My Travel Career

New to Travel – Foundations Program

Powered by Cornerstone Learning and Development / RTO 45250

The New to Travel Foundations Program is a nine-week structured training pathway designed specifically for people entering the travel industry for the first time. This page outlines what your new starter will learn across each block and stream, so you can be confident in what you are investing in before enrolment.

Weeks 1–3 | Industry Foundations

All streams, all new starters, regardless of agency type or specialisation | 12 modules

Every new starter completes the twelve foundations modules before moving into their stream. This block builds the professional baseline, the industry literacy, and the technical fundamentals that underpin everything that follows.

1.1 The Travel Technology Ecosystem	– How the key systems in a travel agency connect: Client, OBT, GDS, NDC, Mid-office, CRM, Accounting, and Reporting – What each system does, who uses it, and where the consultant fits within the full workflow – Why understanding the whole chain matters for data accuracy, client experience, and agency efficiency
1.2 Travel Terminology and Acronyms	– The language of the industry: PNR, TTV, BSP, GDS, NDC, PAX, FIT, MICE, ADM, EMD, Queue, Reissue, Refund, and more – How terminology is used in context across bookings, supplier communications, and client conversations – Building the habit of asking when something is unfamiliar, rather than guessing and moving on
1.3 How the Travel Industry Works	– How suppliers, distributors, wholesalers, agencies, and OTAs connect and how agencies generate revenue – The difference between retail, corporate, MICE, and independent agency models – Where consortia and franchise groups fit and why they matter for independent agencies
1.4 The Role of the Travel Consultant	– What genuine consultation looks like versus order-taking, and why the distinction matters from the very first client interaction – Professional workplace behaviours: phone etiquette, email standards, note-taking, asking for help, and managing competing priorities under pressure – Accountability, follow-through, and what high performance looks like in a busy agency environment
1.5 Professional Communication	– Client-facing communication across phone, email, and written correspondence: tone, clarity, and the standards that build confidence from the first contact – Active listening and questioning techniques, managing client expectations, and delivering difficult news professionally – Internal communication: working with colleagues, suppliers, and managers in a way that supports the whole team

1.6 **Geography and Destination Fundamentals**	– Routing logic, stopovers, connections, and how to read an itinerary confidently – Time zones, the international date line, and their practical impact on long-haul travel – Key airport codes, hub airports, and how to advise on passport, visa, and entry requirements
1.7 **GDS Fundamentals**	– What a GDS is, why it exists, and how it connects agencies to supplier inventory – Basic navigation, availability displays, booking class codes, and status indicators – How a PNR is structured and the relationship between GDS, NDC, and direct channels
1.8 **Air Booking Essentials**	– Flight classes, cabin classes, booking codes, and what they mean in practice – Alliance structures, codeshare arrangements, and interline agreements – Booking workflow from availability to confirmation, and minimum connecting time judgment
1.9 **Fares and Ticketing Foundations**	– Published, nett, and dynamic fares, and when each type applies – Reading a fare quote from base fare through taxes, surcharges, and carrier fees – Refundability, flexibility terms, ticketing time limits, and common ticketing errors
1.10 **Introduction to NDC**	– What NDC is, why airlines introduced it, and how it changes the booking workflow – Offers and orders, the new language of airline retailing, and what consultants need to know now – Content gaps, ancillary access, and the current state of NDC adoption in Australia
1.11 **AI in the Travel Workplace**	– Practical AI tools for drafting client emails, summarising supplier information, researching destinations, and preparing client notes – Using prompts effectively: how to get useful, accurate output and how to sense-check it before it goes to a client – AI for social content, itinerary formatting, and administrative tasks, and how to stay current as the tools keep evolving
1.12 **Duty of Care, Compliance and Ethics**	– What duty of care means in practice, how to use Smartraveller, and what to document in every booking – ATAS accreditation requirements and Australian Consumer Law obligations for travel sellers – Privacy, data handling, and the line between confident selling and inappropriate pressure

Weeks 4–6 | Stream Specialisation

Choose one stream based on the agency's primary focus: Corporate, Retail/Leisure, or MICE

From Week 4, each new starter moves into the stream that matches their agency's focus. The six modules in this block cover the specific tools, products, client relationships, and workflows relevant to that part of the industry.

