmans/Hunting breastplate**

Attaches to 'D' rings on either side of the saddle, comes around the neck and between the front legs attaching to the girth.



### **Stockmans/Hunting breastplate**

Attaches to 'D' rings on either side of the saddle, comes around the neck and between the front legs attaching to the girth.



### **Jumping breastplate**

A strap that attaches to either side of the pommel of the saddle under the neck.

Cruppers help to prevent the saddle sliding too far forward. A Crupper involves a strap that attaches to the back of the saddle which then loops around the dock (top of the tail).



All equipment used should be in good working order, be clean and in good repair (e.g., no broken buckles, torn or broken stitching, or dangerously worn leather). Once a horse is saddled a gear check should be performed to check for any twisted or looped straps, straps adjusted to the wrong buckle and the fit of the saddle cloth under the saddle (there should be no creases or folds).

## Personal Equipment

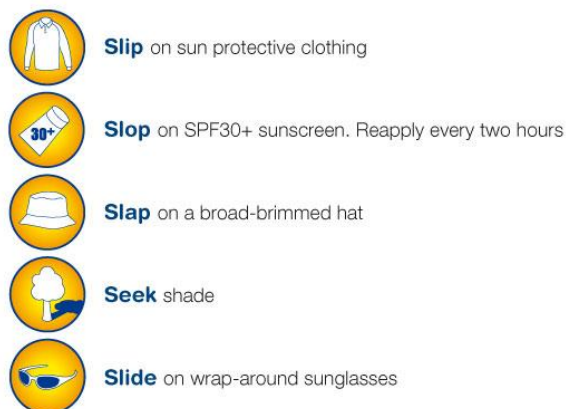
The selection of personal equipment should take into consideration the anticipated weather conditions. A long ride will seem even longer if you have to ride wet or cold. The attire you ride in won't be that different for trail riding as it is for arena riding. The basic essentials will be the same; helmet, boots, long pants and a shirt with sleeves.

Your clothing for trail riding needs to reflect safety & practicality rather than fashion and when representing a business it should also reflect professionalism. Long pants such as jeans or jodhpurs protect your legs from the elements, stirrup leathers and vegetation. If you intend to be riding through dense vegetation you may find jeans offer more protection for your legs and will withstand damage from branches.

A shirt with sleeves will protect from sunburn. Long sleeves are better protection from weather and vegetation but in some climates they will be too hot. Avoid clothing that may flap around and frighten the horse being ridden or other horses in the group.

In wet weather an oilskin coat or rain jacket can help to keep rain off but you should check whether the horse being ridden is accustomed to a rider wearing one whilst mounted and the sound rain makes on the coat. Sunscreen is important even on cloudy days.

Sunburn can occur in less than 15 minutes and in severe cases can take weeks to heal. Not only does UV damage cause premature aging, it increases the risk of developing skin cancer every time you are exposed to it. Remember to slip, slop, slap: -



Riding boots are best and some large trail riding establishments may provide these for customers but if not clogs may need to be added to the stirrups to make the riding attire safe. Top boot or long boots may be less desirable on trail rides, especially leather top boots as coming into contact with trees and shrubs can damage the leather. Top/long boots will also get hotter than short jodhpur boots and are less comfortable to walk around in when unmounted.

## Personal Equipment (cont.)

As with any riding the helmet used should be to the current safety standard in your location. In Australia helmets should conform to Australian standard AS/NZS 3838. It is also recommend that helmets over 5 years old not be used as they start to deteriorate. A correctly fitted helmet should fit tight enough around the skull not to move but not so tight that it causes discomfort. To check the fit of a helmet the wearer should shake their head side to side and forward to back; a helmet that wobbles around is too big.



If the planned trail ride will take a few hours you may need to pack water and food for yourself. If there will be no natural water sources available for the horse then you will also need to carry water for your mount as well. Your water and food can be packed and carried in saddle bags but there are some alternatives if a large quantity of water needs to be carried. Neck water bags (carried around the neck of the horse) made of canvas are designed to carry a full day's water. Army style water bottles are also suitable and a canvas nose bag can be easily carried to provide water to the horse. Any food packaging should be carried out with you.





