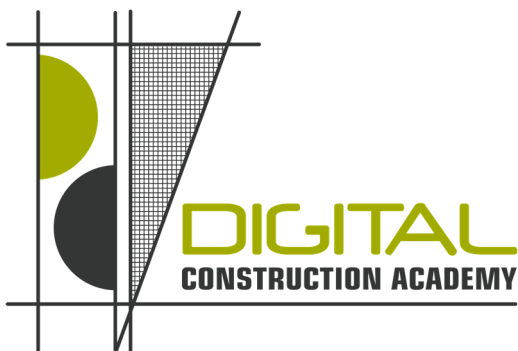


STUDENT HANDBOOK 2019



BUILDING DESIGN



MQ - AQTF - BD
Issue 7: November 2019

"fostering excellence in the discovery, interpretation and diffusion of knowledge"

WHO ARE DIGITAL CONSTRUCTION ACADEMY

Digital Construction Academy [DCA] is an established Registered Training Organisation [RTO] with over 10 years' experience in the delivery of fully ONLINE academic qualification for professionals in the building design sector of industry, and those who aspire to this industry.



We specialises primarily in **Building Design** education and also offer a range of associated short and long courses in related areas, both accredited and non-accredited.

Our online portfolio of courses are designed to meet the needs of the self-directed learner, and provide for flexible opportunities to meet the demands of learning, teaching and assessment. DCA will provide extensive opportunities for both directed and self-discovery, and specifically address the professional training needs and skills required of Building Designers and Technicians in the 21st century.

Throughout your experience with us, you will develop knowledge and skills to prepare you for an industry role, and be supported by experienced professionals.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Digital Construction Academy [DCA]

Postal Address: PO Box 3769, Loganholme, QLD 4129

Telephone: 07 3806 0857

Website: www.digitalconstructionacademy.edu.au

Emails: admin@digitalconstructionacademy.edu.au
training@digitalconstructionacademy.edu.au
finance@digitalconstructionacademy.edu.au

General Enrolment Conditions

It is a requirement of any candidate seeking enrolment with DCA to read this Student Handbook document.

Candidates are required to sign and date the Handbook.

The Enrolment Agreement form is to be returned to DCA along with your enrolment.

RTO Registration Number

31840

ABN:

28 125 540 981

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WELCOME MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Welcome to Digital Construction Academy

Thank you for enrolling with Digital Construction Academy [DCA]. We hope you will find the time we share challenging, rewarding and fun.

This handbook is intended to provide you with some basic information about the structure of your course, and how it is organised and delivered in an online environment.

The Diploma of Building Design is a level 5 AQF (Australian Qualifications Framework) nationally approved course and approved for delivery by DCA. The course aims to provide a learning experience whereby students of all abilities can follow a structured programme, suiting both vocational and academic requirements.

Through a structured programme of Units, students will be prepared for advancement to higher levels of qualification, or for entry and/or progression in industry. Our aim is to equip you with the knowledge, skills and confidence you need to enter/progress in the workforce, or to undertake further studies.

We hope that this course will expose you to a variety of experiences and challenges. The course will provide a mix of theory and practical training. We will also offer you an opportunity to build your confidence and motivation with a view to preparing you for a competitive market.

Upon enrolling, you have rights and responsibilities, most of which are outlined in this handbook. You are naturally welcome to ask us for further information if you have questions that are not covered.

Successful completion of your studies is greatly facilitated by the harmonious development of relationships during your time with us. All of the DCA team are committed to this aim. The quality of your experience with Digital Construction Academy depends largely on your motivation and commitment. We feel that we have in place an ideal learning environment. Meet the challenge, and we will do our very best to ensure that the benefit to you exceeds your expectations.



Todd Dunlop BA BSc [Hons]

Director of Curriculum

Digital Construction Academy

COURSE INFORMATION

Entry Requirements

There are no formal entry requirements or prerequisites for entry into the **CPP50911 Diploma of Building Design** qualification. However, whilst not mandatory, it is generally expected that candidates seeking to follow this route would present with the Language, Literacy and Numeracy [LLN] skills which are equivalent to Year 12 English and Mathematics, their equivalent, or higher.

