



*Users' Guide to the  
Essential Standards  
for Registration*

## State and Territory Registering Bodies

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*AQTF 2007  
Users' Guide to the  
Essential Standards  
for Registration*

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## Introduction to AQTF 2007

The national training system is a key driver of Australia's economic and social growth. For more than a decade, Australian and State and Territory Governments have worked with industry to develop a national training system that now provides the basis for high-quality, industry developed and nationally recognised training to about one in nine working-age Australians. Through a national network of over 4,200 public and private registered training providers, over 1.5 million Australians from all ages, backgrounds and locations participate in vocational education and training each year.

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is the national set of standards which assures nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment services for the clients of Australia's vocational education and training system. AQTF 2007 is the current version of the framework, effective from 1 July 2007.

The National Quality Council (NQC) collaboratively developed AQTF 2007 and will continue to monitor it. The NQC includes all State and Territory Governments, the Australian Government, peak industry bodies, peak training organisations and a representative on equity issues. The Ministerial Council of Vocational and Technical Education, which includes all Ministers for Training in Australia, has approved these quality arrangements.

### The three components of AQTF 2007

The three components of AQTF 2007 are:

**The Essential Standards for Registration** – Training organisations must meet these standards in order to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications. They include three standards, a requirement for registered training organisations to gather information on their performance against three quality indicators, and nine conditions of registration.

**Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies** – State and Territory registering bodies are responsible for registering training organisations and for quality assuring the training and assessment services they provide, in accordance with the AQTF 2007 and relevant legislation within each jurisdiction. The standards and supporting guidelines provide a national operating framework.

**Excellence Criteria** – These are criteria that registered training organisations may use voluntarily to continue improving the quality of their training and assessment and to gain recognition of their performance.

### The key features of AQTF 2007

#### Outcomes focused

AQTF 2007 focuses on the quality of services and outcomes being achieved for clients rather than the inputs used to get there. This means that registered training organisations have more flexibility in demonstrating how their individual approaches provide quality training outcomes for their clients.

## Nationally consistent

Individuals expect that they can use the skills from nationally endorsed qualifications across Australia and employers expect that the staff they hire have the same skills no matter where they were trained. State and Territory registering bodies have worked together to develop and publish national guidelines to ensure consistent interpretation and implementation of AQTF 2007.

## Streamlined

The standards for registered training organisations have been simplified and streamlined to focus on outcomes. AQTF 2007 places the focus of quality assurance squarely on training and assessment, client services and management systems.

## Transparent

National guidelines and handbooks to be used by registering bodies in all states and territories are readily accessible through the following link on the national training website <<http://www.training.com.au/AQTF2007>>.

The commitment by registering bodies to work together on continuous improvement in implementation of AQTF 2007 is one of the measures to build confidence of industry, clients, regulators and registered training organisations in the quality assurance arrangements of the training system.

## The beneficiaries of AQTF 2007

**Learners** have equitable access to quality training and assessment services tailored to their needs and the learning outcomes they seek.

**Industry, unions, enterprises and regulators** have confidence that registered training organisations are delivering training and assessment services that achieve the skill requirements of nationally recognised qualifications developed by industry.

**Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)** can focus on providing quality training and assessment in the way that best suits their business. No matter what the size or scope of the organisation, they can also seek recognition of excellence.

**Registering bodies** (the bodies which register training organisations in each state and territory) work as part of a national system of registration and audit that is outcomes-focused and risk-managed to streamline quality assurance processes.

### About this Users' Guide

This guide supports the understanding and application of the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* and explains the three parts of those standards. It also describes how the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* relate to the other parts of AQTF 2007 and the roles of the various stakeholders in supporting the framework.

The guide is to help RTOs interpret and apply the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* to their operations and to help training organisations preparing to apply for registration. Existing RTOs can use the guide when conducting self-assessments against the standards and when preparing for external audits. It is also designed to help RTOs manage and continuously improve their training and assessment outcomes in order to meet the needs of industry and learners.

The guide does not prescribe how an RTO should manage its operations nor does it mandate the form that evidence used in an audit must take. The type of evidence an RTO provides will vary depending on its size and scope. The guide does offer suggestions about the types of evidence an RTO may provide during an audit to demonstrate compliance with the standards and the achievement of quality outcomes.

