

	Document Name	Environmental Policy
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	Comment	It is the responsibility of the recipient to identify/control superseded documents

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

GEM College recognises its responsibility to conduct its operations in an environmentally responsible manner. This policy establishes GEM College's commitments to preventing environmental harm, using resources responsibly and incorporating relevant environmental practices into its operations, training and assessment.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All GEM College campuses, workplaces and operational activities;
- Employees, contractors and governing persons;
- Training and assessment delivered by or on behalf of GEM College;
- Third parties providing services on behalf of GEM College;
- Work placements, excursions and other community-based learning arranged by GEM College; and
- Students and visitors while participating in GEM College activities.

The policy applies to environmental matters that GEM College controls and to matters it can reasonably influence through its decisions, contracts, purchasing, training and business relationships.

Legislative and regulatory framework

GEM College will comply with applicable Commonwealth, state, territory and local environmental requirements, including requirements relating to pollution, waste disposal, hazardous materials and the protection of the natural environment.

This policy also supports:

- Standards 1.1 and 1.2 of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025, where environmental requirements or current environmentally responsible practices are relevant to a training product or industry;
- Standard 4.3, where environmental matters present risks to students, staff or GEM College; and
- Standard 4.4, concerning monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.

Detailed environmental controls and instructions may be contained in relevant risk-management, work health and safety, procurement, facilities, incident-management and training and assessment documents.

DISCUSSION

GEM College incorporates environmental considerations into its planning and day-to-day activities. Its approach is proportionate to the nature, scale and environmental impact of its operations and the services it provides.

1. Environmental commitments

GEM College will:

- Comply with applicable environmental requirements;
- Identify and manage environmental risks arising from its activities;
- Prevent pollution and avoid unnecessary environmental harm;
- Use energy, water, materials and other resources responsibly;
- Avoid or reduce waste where reasonably practicable;
- Reuse and recycle materials where suitable arrangements are available;
- Dispose of waste safely and lawfully;
- Consider environmental impacts when purchasing goods and services;
- Promote environmentally responsible practices among staff and students; and
- Monitor its practices and implement reasonable improvements.

Environmental considerations must be balanced with student safety, training-product requirements, accessibility, educational quality and other legal and operational obligations.

2. Compliance and environmental risk

Environmental risks must be considered as part of GEM College's risk-management arrangements. Environmental risks may arise from:

- The use of energy, water and consumable materials;
- Waste generation, storage and disposal;
- Hazardous substances or dangerous goods;
- Damage, leaks, spills or equipment failure;
- Training activities involving materials, equipment or environmental hazards;
- Work placements, excursions and community-based learning;
- Purchasing and contractor activities;
- Changes to premises, facilities or methods of delivery; and
- Emergency events or disruptions affecting the environment.

Material environmental risks must be assessed, controlled, recorded, monitored and escalated in accordance with GEM College's Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Process. No person may knowingly disregard an environmental requirement or approved control for reasons of cost, convenience or operational expediency.

3. Training and assessment

Where environmental requirements, sustainable work practices or environmental risks form part of a training product, licensing requirement or current industry practice, they must be appropriately addressed in GEM College's training and assessment.

Training and assessment strategies, learning resources, assessment tools and delivery practices must accurately reflect applicable training-product requirements and relevant current industry practices.

Environmental content must not be added merely as a general principle where it is unrelated to the training product. However, all training and assessment activities must be conducted in a manner that appropriately manages foreseeable environmental and safety risks.

GEM College will encourage students to understand and apply environmentally responsible practices relevant to their intended workplaces and industries.

4. Energy water and resource use

GEM College will take reasonable steps to reduce unnecessary consumption of energy, water, paper and other materials.

Responsible resource practices may include:

- Switching off lights, equipment and appliances when they are not required;
- Selecting energy-efficient equipment where reasonably practicable;
- Maintaining equipment and facilities to support efficient operation;
- Avoiding unnecessary printing and using electronic records where appropriate;
- Using water responsibly;
- Reusing suitable materials; and
- Planning purchasing and stock levels to avoid unnecessary consumption or disposal.

Resource-saving measures must not compromise safety, accessibility, privacy, recordkeeping obligations or the quality of training and assessment.