As candidates are entering into an online environment for learning and study, candidates are also expected to possess some confidence in the use of computers, basic software operations, and have knowledge and experience in internet browsers used for research and academic investigations.



Course Tuition Fees

Full **standard** costs of the qualification include:

Payment Schedule

Invoicing is produced in sequence as 10 [ten] payments.

An enrolment administration fee: \$375.00

Invoice 1 \$375.00 Initial Enrolment Administration Fee [Non-Refundable]

Standard Tuition Fees [covers all delivered units]: \$12420.00

Invoice 2 \$1450.00 Payable to commence course.

Total Fees: \$12795.00

Invoices 3-9 \$1450.00 Seven [7] further payments, made bi-monthly, commencing 60 days after Invoice 1, *or earlier, upon commencement of new units.*

Invoice 9 \$820.00 Final payment.

Above costs indicate the 'standard' academic route through qualification - slight adjustments to these figures may be used where elective unit choices differ, but is usually a simple up/down adjustment to the final payment.

Tuition fees includes all learning and assessment material, and are GST free. All costings and fees indicated are given in Australian Dollars [\$AUD]

Additional Guidance Information

This qualification provides the ideal solution for those who have always aspired to work as a qualified and recognised Designer in the architectural environment.

The CPP50911 Diploma of Building Design is a nationally accredited training course that provides the skills required to design what the qualification describes as '*small-scale*' buildings - this typically indicates most types of residential, domestic architecture up to 3 or 4 floors in height, and also includes a range of commercial building design configuration with some limitations. You may also work on a wider variety of projects in industry which might include more significant, more complex and sophisticated buildings, including high rise commercial projects, but always under the supervision of a registered architect, engineers and other consultants. Many Building Design graduates might end up as an employee of a larger design company specialising in such.

The role of the Building Designer includes identifying project parameters, developing client briefs and concepts for residential and commercial project, utilising options routinely to incorporate sustainable design parameters, and significant involvement in the documentation processes and liaison with project stakeholders.

Building design graduates will be expected to understand how to utilise building information modelling software (BIM - 3D CAD) that is current industry standard, how to produce drawings and documentation required by clients for the planning and building approval process. There is a specialised unit which is available as an elective which looks closely at 'full blown' BIM processes, generally best exploited by those involved in more substantial design projects.

As a building designer, you will be required to carry out research and apply relevant information to drawings and reports from other professionals, including compliance requirements relevant to the specific projects.

You will also be required to provide administrative support for design projects, including data collection and storage, and file management.

Who Can I Potentially Work For?

- Many students will use the qualification to exploit the academic fulfilment for academic recognition towards official certified licensing as a Building Designer, and may pursue such routes as a self-employed, freelance designer.
- Other options might include employment for:
 - Architects
 - Interior designers
 - Property Developers
 - Contractors / Builders
 - Public Service agencies [Council, etc]

Licensing and legislation

Licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to building design in some states. Relevant state and territory regulatory authorities should be consulted to confirm these requirements.

This qualification provides fundamental skills that offers the student many opportunities on its own. However, for those wishing to further their studies they can use this course as a pathway into architecture, construction management, town planning, or interior design.

Hardware / Software Requirements

Our courses are delivered in an online environment, so candidates are expected to have access to a computer, with access to the Internet.

Developed material for projects and all assessment work are generated using a combination of CAD [Computer Aided Design] software and a variety of office applications, such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint, or equivalents.