State and Territory registering bodies and auditors also use the guide, together with the AQTF 2007 *Audit Handbook*, to help them interpret and apply the standards consistently when assessing applications for registration and conducting audits.

# What's in the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*?

The AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* includes:

- Three standards, each comprising several elements
- Quality indicators
- Conditions of registration

These are underpinned by:

### A focus on outcomes

The standards and their elements specify the key requirements to be met by each RTO. The standards do not specify detailed processes but explain the outcomes to be achieved through the application of each standard. An RTO must be able to show, through systematic approaches to management and continuous improvement, that it is focused on improving its outcomes in relation to each standard. AQTF 2007 quality indicators support the outcomes focus of the standards by giving an overall picture of how well an RTO is meeting clients' needs.

### A systematic approach

A systematic approach to the management and delivery of services helps an RTO to meet the registration requirements throughout the registration period. Systematic approaches are planned, purposeful and repeatable actions to improve products and services for clients.

Because RTOs vary in size and complexity, the processes they use to comply with the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* will differ considerably. For example, the quality of outcomes to be achieved by a one-person RTO, a secondary school offering school-based apprenticeships, a community-based provider, an enterprise-based RTO and a TAFE institute may be the same, but the differences in the scale and operating context of these five organisations may lead to differences in the nature of their systematic approaches and the management systems they use.

### Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is an integral part of AQTF 2007. An effective quality system includes processes that encourage and achieve continuous improvement. For RTOs this means developing a planned and ongoing process to systematically review and improve policies, procedures, products and services through analysis of relevant information and collection of data from clients and other interested parties, including staff. Data from the quality indicators provides a key tool for continuous improvement.

The value for RTOs of adopting a continuous improvement cycle is in its potential to create a stronger, more sustainable business that meets the needs of clients and stakeholders. Such a cycle also enables RTOs to adapt quickly to changing external environments such as economic factors and skills needs.

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Types of continuous improvement processes and tools are not prescribed and RTOs have the flexibility to consider their own business context and make improvements based on feedback from their clients and stakeholders.

## Access and equity

The National Skills Framework has a strong focus on providing opportunities for everyone to access and participate in learning and to achieve their learning outcomes. An RTO needs to ensure that its practices are as inclusive as possible and do not unreasonably prevent any clients from accessing its services. While access and equity are explicit in the second standard, they are relevant to all three.

The three components of the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* are discussed in more detail in sections 4, 5 and 6 of this guide.

## Understanding the three standards

The three standards are:

- Standard 1** The Registered Training Organisation provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations.
- Standard 2** The Registered Training Organisation adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients.
- Standard 3** Management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the Registered Training Organisation operates.

The standards focus on the quality of services and outcomes being achieved for clients. They allow RTOs some flexibility in demonstrating how they are meeting clients' needs in the context of the scope and nature of their business. Instead of asking, 'Have we got a process in place?' the RTO can ask 'What tells us we're doing well?' and 'What can we do better?'

Each standard is supported by elements that provide more detail about achieving the outcome described in the standard. In each standard, the first element relates to continuous improvement processes. An RTO with a specialist function (for example, an assessment-only RTO), does not have to demonstrate compliance with elements or aspects of elements that are irrelevant to its operations.

This section provides suggestions about application of the standards and elements under the following subheadings.

### Intent

The purpose of the element – what the RTO achieves rather than the specific processes it follows.

### Key actions

Possible approaches that an RTO can take to effectively meet the element's requirements.

### Evidence guide

An indication of the evidence that could be provided by an RTO to show it is meeting the element's requirements and continuously improving its operations and outcomes.

### Relevant conditions of registration

Any conditions of registration that directly relate to the element are noted, to help RTOs maintain compliance with the conditions.

### Explanatory notes

These further explain the words in bold in the evidence guide, suggesting possible evidence that an RTO may provide to demonstrate that it is meeting the requirements of that element. The explanatory notes also suggest operational practices that may help an RTO to achieve the intent of the element.