Corporate Stream

C.1 Corporate Travel Policy	– How to read and apply a client travel policy correctly in day-to-day bookings – Common policy provisions: preferred suppliers, booking windows, cabin class thresholds – Handling out-of-policy requests professionally and knowing when to escalate
C.2 GDS in Practice: Sabre and Tramada	– Applied Sabre workflows for air, hotel, and car across the most common transaction types – How Sabre and Tramada work together for PNR import, itinerary management, and invoicing – Queue management, ticketing in the GDS, and avoiding the most common corporate booking errors
C.3 Managing a Corporate Account	– Client onboarding: traveller profiles, preferences, approval workflows, and SLAs – Managing multiple bookers across one account and maintaining consistent service standards – Building the client relationship through proactive communication and regular check-ins
C.4 Complex Itineraries and Disruption	– Multi-sector, multi-passenger, and open-jaw itinerary construction – Disruption handling: rebooking under pressure, communicating with travellers, and documentation – Using airline disruption tools and knowing who to call first when things go wrong
C.5 Expense, Reporting and Reconciliation Basics	– How corporate clients use travel data: reporting, reconciliation, and benchmarking – The consultant's role in data accuracy and what finance teams care about – Lodge cards, virtual cards, and how to support the client's expense management process
C.6 Complaints and Escalation	– Receiving a complaint professionally and distinguishing a service failure from a misunderstanding – Escalation pathways, clean handover to senior consultants, and complaint documentation – How to turn a complaint into a stronger client relationship

Retail / Leisure Stream

R.1 **Leisure Products and Suppliers**	– Package holidays, cruising, escorted touring, and accommodation: structure, pricing, and booking conventions – Key wholesale and retail supplier relationships in the Australian leisure market – Staying current with product changes, new launches, and supplier news as an ongoing habit
R.2 **Quoting, Margins and Selling**	– Gross, nett, and markup pricing: how leisure fares work and how to protect the agency's margin – Building a quote that is competitive without underselling, with inclusions and exclusions made explicit – Upselling and cross-selling done well: how to present options that serve the client's interests
R.3 **Supplier Relationships and Preferred Partners**	– Why preferred partnerships matter and how to use them deliberately for client and commercial benefit – Working effectively with BDMs and getting value from famil trips – Tools and routines for staying current without spending hours every week on product research
R.4 **Groups and FIT**	– The operational differences between FIT and group travel and why they matter – Group mechanics: deposits, naming deadlines, rooming lists, and payment schedules – When to use a wholesaler versus booking direct, and how to manage a group from enquiry to departure
R.5 **Client Relationship and Repeat Business**	– Why repeat clients are the foundation of a leisure business and how to build toward them from day one – Client profiles, post-travel follow-up, and the habits that generate genuine referrals – Handling the client who returns from a trip with a complaint
R.6 **Consumer Rights in Leisure Travel**	– Australian Consumer Law obligations: refunds, credits, cancellations, and disclosure – Force majeure: what it actually covers, what it does not, and how to explain it to a client – When and how to involve the agency's errors and omissions insurer

MICE Stream

M.1 **Introduction to MICE**	– Meetings, incentives, conferences, and events: how they differ and what each client type cares about – The MICE ecosystem: event managers, PCOs, DMCs, and where the travel consultant fits – Career pathways within MICE and the skills that make this stream transferable

M.2 **Venue and Supplier Sourcing**	– How to brief a venue search and structure the request so responses are genuinely comparable – Venue types, DMC partnerships, and when to engage an on-the-ground partner – Site inspections: what to evaluate, what to document, and how to use the findings
M.3 **Group Air and Ground Logistics**	– Group air contracts: blocked space, naming deadlines, ticketing rules, and attrition exposure – Ground transfer planning, rooming lists, VIP handling, and arrival and departure wave management – The logistics documentation that keeps a large group program on track
M.4 **Budgeting and Client Proposals**	– Per-head versus total program budgeting and how to translate client expectations into realistic numbers – Building a proposal that demonstrates genuine understanding rather than just competitive pricing – Cost transparency, contingency budgeting, and how to present a budget confidently
M.5 **On-site Coordination Basics**	– The consultant's role on-site versus the event manager's role, and why the distinction matters – Using a run sheet, managing suppliers on the day, and handling last-minute changes calmly – Staying in lane, staying professional, and knowing when to escalate
M.6 **Post-event Reporting and Client Retention**	– Post-event reconciliation: actuals versus budget, variance explanation, and financial summary – Running a post-event debrief that surfaces genuine learnings and strengthens the relationship – Turning a one-off event into an ongoing client relationship

Weeks 7–9 | Applied Practice

Stream-specific, complex scenarios, and consolidation

The final three weeks move from knowledge into application. New starters work through complex scenarios, difficult conversations, and consolidation exercises that mirror real situations in the agency. Each stream ends with a capstone exercise and a written reflection on what has changed since week one.