Candidates will need access to:

- **A personal computer:**
 - Windows operating system
 - Mac operating system *[most CAD software requires Windows, but a Mac can run Windows using a 'Parallels' process to run Windows programmes if necessary]*
- Two-button with scroll wheel mouse device *[required for CAD operations]*
- Multi-core *[minimum 4 cores]* 64-bit processor
- Minimum 8Gb RAM *[16Gb recommendation]*
- Minimum 16Gb hard drive space *[most modern PCs are in the 100s]*
 - *An additional, external hard drive storage device would also be useful, but not mandatory*
- Display resolution *[monitor output]* minimum 1440 x 900 *[1920 x 1080 recommended]*
- Graphics Card - OpenGL2.0, GeForce 840 Series, or equivalent
- Integrated Audio Input / Output for webinar review participation
 - System microphone and peripheral speaker systems
 - USB Headset with mic *[recommended]*
- Internet connection, recommended browsers Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome
- Adobe Acrobat Reader *[free download online, but usually incorporated to PCs by default]*
- Adobe Flash Player *[visit Adobe website to obtain latest version]*
- Microsoft Office suite *[MS Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Outlook], or equivalent*
- Personal email account



PRIOR TO STUDY COMMENCEMENT

Our Commitment to You

Digital Construction Academy is dedicated to providing learning and assessment services to meet the needs of prospective candidates, employers and the industry sector. Lecturing staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and consistently endeavour to provide resources and opportunities, which are impartial, objective and adaptable. Our goals are, as reflected in our mission statement to ‘**foster excellence in the discovery, interpretation and diffusion of knowledge**’.

Student Support

Digital Construction Academy is committed to providing the highest set of standards for all candidates. Communication with DCA is never further away than the end of your fingertips. Most routine communication will normally be conducted by email correspondence, or by telephoning during normal office hours [9am – 6pm].

We strive to respond to live students as quickly as possible, and are normally able to do so by return of email within the same working day. Please do bear in mind however, staff will usually have other students and groups to manage also.

Feedback on most submitted assessments will routinely be provided within five [5] working days, and, subject to normal working operations, earlier where possible.

Statements of Attainment for units completed will routinely be issued following the completion and closure of those units.

Should you require any additional, extended support in language, literacy, numeracy, counselling, career advice or other area, we will endeavour to identify and provide the appropriate support required. It should be noted that such support services may attract additional fees, such fees being the responsibility of the candidate.

Where additional support is required, DCA will work with you to develop appropriate support measures to facilitate the required support.

Unique Student Identifier

It is a national requirement that all students must supply a **Unique Student Identifier**. This should typically be provided at the time of enrolment, and we will be unable to complete enrolments and inductions without this. The USI provides for linking internal records to the national government database, which provides you with easy access to that database wherever [and whenever] you are.

If you already have a USI number, please pass this to us at enrolment for inclusion in your records. If you do not yet have a USI value, please follow the instructions below:

Go to <https://www.usi.gov.au/students/create-usi>

Provide appropriate ID as requested [driving license / medicare card / passport / birth certificate / other as described]

*Note: Details entered **must match exactly** the documentation provided*

Complete the creation of your USI as requested and ensure you keep a record of the USI. Forward the USI value to us for incorporation to your enrolment records. .

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

International Students

International students will meet the same payment requirements as domestic students. We do require that all international students provide a USI. DCA will be unable to issue qualifications to students who do not provide a USI.

All fees are to be met in Australian dollars [\$AUD]. DCA is unable to accept payments made in foreign currencies. International students are solely responsible for all conversion and transaction fees.

Refund Policy

The initial Enrolment Administration Fee [\$375.00] is non-refundable.

A full refund of all tuition fees paid will be made if a course is cancelled by Digital Construction Academy for any reason.

Where you have not commenced your studies or received any course material, and cancel your own participation in an agreed course of study, up to ten (10) working days prior to the commencement of the course, you will receive an eighty-five percent (85%) refund of tuition fees paid. Cancellation of enrolment under these circumstances incurs a fifteen percent (15%) administration fee.

No refund is available where cancellation by you is made less than ten (10) working days prior to the commencement of a course, or to participants who leave before finishing the course.

No refund is available where candidates remain enrolled and do not progress. Should you decide not to continue with the course, you need to communicate clearly with us your intention to withdraw or defer. Deferment of training can be negotiated.