# Standard 1

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The Registered Training Organisation provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations

- Element 1.1 The RTO collects, analyses and acts on relevant data for continuous improvement of training and assessment.
- Element 1.2 Strategies for training and assessment meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course and are developed in consultation with industry stakeholders.
- Element 1.3 Staff, facilities, equipment and training and assessment materials used by the RTO are consistent with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course and the RTO's own training and assessment strategies.
- Element 1.4 Training and assessment are conducted by trainers and assessors who:
- a) have the necessary training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors
  - b) have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and
  - c) continue developing their vocational and training and assessment competencies to support continuous improvements in delivery of the RTO's services.
- Element 1.5 Assessment, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):
- a) meets the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course
  - b) is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence
  - c) meets workplace and, where relevant, regulatory requirements.

## Element 1.1 The RTO collects, analyses and acts on relevant data for continuous improvement of training and assessment.

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### Intent

The RTO improves training and assessment arrangements in accordance with data collected.

### Key actions

The RTO's continuous improvement approach is systematic, involves staff, clients and other stakeholders, and uses qualitative and/or quantitative data to determine the need for improvements to training and assessment.

### Evidence guide

**Data** on the quality of training and assessment services **is collected and analysed systematically.**

**Data** that is collected and analysed **is relevant and sufficient** to make judgements about the quality of training and assessment across the RTO's scope of registration and operations.

**Improvements** to training and assessment **are demonstrated.**

## Explanatory notes

### *Systematically collecting and analysing data*

Systematic approaches support continuous improvement. They may include:

- planning where data will be collected from, how it will be collected, the form it will take, how often you will collect it, and how it will be collated, analysed and used
- ensuring that data collection and analysis confirm good practice and show where improvements need to be made
- making improvements where analysis demonstrates that they are needed
- regularly reviewing data collection to assess its usefulness for improving products and services
- giving feedback to those who have contributed to the data.

### *Ensuring that data is relevant and sufficient*

The focus of qualitative and quantitative data collection could be informed by:

- prior continuous improvement activities
- assessing the relevance of the collected data to your training and assessment outcomes
- deciding which aspects of training delivery are most critical to your quality training and assessment.

Data sources relevant to improving training and assessment could include:

- client satisfaction surveys/questionnaires
- interviews, focus groups, and/or other data from consultation with learners, enterprise clients, industry organisations and licensing bodies
- records of staff/planning meetings and agreed actions
- records of complaints and appeals and their resolution
- internal audit reports and organisational self-assessment
- staff performance-appraisal reports.

### *Demonstrating improvements*

Improvements to training and assessment could be demonstrated by changes to:

- quality, currency, relevance and sufficiency of training and assessment resources, including reasonable adjustments made to meet the needs of learners with a disability
- professional development activities and outcomes
- validity, reliability, flexibility and fairness of assessment processes.

For continuous improvement, revised practices are analysed in light of further data collection.

## Element 1.2 Strategies for training and assessment meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course and are developed in consultation with industry stakeholders.

### Intent

Industry engagement and support is evident in the development of all training and assessment strategies. All training and assessment strategies meet the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course.

### Key actions

The RTO develops training and assessment strategies and training programs that provide sufficient information to guide trainers and assessors and ensure that learners receive training and assessment that meets their needs and current industry requirements.

### Evidence guide

Each training and assessment strategy is **clearly articulated** and **based on data** collected on **industry/enterprise requirements** and **learners' needs** through effective consultation.

Each training and assessment strategy and training program specifies the **resources**, both human and physical, that will be used to **meet the requirements of the Training Package** qualification (or unit of competency) or accredited course (or module).

Each strategy is **monitored and improved** through effective consultation.

### Relevant conditions of registration

The following conditions of registration relate to this element:

- compliance with legislation
- transition to Training Packages and expiry of accredited courses.

### Explanatory notes

#### *Clearly articulating strategies*

The purpose of being able to articulate training and assessment strategies is to ensure that accurate and up-to-date information about delivery and assessment is available to those who need it. By having a clearly described training and assessment strategy for each accredited course or Training Package qualification (or unit(s) of competency if a full qualification is not delivered) on your scope of registration, you can ensure that training programs and assessment instruments are developed in accordance with the requirements described in this guide.