## Food & Water

Trail rides of an hour or two in duration should be able to be completed without the need to stop for food or water, though this may be more difficult in extremely hot climates. Rides of up to a day in duration will require stopping at least once to eat and drink.

For people, the recommended daily water intake for an adult is approximately 2.1 to 2.6 litres a day and for children (between 4yrs to 18yrs) is approximately 1.2 to 1.9 litres a day. Fluid intake increases when people are physically active so it is important to keep this in mind when determining how much water to take on a ride.

Inadequate water intake lowers physical and mental performance and leads to dehydration. In remote settings if dehydration is not corrected by fluid intake it can become life threatening as the kidneys fail because urination has stopped and the body cannot remove toxic waste products. Symptoms of dehydration include: -

- Thirst
- Headaches
- Lethargy
- Mood changes
- Slow responses
- Dry nasal passages
- Dry and/or cracked lips
- Dark coloured urine
- Weakness tiredness
- Confusion
- hallucinations



Whilst it is important to remain hydrated, drinking too much water can damage the body. When large amounts of water are consumed in short periods of time hyponatraemia can occur where the kidneys can't excrete enough fluid and the sodium in the blood drops to low levels. Fortunately hyponatraemia is extremely rare and requires consumption of many, many litres of water in a short timeframe.

### Water requirements for horses

The average 500kg horse will require approximately 25 – 30 litres of water a day. This amount will increase in hot climates or weather and for horses in work and the water requirements of horses vary with age, weight, air temperature, humidity, health, and diet.

During trail riding if horses will be watered using natural watercourses ensure that it is free from contaminants and use established access points to avoid the environmental impacts of horses disturbing vegetation, soil and pollution of the source of water. See page 13 for information about carrying water for the horse.



## Food & Water (cont.)

Signs of dehydration in horses includes: -

- Elevated heart rate
- Changes in gum colour (excessively red)
- Decreased skin elasticity
- Sunken eyes
- Tucked up appearance to the abdomen
- Frequent shallow breaths
- Lack of perspiration
- No gut sounds
- No manure
- Muscle twitching
- Tying up

If a horse shows signs of dehydration all tack should be removed and the horse should be cooled using cold water. The water should be scraped off the horse's body then the horse hosed or sponged again. Scraping off excess water prevents it from insulating and heating the horse. Contact your vet.

### Food Requirements

Again, depending on the type of trail ride being ridden, the riding group may stop one, two or even three times on a day long trail ride to rest and eat. Food taken on trail rides should be easy to carry and won't spoil on route in the weather or temperatures. It will also be more practical to take food that requires little preparation or few preparation utensils to save lugging around heavy, excessive equipment. Any food scraps or rubbish should be taken with you when you leave.

For day ride treks where you ride out in the morning and return in the afternoon it should not be necessary to take feed for the horse with you, provided the horse receives a feed before and after the ride. You may come across areas where it is suitable to allow the horse to graze for short periods however do not allow the horse to graze on vegetation such as trees and shrubs.

## Catching

Before handling a horse its best to find out some basic information about it, for example, age, basic description for identifying, does it have any vices.

Once the appropriate information is sort, organise the gear you will need to catch the horse. Ensure the halter and lead rope is in good working order and will fit the horse to be caught.

Approach the horse from the side, preferably the left or near side, walking towards the neck and shoulder region as this is the safest place as the horse can see you and the most appropriate place being that you're going to put a halter on.

Patting the horse on the shoulder slide your hand up to its neck and slide the lead rope around the neck. Do not flick or toss the rope over the neck in case the horse gets a fright.

To put a halter on firstly identify the headpiece and nose band of the halter. If you are unfamiliar with halters you will probably find them to be a little confusing at first. When a halter is off the horse the easiest way to find the headpiece is to look for the longest strap, the noseband will form an 'o' as it should be done up from the last time it was used. This is because the noseband doesn't need to be unbuckled or undone to remove a halter from a horse.

Pass the head piece over the horse's neck so that it comes over from the off side of the horse to the near side. (Shown in blue in the image.) Don't buckle it up yet but hold onto it with your right hand.