Refunds will be considered on a pro-rata basis for students who fall ill or are injured to the extent that they can no longer undertake the course providing a supporting Medical Certificate is supplied to Digital Construction Academy.

However, should participants wish to finalise incomplete units of competency in a future course the original fee can be used as a credit towards that course within six months of initial payment.

In all other cases, refunds are at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer of Digital Construction Academy and may be negotiated on an individual case-by-case basis. All requests for refunds will be acted upon within 14 days.

Student Progression and Invoicing

The CPP50911 Diploma of Building Design will be delivered in a series of nine [9] learning semester periods/modules. Each semester module typically includes two [2] units of competency. Invoicing and payments are issued within the first 18 months of study, at regular bi-monthly intervals. These arrangements describe your Payment Plan, unless otherwise specified by DCA.



The Diploma level qualification, like all other Diploma level awards, is typically indicative of 18 months to 2 years of full-time study effort, and amount to a total of 1800 learning hours.

As an online learner with flexibility to manage your own pace, students may complete the qualification in less time by accelerated and more intense learning. Most students are usually managing work careers and families and using an online provision to facilitate a steady approach to learning, and typically should take no more than 3 years to complete all units required. Aiming for a three [3] year target for completion generally indicates an approximate level of study hours at 10 to 12 hours per week.

All students are automatically provided with three years to complete all units of competency. Bi-monthly invoicing and payments are timed to schedule with the full-time course load.

Notes:

Where a candidate studying full-time completes a learning semester/module earlier than the allocated time, DCA will invoice the candidate earlier than scheduled before engagement with the next learning semester/module and embedded units of competency. This facilitates swifter progression through the qualification.

Where a candidate completes the entire qualification and all units of competency earlier than the prescribed 18 months, the qualification parchments and record of results will not be issued until all fees for the qualification have been received from the candidate.

All units of competency must be completed in the prescribed order before subsequent units of competency can be accessed. This facilitates ongoing integration relationships between and across subjects.

Competency Based Training and Assessment

Vocational qualifications in the VET sector, and governed by the protocols of the Australian Qualifications Framework [AQF] are working towards nationally developed and approved formal qualifications which are **competency based**. Candidates are required to complete a range of assessments across units of competency which is the default method of evidence collection to confirm that candidates meet the performance requirements, required knowledge and skills associated to the defined units.

Assessment may be in the form of:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| ■ Written assessments | <i>Formally produced documents / reports [MS Word or equivalent] in response to assessment tasks</i> |
| ■ Oral assessment | <i>Recorded audio monologues / response by questioning on live webinar [all webinar sessions are recorded]</i> |
| ■ Presentation assessments | <i>Slide Show presentations [graphic / textual] - MS Powerpoint or equivalent</i> |
| ■ Practical demonstrations | <i>Online observations during webinar sessions</i> |
| ■ Case study investigations | <i>Research based response to assessment tasks, usually in conjunction with written material work</i> |
| ■ Portfolio development | <i>Majority of design / drafting / detailing graphical communication work as uploaded solutions from CAD software [Revit / AutoCAD / other]</i> |

Alternative assessment methods may be used for unique situations.

Access & Equity

All trainees/students will be recruited in an ethical and responsible manner and consistent with the requirements of the National Training Package. Our Access and Equity Policy ensures that trainee/student selection decisions comply with equal opportunity legislation. Appropriately qualified staff will assess the extent to which the applicant is likely to achieve the stated competency standards and outcomes of the course, based on their qualifications and experience. All members of the community, including priority VET target group members, are actively encouraged to participate in, and supported during our courses.