#### *Basing strategies on data*

When the training and assessment strategies are based on data gained from effective consultation with industry or enterprises, training and assessment are more likely to meet their

requirements. Using data on the needs of learners ensures that services also meet those needs.

Data relevant to training and assessment strategies could include:

- regulations or laws governing the industry and/or standard operating procedures, equipment and machinery used at the enterprise level
- information about the work environment (for example shifts or seasonal changes to schedules) that will affect delivery and assessment
- preferences about the way in which a qualification is delivered
- characteristics of the target group that need to be accommodated in training and assessment.

You could offer industry and enterprises the opportunity to collaborate in making joint decisions about training and assessment strategies, as well as assisting in the review of strategies and training programs by providing feedback and participating in assessment validation.

## Element 1.2 Strategies for training and assessment meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course and are developed in consultation with industry stakeholders.

### *Meeting industry/enterprise requirements*

Industry/enterprise could include:

- industry organisations
- industry training advisory bodies and skills councils
- unions
- specific clients
- occupational licensing bodies

Where a qualification does not have a clear vocational outcome, 'industry' could mean other bodies, such as community groups or other RTOs.

Enterprise includes enterprise RTOs.

### *Meeting learners' needs*

Learners could have needs related to:

- relevant prior training and/or employment
- learning styles
- physical or intellectual ability
- language, literacy and numeracy levels
- location
- cultural or ethnic background
- socio-economic factors.

### *The training program*

The training program could include information about:

- how units are packaged to meet qualification requirements
- how pre-requisites and co-requisites are included
- the mode of delivery to be used (for example, online, classroom, on-the-job)
- the learning approaches or styles that will be used to suit the needs of learners
- how the needs of groups or individual learners will be met (for example, reasonable adjustment in assessment)
- a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) strategy, where units may be packaged for assessing learners with prior experience.

It could also include advice to assessors about how assessments will be conducted.

### *Including resources in the strategies*

Resources specified in each training and assessment strategy could include:

- the training and assessment materials that will be used
- the trainer and assessor competencies that are required
- the facilities and equipment that will need to be available or accessed, including industry placement arrangements
- simulated work environments to be used
- support staff or resources that may be required to meet the needs of learners
- agreements for the use of resources and facilities.

### *Meeting the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course*

You can best achieve consistency with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course when you address each of the following:

- specific entry requirements, where these are noted in the Training Package or accredited course
- assessment guidelines and qualification packaging rules
- required trainer and assessor competencies
- assessment evidence requirements specified in the units of competency or modules.

### *Monitoring and improvements*

Evidence that training and assessment strategies are being monitored and improved could include:

- revised training and assessment strategies and training programs
- data on consultations with trainers and assessors, learners, enterprise clients, industry organisations and, where relevant, licensing bodies; and the actions taken in response to such consultations
- records of staff meetings about training and assessment strategies and training programs, and the agreed actions.

Element 1.3 Staff, facilities, equipment and training and assessment materials used by the RTO are consistent with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course and the RTO's own training and assessment strategies.

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### Intent

The resources used by the RTO across all of its operations are consistent with current industry standards.

### Key actions

The RTO uses appropriate resources that have been selected through thorough planning and systematic monitoring, and through implementing any necessary improvements.

### Evidence guide

The **resources specified in each training and assessment strategy and training program** for the relevant qualification or unit of competency are used across all of the RTO's operations by staff and learners.

The **currency, sufficiency and effectiveness** of the staff, facilities, equipment and training and assessment materials are **systematically reviewed and improvements are made** where needed.

### Relevant conditions of registration

The following condition of registration relates to this element:

- Transition to Training Packages/expiry of accredited courses.

## Element 1.3 Staff, facilities, equipment and training and assessment materials used by the RTO are consistent with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course and the RTO's own training and assessment strategies.

### Explanatory notes

#### *Specifying resources in each training and assessment strategy and training program*

You can use training and assessment strategies and training programs to check that the required facilities, equipment, and training and assessment resources are in place across all of your operations and are being used by staff wherever and however delivery is occurring (for example, at different sites and workplaces or by online or flexible delivery and assessment).