Using your left hand pass the noseband over the horse's nose while your right hand holds onto the headpiece that is over the horse's poll or neck.

By putting on the halter in this manner you can control the horse's head with the headpiece until you get the noseband on.



Right hand holds the headpiece

Left hand puts the noseband on the nose



## Catching (cont.)

Once the noseband is in position on the horse's head you can then buckle up the headpiece so that the halter is secured on the horse's head.



When fitted a halter should not be tight. The headpiece should sit over the horse's poll behind the ears. If it is adjusted too tight/short it will pull the noseband too far up the nose and the throatlatch too tight under the jaw. If the headpiece is too loose the noseband will be sliding off the nose.

You should be able to fit 3 to 4 fingers between the throatlatch and under the jaw if it is the correct size and fitted correctly. This will allow the horse to move the jaw.

The noseband needs to be secure enough that it cannot get caught or come off the nose but still allow jaw movement. Usually 2 to 3 fingers between the noseband and the horse is enough.

The cheek pieces should lie flat against the horse's head, just under or parallel to the cheek bones.

If you are catching a horse in a herd situation where there are other horses in the paddock or yard you need to be aware and alert to the other horses. Having some knowledge of the pecking order before entering can help to avoid hazardous situations.

Never use feed to catch a horse which is kept with other horses. More often than not you will attract all the horses which will result in an unsafe situation as they will fight and push each other out of the way to get to the feed.

## Leading a Horse

When leading or handling a horse is important to do so in a safe manner, not only for your safety but the horse's as well.

When leading a horse you should be on the near side (which is the left when you're facing the same direction as the horse). Your right hand holds onto the lead rope under the horse's jaw and the left hand hold the rest of the rope, in a tidy fashion, up off the ground. Never wrap the lead rope around your hand.



Avoid dragging the horse along behind you on a long lead. You will have very little control over the direction of the horse. If it gets a fright or excited it may try to run back in the direction it came from or it may run past you with the possibility that it kicks out or knocks you down as it goes past. A shorter lead, with the horse by your side gives you greater control and influence over where the horse is going.

When leading through gateways make sure the gate is open wide enough for the horse to pass through easily. Horses can become entangled and do themselves injury (even break bones) from getting caught up in gates which weren't open wide enough. By leading the horse through the middle of an open gateway you will reduce this risk further.

When you need to turn your horse while leading it is best to turn the horse away from you. This means that you will turn the horse to the right (because you will lead from the near/left side) by doing this the horse's hooves step away from your feet, reducing the risk of you being stood on.

## Leading a Horse (cont.)

Should a horse rear whilst it is being lead ensure you stay clear of the front legs and maintain enough pressure to maintain control when the horse returns to the ground. Pulling forcefully on the lead rope may cause more problems if the horse tries to fight against the pressure or takes fright from it.

When leading towards another person leading a horse you should pass person to person rather than horse to horse. In doing so both people will be able to see both horses as they pass and should trouble arise each person can turn the horse so that the hindquarters swing away from the other person.

Avoid carrying objects whilst leading a horse; it reduces the control the handler will have. Never lead two horses at the same time, a handler will have limited control and is in a bad position if the horses start to fight.

## Saddling a Horse

After grooming your horse, the next step is putting on the saddle.



The saddle cloth/blanket goes on first. Once in place there should be an even amount on both sides of the horse. Some saddle cloths will have keepers to pass the girth thru to help keep it in place under the saddle. It should sit over the horse's wither/rib cage.



You can then place the saddle over the saddle cloth, once you have it on the horse you can slide it backwards slightly to smooth the hair (so there is no irritation) flat under the saddle. From here you can go around the other side of the horse (making sure to either walk in a wide circle around the hind legs or stay close, keeping a hand on the horse so it knows where you are when you pass thru its blind spot) and let the girth down.