Expectations of Candidates

All trainees/students will be recruited in an ethical and responsible manner and consistent with the requirements of the National Training Package. Our Access and Equity Policy ensures that trainee/student selection decisions comply with equal opportunity

CPP50911 DIPLOMA OF BUILDING DESIGN FRAMEWORK



Units of Competency

Unit Code	Unit Title	Tuition Fee
Mandatory [Core] Units [7]		
CPPBDN5001A	Research construction materials and methods for small-scale residential building design projects	\$675.00
CPPBDN5003A	Research compliance requirements for small-scale residential building design projects	\$475.00
CPPBDN5005A	Recommend sustainability solutions for small-scale residential building design projects	\$675.00
CPPBDN5008A	Develop concepts for small-scale building design projects and finalise solutions with clients	\$785.00
CPPBDN5009A	Produce complaint client-approved designs for small-scale building design projects	\$1,095.00
CPPBDN5011A	Produce complaint client-approved working drawings for small-scale residential buildings	\$895.00
CPCCOHS2001A	Apply OHS requirements, policies and procedures in the construction industry	\$375.00
Elective Units included [10]		
CPPBDN5002A	Research construction materials and methods for small-scale non-residential building design projects	\$475.00
CPPBDN5004A	Research compliance requirements for small-scale non-residential building design projects	\$475.00
CPPBDN5006A	Consult with clients to produce approved small-scale building design project briefs	\$475.00
CPPBDN5010A	Negotiate and finalise planning approval for small-scale building design projects	\$425.00
CPPBDN5012A	Produce and present 3D models of small-scale building designs	\$875.00
CPPBDN5013A	Develop and collaborate on building information models for small-scale building design projects	\$845.00
CPPBDN5016A	Produce and present rendered animations of 3D models of small-scale building designs	\$875.00
CPPACC5011A	Prepare a concept design for accessible building work	\$275.00
CPCCSV5012A	Assess timber-framed designs for one and two storey buildings	\$675.00
MSFID4009	Research architectural styles and movements	\$475.00
Alternative Elective Units		
[subject to availability: may be used as additional units to above on request, or as alternative replacements in unique circumstances]		
MSFID5014	Use CAD applications to create models and documentation for interior design projects	\$775.00
CPCCBC4015A	Prepare specifications for construction works	\$375.00
BSBPMG514	Manage project costs	\$425.00

Many candidates will engage with additional electives during and beyond the minimum requirements and complete with more than the standard number of units required. Refer to page 17 for your elective choice decisions - alternative, custom elective units may be discussed with your academic mentor where necessary.

Minimum Diploma Requirements	7 mandatory [core] units of competency
	10 electives units of competency
Total of	17 units of competency

Delivery Schedule – Standard Arrangements

Your units of competency are delivered sequentially in learning semester ‘modules’. Each module is ‘weighted’ with comparably similar study hours, and generally comprises two [2] units of competency.

The sequential nature of the modules is important to establish ongoing academic integration of subjects and learning development and assessment. Sometimes this integration is very direct and obvious, and on other occasions, more discrete. Minor adjustments to scheduling for a replacement elective can usually be adjusted without difficulty. Those candidates following RPL procedures may be following alternative learning pathway arrangements.

Learning Semester Module 1

A Suitable Description / Code

CPPBDN5006A	Consult with clients to produce approved small-scale building design project briefs
CPPBDN5012A	Produce and present 3D models of small-scale building designs

Learning Semester Module 2

A Suitable Description / Code

CPPBDN5001A	Research construction materials and methods for small-scale residential building design projects
MSFID4009	Research architectural styles and movements

Learning Semester Module 3

A Suitable Description / Code

CPPBDN5003A	Research compliance requirements for small-scale residential building design projects
CPPBDN5008A	Develop concepts for small-scale building design projects and finalise solutions with clients

Learning Semester Module 4

A Suitable Description / Code

CPPBDN5005A	Recommend sustainability solutions for small-scale residential building design projects
CPCCOHS2091A	Apply OHS requirements, policies and procedures in the construction industry

Learning Semester Module 5

A Suitable Description / Code

CPPACC5011A	Prepare a concept design for accessible building work
CPPBDN5010A	Negotiate and finalise planning approval for small-scale building design projects

Learning Semester Module 6

A Suitable Description / Code

CPPBDN5011A	Produce complaint client-approved working drawings for small-scale residential buildings
CPCCSV5012A	Assess timber-framed designs for one and two storey buildings