#### *Ensuring that resources are current, sufficient and effective*

Some factors that may affect the currency, sufficiency and effectiveness of resources used in delivery and assessment include changes to:

- Training Package content
- training and assessment activities
- the RTO's personnel
- equipment and processes used by industry
- operating procedures
- legislation and regulations
- learners' needs
- location of delivery
- modes of delivery.

#### *Systematically reviewing and making improvements*

Reviews of resources can take place when there is a change of the kind listed above, and as part of your continuous improvement cycle. Consultation with industry as part of these reviews will also be useful. Analysing review data (including industry feedback) will assist in confirming good practice and identifying where improvements need to be made.

#### *Evidence of improvements*

This could include:

- updating staff qualifications and experience
- adjusting or rewriting training and assessment resources
- gaining access to new/different equipment or training/learning materials
- redesigning simulated work environments
- changing arrangements for industry placements
- changing training and assessment facilities to better meet the requirements of learners.

To ensure that changes to resources are consistently applied, you will need to consider how you ensure that staff:

- know when changes have been made to resources
- know how to gain access to current resources
- use updated resources.

Industry regulators and registering bodies may agree on preferred learning and assessment resources for use by RTOs. Auditors would be guided by such agreements when considering the continuous improvement of training and assessment services.

- Element 1.4 Training and assessment are conducted by trainers and assessors who:
- have the necessary training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors
  - have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and
  - continue developing their vocational and training and assessment competencies to support continuous improvements in delivery of the RTO's services.

## Intent

All trainers and assessors of nationally recognised training meet national benchmark competency requirements and continue to develop their competence. (See Appendix 2 for the NQC-approved training and assessing competencies for trainers and assessors.)

## Key actions

The RTO establishes and verifies that trainers and assessors meet national benchmark competency requirements and continue to develop their competence by:

- supporting them in meaningful engagement with industry and relevant professional bodies
- supporting their professional development in teaching and learning methods
- fostering a culture of critical evaluation and innovation.

## Evidence guide

**Trainers' and assessors' competence is established and verified.** In some instances, assessors who have the assessment competencies but not the vocational competencies required may **work together to conduct assessment** with a person who has the required vocational competencies.

**Direct supervision** arrangements for trainers are implemented and managed as required.

**Trainers' and assessors' competencies are continuously developed.**

## Explanatory notes

### *Establishing and verifying that trainers and assessors are competent*

You establish staff competencies when you verify evidence that staff hold the required qualifications and experience. Trainers and assessors must:

- have the training and assessment competencies determined by the National Quality Council (see Appendix 2)
- have the competencies they are delivering and/or assessing (or demonstrated equivalent competencies)\*
- meet any additional competency requirements detailed in Training Packages or determined by regulatory or licensing bodies.

\* Trainers and assessors must be able to demonstrate vocational competencies at least to the level of those being delivered and assessed. Where

there are legislated requirements for licensing purposes, industry regulators and registering bodies may agree to additional requirements for trainers and assessors.

You could verify evidence of competence by:

- carrying out referee checks, including confirming relevant industry experience and vocational competencies
- sighting originals (or true copies) of qualifications.

### *Working together to conduct assessment*

If an assessor does not have the appropriate 'assessor competencies or demonstrated equivalent competencies' as well as the relevant vocational competencies, they may work with someone who has the relevant vocational competencies to conduct assessments.

Element 1.4 Training and assessment are conducted by trainers and assessors who:

- a) have the necessary training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors
- b) have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and
- c) continue developing their vocational and training and assessment competencies to support continuous improvements in delivery of the RTO's services.

This type of arrangement may be necessary when an assessor is working with a subject-matter expert such as a workplace supervisor, to conduct assessment in the workplace; for example, if the assessor has difficulty observing the candidate because of work schedules, geographic location, privacy or confidentiality.

The assessor is the one who makes the assessment decision about whether or not competency has been attained. The subject-matter expert gathers evidence of the competence, which contributes to the assessment judgements by the assessor.

An assessor may co-assess with a subject-matter expert. The assessor's role is to ensure that the assessment methodology used by the subject-matter expert is consistent with Training Package requirements.

RTOs need to check for any additional conditions required by licensing authorities.