Coming back around to the near side (left side) of the horse, reach under the horse's belly- keep watching your horse as you do this as some horses will not like it- bring the girth up and fasten to the girth points under the saddle flap. At this stage the girth should be firm enough so that the saddle won't shift. If you had additional equipment such as a breastplate or martingale you would fit it prior to doing up the girth. If you are using a stock saddle you may have a lace (long length of webbing) that holds the girth on the saddle in place.



The saddle should be positioned so that it is sitting over the rib cage of the horse. If it is too far forward the pommel of the saddle will be much higher than the cantle and this will position you on the back of the saddle rather than the middle, it will also cause your horse discomfort and restrict shoulder movement.

If it is too far back your weight will be carried on the horse's loins, you may also find the saddle is insecure.

Once saddled check the gear on the horse for:-

- For any twisted or looped straps
- Straps adjusted to the wrong buckle
- If the saddle cloth has shifted.
- If the saddle has shifted. Sometimes if the girth isn't adjusted firmly when the saddle is first put on it will slide back.

## Bridling a Horse

Bridling is done after saddling and can be quite tricky for novice riders or handlers.



- 1) Organise the bridle so it's ready to go. Hold the reins separately from the rest of the bridle, either over your shoulder or over the horses' neck. Never let the reins hang down on the ground, as if the horse steps on them it is likely to get a fright and not only break the bridle but also do injury to itself.
- 2) Start by moving the halter so that it is fastened only around the horses' neck.
- 3) You should always put your bridle on from the near side as this is the side all the buckles do up on.
- 4) Take your right arm around the horses' nose and hold the head piece (top) of the bridle. Alternatively you may find it easier, especially with tall horses, to keep your right arm on the near side of the horses' head to hold the top of the bridle.
- 5) With your left hand guide the bit (metal piece) into the horses' mouth as the horse opens its mouth take your right hand up so the horse doesn't drop the bit out again.
- 6) Now you can push the horses' ears under the head piece and tidy any mane or forelock that may be caught up.
- 7) Depending on the type of bridle being used will determine how many buckles you have to adjust.

**Throat latch** - Once done up you should fit approximately 4 fingers between the jaw and the strap.

**Nose band** - Depending on the horse and the style of noseband used you should fit approx. 2 fingers between the nose and the strap.

**Brow bands** - Whilst brow bands cannot be adjusted by a buckle, if it is the correct size for the horse you should fit 2 fingers between the brow and the strap.

Once on the horse check the bridle for:-

- For any twisted or looped straps
- Straps adjusted to the wrong buckle

## Extension Lesson

***This activity is for you to complete to confirm your learning in this subject area.***

***Unless specifically requested, you are NOT required to submit this completed activity to your assessor.***

Perform a gear check and make notes of any wear, damage or errors in the table below.

Item	Comments

Go around your establishment/area and record what types of saddles and saddle cloths different riders' use.

Horse Name/Description	Type of Saddle Used	Type of Saddle Cloth Used

## Recommended Reading

### Websites:-

Horse riding in National Parks: - [www.bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/So-you-want-to-go-trail-riding.pdf](http://www.bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/So-you-want-to-go-trail-riding.pdf)

Horse hydration: - [www.thehorse.com/articles/33926/horse-hydration-faqs](http://www.thehorse.com/articles/33926/horse-hydration-faqs)

Preparing for Trails: - [www.thelongridersguild.com/preparation.htm](http://www.thelongridersguild.com/preparation.htm)

Sunburn: - [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/sunburn](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/sunburn)

## References

Publication:-

SISSEQS303A Saddling

Authors:-

Online Horse College

Websites: -

[www.bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au](http://www.bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au)

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

[www.australiananimalwelfare.com.au](http://www.australiananimalwelfare.com.au)

**www.OnlineHorseCollege.com**

(Ausintec Academy P/L ATF Ausintec Academy Trust T/as)  
Ausintec Academy

Mailing Address:-  
392 Bribie Island Road,  
CABOOLTURE QLD 4510  
(between Brisbane & Sunshine Coast)  
AUSTRALIA

Registered Training Organisation No: 31352  
Centrelink Approval No: 4P530  
CRICOS Provider Code: Pending

Phone within Australia (07) 3102 5498  
Outside Australia + 61 7 3102 5498