5. Waste avoidance and disposal

GEM College will apply the following order of preference when managing waste:

- Avoid generating unnecessary waste;
- Reduce the quantity of materials used;
- Reuse materials where safe and appropriate;
- Recycle through available and suitable recycling arrangements; and
- Dispose of remaining waste safely and lawfully.

Hazardous, regulated, electronic or confidential waste must not be placed in general waste or recycling where specialised handling or secure destruction is required.

Persons handling or disposing of waste must follow applicable site instructions, safety requirements and legal obligations.

6. Sustainable procurement and third parties

Environmental considerations should be included in purchasing and contracting decisions where they are relevant and proportionate.

When selecting goods or services, GEM College may consider:

- Durability and expected operating life;
- Energy and water efficiency;
- Packaging and waste;
- Reusability, repairability and recyclability;
- The availability of environmentally preferable alternatives;
- Safe disposal requirements;
- Whole-of-life cost; and
- The supplier's ability to meet applicable environmental requirements.

Environmental claims made by suppliers must not be accepted without reasonable supporting information where those claims materially affect a purchasing decision.

Contractors and third parties must comply with applicable environmental laws, GEM College site requirements and environmental controls relevant to the services they provide.

GEM College remains responsible for monitoring risks arising from services delivered on its behalf.

7. Environmental incidents

Environmental incidents, hazards and control failures must be reported promptly through GEM College's applicable incident or risk-reporting arrangements.

Reportable matters may include:

- Spills, leaks or uncontrolled releases;
- Incorrect disposal of hazardous, regulated or confidential waste;
- Pollution or environmental damage;
- Unsafe storage of chemicals or other materials;
- Failure of an environmental control;
- Suspected non-compliance with an environmental requirement; or
- Conduct that creates a material environmental risk.

Immediate action may be taken to protect people, property and the environment, provided the person taking action can do so safely and within their authority.

GEM College will assess reported incidents, implement necessary corrective action and notify an external authority where required by law.

8. Responsibilities

Governing persons are responsible for overseeing material environmental risks where those risks may significantly affect GEM College, its students, staff or operations.

Managers are responsible for:

- Identifying environmental requirements and risks within their areas;
- Implementing and monitoring appropriate controls;
- Ensuring staff receive relevant information or instruction;
- Escalating material risks and incidents;
- Addressing identified non-compliance; and
- Monitoring approved corrective actions.

Employees and contractors are responsible for:

- Following applicable environmental controls and instructions;
- Using resources responsibly;
- Managing waste appropriately;
- Reporting incidents, hazards and control failures; and
- Participating in relevant training or corrective action.

Students and visitors are expected to comply with reasonable environmental instructions while participating in GEM College activities.

A person must not undertake an environmental task for which they are not appropriately authorised, equipped or competent.

9. Monitoring and continuous improvement

GEM College will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through information that may include:

- Environmental incidents and hazards;
- Risk assessments and risk-register information;
- Resource consumption and waste information, where reasonably available;
- Audit and inspection findings;
- Staff and student feedback;
- Contractor performance;
- Changes to legal, regulatory, training-product or industry requirements; and
- The completion and effectiveness of corrective actions.

Monitoring must be proportionate to the nature and environmental impact of GEM College's operations. This policy does not require the collection of data that provides no reasonable operational or environmental benefit.

Where monitoring identifies an avoidable environmental impact, systemic issue, non-compliance or ineffective control, GEM College will determine and implement appropriate corrective or improvement action.

SUMMARY

GEM College is committed to conducting its operations in an environmentally responsible manner. Environmental considerations form part of its risk management, operational decision-making, training practices and continuous-improvement arrangements.

In particular:

- GEM College will comply with applicable environmental requirements;
- Environmental risks must be identified, managed and reviewed;
- Training and assessment must reflect relevant training-product and current industry environmental requirements;
- Energy, water and materials must be used responsibly;
- Waste should be avoided, reduced, reused or recycled before disposal;
- Hazardous, regulated and confidential waste must be appropriately managed;
- Relevant environmental considerations should inform purchasing and third-party arrangements;
- Environmental incidents and control failures must be reported and addressed;
- Staff, contractors, students and managers have responsibilities under this policy; and
- Environmental information must inform proportionate corrective action and continuous improvement.



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