### *Directly supervising*

Where a trainer does not have the appropriate training competencies or demonstrated equivalent competencies (see Appendix 2), they must be under the direct supervision of someone who does. The supervising trainer provides regular guidance, support and direction, and monitors the training and assessment. Although it is not necessary for the supervising trainer to be present during all training delivery, he or she is accountable for the training delivered by the supervised trainer.

Examples of direct supervision could include a combination of some of the following:

- providing input to the preparation for training
- discussing strategies to support specific learners
- assisting the trainer to locate appropriate resources

- observing some training sessions and providing feedback
- debriefing the trainer after training sessions
- providing regular support, guidance and monitoring.

RTOs need to check for any additional conditions required by licensing authorities.

### *Continuously developing the competencies of trainers and assessors*

The purpose of reviewing and developing the competencies of staff is to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge needed to continuously improve the training and assessment they provide.

An appraisal of vocational and training and assessment competencies could be informed by:

- reviews of Training Packages/accredited courses
- data collected from learners and other stakeholders
- staff self-assessment
- assessment validation activities.

Evidence that trainers and assessors are maintaining and improving their competencies could include documentation of:

- their attendance at relevant professional development activities
- participation in networks, communities of practice or mentoring activities
- participation in industry release schemes
- personal development through reading of industry journals
- participation in projects with industry
- shadowing or working closely with other trainers and assessors.

- Element 1.5 Assessment, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):
- meets the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course
  - is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence
  - meets workplace and, where relevant, regulatory requirements.

## Intent

Assessment ensures that only learners who hold the requisite skills and knowledge are certified as competent.

## Key actions

The RTO ensures that assessors systematically validate and improve assessment processes, tools and evidence requirements.

## Evidence guide

**Assessment** (which includes RPL):

- meets the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course
- is consistent with the training and assessment strategy
- is valid, reliable, flexible and fair
- focuses on the application of knowledge and skill to the **standard of performance required in the workplace**
- involves the collection of **sufficient, valid, authentic and current evidence** to enable a judgement to be made about whether competency has been attained
- confirms that **workplace and regulatory requirements are met.**

**Judgements** made by assessors against the same competency standards are consistent.

**Systems, processes, tools and practices are improved.**

## Relevant conditions of registration

The following conditions of registration relate to this element:

- compliance with legislation
- transition to Training Packages and expiry of accredited courses.

## Explanatory notes

### *Meeting the requirements*

Components of the Training Package or accredited course to be taken into account when designing assessment include:

- the evidence guide
- assessment guidelines
- units of competency
- elements
- performance criteria
- range statements.

### *Ensuring consistency with the training and assessment strategy*

One of the purposes of training and assessment strategies is to provide the assessor with an accurate

guide to the way in which assessment is structured. Strategies that explain which assessment tools are to be used are an excellent reference for the assessor. A strategy could also indicate the characteristics specific to workplaces, or to candidates, that need to be accommodated in assessment.

### *Assessing validly, reliably, flexibly and fairly*

Validity, reliability, flexibility and fairness are the principles of assessment (refer to Section 7, Terminology, for a definition of each term). When developing assessment tools, you need to ensure that these principles are met.

### *Documenting the standard of performance required*

Competency standards and assessment guidelines (or assessment requirements in accredited courses)

## Element 1.5 Assessment, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

- a) meets the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course
- b) is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence
- c) meets workplace and, where relevant, regulatory requirements.

provide advice on the application of knowledge and skills to the standard of performance required in the workplace. You meet the assessment requirements of the Training Package or accredited course when you assess the whole of the unit of competency. Reference to the key competencies/employability skills, the range statement and the evidence guide – including the context of assessment and the critical aspects of evidence – guides the development of appropriate assessment tools.

The consultation that you carry out when developing training and assessment strategies should provide a clear picture of a competent candidate – any unusual circumstances they need to deal with, any competing pressures they may need to manage and any specific requirements they need to know about (for example, legislation and operating procedures) in order to work effectively. By using the answers to these questions you can ensure that all the dimensions of competency (task, task management, contingency management and job/role environment skills) are effectively covered in training and assessment.

### *Ensuring that evidence is sufficient, valid, authentic and current*

Sufficiency, validity, authenticity and currency are the rules of evidence (refer to Section 7, Terminology, for a definition of each term). By providing comprehensive assessment instruments and clear information to the assessor and the candidate about the conditions under which assessment is conducted and recorded, you can help to ensure that these rules are met.