Learning Semester Module 7

A Suitable Description / Code

TBD	Student Elective Selection: Unit 1
TBD	Student Elective Selection: Unit 2

Learning Semester Module 8

A Suitable Description / Code

CPPBDN5002A	Research construction materials and methods for small-scale non-residential building design projects
CPPBDN5004A	Research compliance requirements for small-scale non-residential building design projects

Learning Semester Module 9

A Suitable Description / Code

CPPBDN5009A	Produce complaint client-approved designs for small-scale building design projects
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Student Progression and Invoicing

The CPP50911 Diploma of Building Design qualification is studied over a total of nine (9) Learning 'Modules', with all invoices for course fees to be issued within the 18 months of study, unless other arrangements have been agreed with Digital Construction Academy.

All enrolled students are automatically allocated three (3) years to complete all modules of study. As learning is self-paced students may complete the course in less time where they are able to commit more regular hours to study on an ongoing basis.

Digital Construction Academy assumes that a student studying full time will complete a Learning Module every two (2) months, completing the course inside two [2] years. Bi-monthly Invoicing for course fees is timed to coincide with a full-time course load for completion of Learning Modules.

Please Note: If a student studying full time completes a Learning Module earlier than the allocated two (2) months, Digital Construction Academy will invoice the student before they enrol in the next Learning Module.

If a participant completes their study in under 18 months, the qualification testamur and record of results will not be issued until full fees for the qualification have been received from the participant.

Each Learning Module must be successfully completed in numerical order - before the following Learning Module can be accessed.

Expectations of Participants

To avoid any confusion in the future, the following expectations of behaviour are provided. Compliance with these expectations is required by all Participants. Failure to do so may result in cancellation of your enrolment.

- Abide by Copyright and Plagiarism laws and legislation
- Comply with workplace health and safety regulations at all times
- Comply with anti-discrimination legislation at all times. This includes but is not limited to equal opportunity, racial vilification and disability discrimination
- Comply with workplace harassment, victimisation and bullying regulations at all times
- Ensure that behaviour is of a level acceptable to the workplace at all times
- Complete training and assessment activities within agreed time frames
- Communicate any difficulties with completion of activities or assessment with your Trainer
- Inform your Trainer immediately should you be unable to progress in your studies due to illness or other reasons
- Inform your Trainer if you have a medical condition that may affect your participation or affect those with whom you may be training

Competency Based Training and Assessment

Participants enrolled in training which will lead to either a Statement of Attainment, Certificate or Diploma qualification are required to complete assessments to demonstrate competency. Competency based assessment is the process of gathering evidence to confirm that participants can perform required skills and knowledge.

Assessments undertaken may include:

- Written/oral Assessments
- Practical demonstrations
- Completion of case studies and similar activities
- Development of a portfolio
- Work samples
- Third party reports

You will be given feedback on all Assessment Activities. Competency based assessment does not use a marking scale rather you are deemed “competent” or “not yet competent”. Please note that by submitting your assessment submissions on the Digital Construction Academy online campus – the LMS, you are agreeing that the work submitted is your own original work, appropriately referenced and not plagiarised.

Credit Transfer [National Recognition]

You may be eligible for a Credit Transfer if you have previously undertaken training through a Registered Training Organisation, a TAFE institute, University, or other accredited institution.

Credit Transfer may be granted for one or more units. Three (3) major factors need to be considered:

- How current the Qualification/Statement of Attainment is
- Mapping to the current training, and
- If the training was undertaken with a Registered Training Organisation or other accredited institution.

If you think you may be eligible for a Credit Transfer, you will need to provide the following:

- The original Statement of Attainment and/or Certificate for your BFDA to sight• A copy of the Statement of Attainment and/or Certificate
- Or a certified copy of your signed Statement of Attainment and/or Certificate by a Justice of the Peace (JP)
- There is a small administrative charge for units of competency through Credit Transfer.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning is the process of formal recognition for skills and knowledge gained through previous learning such as:

- Life experiences
- Previous formal learning
- Employment experience
- Recreational or personal interests

You may be eligible for RPL for part or all of your intended study, based on your previous experiences and learning. For more information regarding RPL and how to apply, please discuss this with your Trainer.