Corporate Applied Practice

CA.1 **Complex Corporate Scenarios**	– Multi-destination, multi-traveller bookings with mixed policy compliance – Last-minute bookings and booking under approval workflow pressure – Three end-to-end scenarios worked through from enquiry to confirmation
CA.2 **Difficult Client Conversations**	– Managing the out-of-policy traveller and delivering unavoidable bad news – Supporting an angry traveller mid-disruption, calmly and effectively – Four scenario-based practice conversations with structured debrief
CA.3 **NDC in Practice: Corporate Context**	– Booking via NDC in a corporate environment and reconciling NDC with GDS content – Communicating NDC changes to travel managers in plain, confident language – Identifying and flagging data and reporting gaps in NDC bookings
CA.4 **Disruption Simulation**	– Live simulation: a multi-leg itinerary falls apart, work through rebooking and communication simultaneously – Priority triage when multiple travellers on one account are affected differently – Documentation during a disruption and what the PNR and mid-office record should show
CA.5 **Data, Reporting and Client Review**	– Pulling and framing travel data for a corporate client review – Identifying savings opportunities and presenting findings to a travel manager – Practical exercise: build a client travel summary from sample data
CA.6 **Consolidation and Program Assessment**	– End-to-end corporate scenario from enquiry to invoice – Policy compliance check across a sample itinerary – Written reflection and program completion discussion

Retail / Leisure Applied Practice

RA.1 **Complex Leisure Itineraries**	– Multi-destination FIT with mixed supplier types built from a client brief – Managing currency, time zones, and visa requirements across one complex itinerary – Handling supplier changes after a booking is confirmed

RA.2 **Difficult Leisure Client Scenarios**	– The client who wants more than the budget allows and the client who returns from a trip disappointed – Handling a complaint from a client who is already overseas – Four scenario-based conversations with structured debrief
RA.3 **Group Management in Practice**	– Managing a group from deposit to departure: payments, names, dietary requirements, and deadlines – When someone in the group wants to change and the financial implications for the whole booking – Practical exercise: manage a fifteen-person touring group through to ticketing
RA.4 **Sales Skills in a Leisure Context**	– Reading a client well before quoting and asking the right questions before building an itinerary – Presenting options clearly without overwhelming, and making a recommendation with confidence – Closing the booking naturally without pressure
RA.5 **Disruption and Post-Departure Issues**	– First-hour response to natural disasters, cancellations, and medical situations for clients already travelling – Guiding a client through a travel insurance claim and working with suppliers to resolve in-trip issues – After-action review: what worked in the response and what to do differently next time
RA.6 **Consolidation and Program Assessment**	– End-to-end leisure scenario from enquiry to departure documentation – Product knowledge assessment and written reflection – Program completion and ongoing development discussion

MICE Applied Practice

MA.1 **Complex Event Scenarios**	– Full-service incentive program: brief to debrief, managing multiple suppliers simultaneously – Budget overruns mid-planning: having the honest client conversation – Capstone exercise: three-day conference from brief to complete run sheet
MA.2 **Supplier Negotiation and Contracting Basics**	– What to negotiate on and how to approach attrition, cancellation, and force majeure clauses – Reading a hotel or venue contract for the provisions that carry real financial risk – Role-play negotiation: work through a venue contract from both sides of the table
MA.3 **Client Management in MICE**	– Managing multiple stakeholders within one client organisation with different priorities – Communicating proactively through the planning cycle and managing pre-event anxiety – When the event manager and the finance team want different things

MA.4 **On-site Problem Solving**	– Handling supplier no-shows, AV failures, and VIP issues discreetly and effectively – Decision-making under time pressure with incomplete information – Live scenario: something goes wrong on day one, work through it
MA.5 **Budgets, Actuals and Post-Event Reconciliation**	– Tracking actuals against budget in real time and managing supplier invoicing accurately – Building a post-event financial summary that the client can present internally – Practical exercise: reconcile a sample event budget against actuals
MA.6 **Consolidation and Program Assessment**	– End-to-end MICE scenario from brief to post-event report – Portfolio piece: submit a sample event proposal built during the program – Written reflection and program completion discussion

Ready to bring great people into your agency?

Talk to Monica about enrolling your first new starter or finding your next great hire. We will walk you through everything, no obligation, no pressure, just a conversation about what is possible.

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