RPL may be applied for in one of two ways:

Partial RPL:

Partial RPL can be applied for either at enrolment into a full qualification or after enrolment in a full Qualification.

Partial RPL cost: Students intending to apply for partial RPL for some of the units of competency in the qualification, will still be required to pay full fees. Students granted partial RPL will not have to undertake assessment for units for which they have been granted RPL. However, they will still have full access to all learning materials for the RPL units.

Full RPL: Where an applicant is confident that they can demonstrate full competency in **all** the units of the qualification, they should apply for Full RPL. For instance, an individual who has:

- Completed the same, similar, or an equivalent, or higher relevant qualification
- Presents with extensive Professional work experience.

Note: Full details of qualifications and individual units of competency are available at: www.training.gov.au

Full RPL cost: Enrolment administration fee of \$375 (non-refundable) plus:

- Diploma: \$4750 Total: **\$5125**

Where an applicant for Full RPL is unable to demonstrate full competency in a unit, they will be required to enrol in the individual unit/s and undertake assessment to demonstrate competency. Applicants will have access to learning materials and assessment for the unit only and will not be able to access learning materials in units they have not enrolled in.

Study Guidance: Time Planning & Management

Many students considering online education worry about the lack of face-to-face contact with a lecturer or tutor. Surprisingly, online students have **increased** opportunities to interact directly on a one-to-one basis with their tutor, as messages requesting support can be placed at any time, including out of office hours.

During your studies, you will be additionally supported by the academic staff at DCA in the following ways:

- postal correspondence where appropriate
- phone support
- email support
- web conferencing



It is essential for effective learning and progression that students maintain an ongoing live dialogue with the academic team, and that unit arrangements are followed properly, and that emails and other correspondence with staff are dealt with and responded to in a timely fashion.

You will be notified at the time of enrolment within each block, when the dedicated slots are for phone and web conferencing, and you can be assured that the DCA staff will respond as quickly as possible to email and phone message requests for ongoing support as needed.

It is **critical** that you take full advantage of these opportunities, and it is strongly recommended that you:

- **Define** your own study time by calendar control on an ongoing basis
- **Identify** a suitable time/day slot where you are able to join web conferences with your tutor - preferably on a regular basis, such as weekly, fortnightly or other periodic meetings.
- At a minimum, **stay in touch** with your tutor by messaging / email by contacting him/her once per week to advise on progress, request help - even if just to say 'Hi, doing OK'

Live Web Conferencing Support

As indicated above, you should make all efforts necessary to take advantage of regular and repeated communication with your tutor through our web conferencing arrangements. At the time of publication, we are currently using **Zoom** for our webinar sessions, and you will be provided an opportunity very early on to engage with us through this platform.



The web conferencing interface will require you to download the tools from the links provided, usually only at your first meeting, and only takes a minute or so to do so. You will also be provided through the hosting service the opportunity to download the Google or Outlook Calendar Plug-In tool, which will be useful for your own time managements and scheduling purposes.

Recommendations for ZOOM:

- Connect to the internet through a physical LAN cabled connection - WIFI, which will work, can be prone to interruptions, outages and can be intermittent
- **Always** use a headset [with built-in mic] - this will reduce feedback and static for audio, as well as allowing a degree of privacy

- **All times** published on links from Digital Construction Academy will refer to Brisbane EST local time - you should make the necessary adjustments to suit your state or territory [especially during daylight savings changes]
- Web conferencing takes advantage of live video and audio streaming and provides for screen sharing across the internet, allow demonstrations and presentations to be conducted - a webcam is **not usually required** for most meetings, though may be included when you may be delivering a formal presentation

Our Conferencing Service will usually provide an opportunity to review material, provide feedback, or discuss general directed investigations. We may also use it to conduct live presentations to groups, or to provide live one-to-one assistance, especially in the area of practical alternative solutions and illustrations in the use of CAD software programmes.

Most critically it provides an opportunity to get to know each other more fully and develop a live and fruitful relationship!

The Learning Management System [LMS]

You will generally begin by being registered with our **LMS** (Learning Management System) as your principal point of reference for all learning and assessment materials. This is a web-based e-learning portal through which the majority of documentation, communication, and data transfer and learning support is provided.

This portal is called '**DCA.Matrix**' and is an experienced developer of learning management systems [LMS]. We do continually review the LMS for quality improvement and development, and may from time to time, make minor modification reviews to the material there - your learning would **NOT** be disrupted by these processes. You may also hear staff refer to the system as a '**VLE**' - a virtual learning environment, simply another way of describing the LMS platform.

After initial enrolment, you will be provided with a user account for the LMS and will be able to access this at any time from any PC. The LMS will allow you to [among other things]:

- download learning material
- follow instructions from your tutor
- upload assessment submissions
- engage directly with staff and fellow students by email, forum and 'chat' options
- monitor your own progress
- check your results and grades

All correspondence pertaining to the programme is to be conducted through the LMS. You will find that at all times as you navigate through the learning material on the system, there will be an email contact button on all learning material pages.

Further information on the LMS will be provided on completion of the enrolment process and receipt of your fees, and an introductory webinar conference is routinely provided at the outset of your studies to help familiarise you with our systems and protocols.

The Nature of E-Learning

A common misconception of e-learning is that it will provide a quicker, or easier path to obtaining a qualification. **This is not necessarily the case.** There is essentially little difference between following a Diploma qualification within a traditional college environment, and following an electronically-led programme, other than the 'mechanics' of the process.

The Diploma of Building Design is a nationally approved qualification with a notional learning commitment of around 1600 hours - regardless of the mechanisms used in delivery of the qualification and its content.

It is important to recognise therefore that e-learning is not a shortcut, nor are corners being cut to deliver something which would contravene the national regulations which govern the qualification and its issue. Normal study and assessment conditions will continue to prevail at all times.

The key factor which most students are interested in is the great flexibility which an online, e-learning approach offers:

- The flexibility to structure your learning time around your personal and other commitments
- The flexibility which allows you to continue to work, and earn while you learn
- The flexibility which allows for activation/deactivation/reactivation of your learning account for special circumstances
- The flexibility which allows you to study at any location [subject to an internet connection]
- The flexibility which allows you to adjust your pace to suit changing circumstances
- The flexibility which allows you to increase the pace of your study and lead to a 'quicker' qualification - **providing all conditions are satisfied**

The final point above is particularly critical - many students will start out with this objective but can then often find it difficult to achieve, having allowed other personal or external factors to disrupt their learning and achievement progress.

For example: a typical 'module' of 2 units of competency, will have a total of approximately 150 - 200 learning hours. The notional duration of study for this semester will typically be in the region of 12 - 14 weeks. Some students, depending on their capacity, current experience or other circumstances, might need slightly less or more time - these are the **notional averages**.

The 'window' provided for the semester - 13 weeks, for example - is the **maximum** length of time we would expect the average student take to complete the required units, based on an average 10 - 15 hours per week of notional effort. The HOW, WHERE, WHEN of those hours is largely down to you to organise - evenings, weekends, at home, at the library, at work.

It always remains **your responsibility** to find the time required to complete your study commitment - **being a bit busy at work is simply not a valid excuse for not managing your study time effectively.** We do appreciate that circumstances will change and it may be necessary to revise and adapt as you progress, but leaving your studies unattended for several weeks is not acceptable.

It is possible to 'deactivate' your learning pathway so that you are not time-penalised, and this might occur for a number of valid reasons, such as ill health, pre-planned holidays or other known future commitments.

At all times, it is highly critical that you keep us informed of your progress, and inform us of any obstacles or barriers which can be foreseen, or which occur unexpectedly.

We will remain at all times, committed to providing clear and helpful strategies which will allow you to cope effectively with your studies, and you should not hesitate to ask your academic mentor for guidance or support whenever it is required.