Validation of assessment can occur before, during or after assessment, and can include assessment moderation activities in which assessors discuss and reach agreement about assessment processes and outcomes in a particular industry or industry sector, developing a shared understanding of specific Training Packages. Validation is most effective when it is systematically planned and implemented.

Assessment validation could be integrated with your continuous improvement cycle so that improvements made to assessment as a result of validation are subject to review in order to maintain quality.

### *Incorporating workplace and regulatory requirements*

Consultation with enterprises or industry will provide information about assessment requirements relevant to workplaces. Any regulatory or licensing authority requirements that relate to specific units or the qualifications must be met. RTOs that consult with regulatory bodies and licensing authorities when developing and reviewing assessment strategies and tools will be better placed to meet the requirements of those bodies.

### *Making consistent judgements*

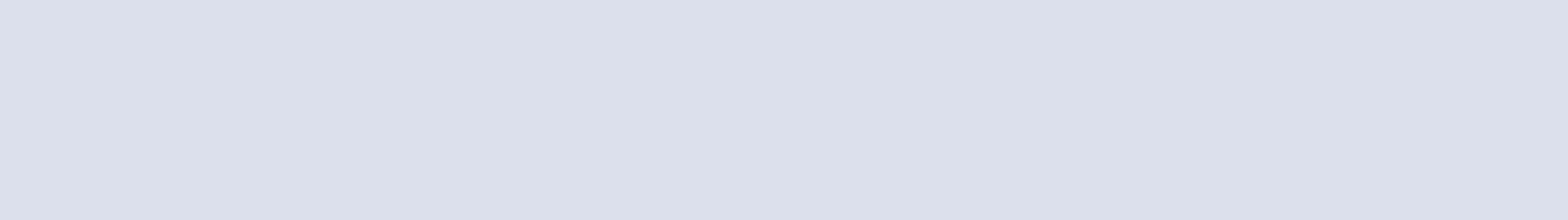
Judgements made by assessors against the same unit of competency are more likely to be consistent when assessors within an RTO:

- work together to compare and refine the assessment tools they are using with particular target groups to collect evidence
- validate assessment processes and outcomes against the same unit(s) of competency.

### *Improving systems, processes, tools and practices*

Evidence of improvements to assessment could include:

- actions taken in response to data from consultation with learners, enterprise clients, industry organisations and licensing bodies
- revised assessment tools, processes and practices
- professional development on assessment practices for assessors
- records of assessment validation activities
- benchmarking of your activities with those of other RTOs.



# Standard 2

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The Registered Training Organisation adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients

- Element 2.1 The RTO continuously improves client services by collecting, analysing and acting on relevant data.
- Element 2.2 Before clients enrol or enter into a contract, the RTO informs them about the training, assessment and support services to be provided, and about their rights and obligations.
- Element 2.3 Employers and other parties who contribute to each learner's training and assessment are engaged in the development, delivery and monitoring of training and assessment.
- Element 2.4 Learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs.
- Element 2.5 Learners have timely access to current and accurate records of their participation and progress.
- Element 2.6 Complaints and appeals are addressed efficiently and effectively.

## Intent

Client services meet clients' needs and are continuously improved in accordance with data collected about their effectiveness.

## Key actions

The RTO:

- establishes what clients' needs are
- collects data about whether these needs are being met
- improves services in response to this data.

## Evidence guide

**Data** on the needs of clients and on services provided to them **is collected and analysed systematically.**

**Data** that is collected and analysed **is relevant** and **sufficient** to allow judgements about the quality of client services across the RTO's scope of registration and operations.

**Improvements** to client services **are demonstrated.**

## Explanatory notes

### *Systematically collecting and analysing data*

The purpose of collecting and analysing data from and about clients is to ensure that your services meet clients' current and changing needs.

Systematic approaches to data collection and analysis will support continuous improvement and may include the following:

- planning where data will be collected from, how it will be collected, the form it will take, how often you will collect it, and how it will be collated and analysed
- ensuring that data collection and analysis confirm good practice and show where improvements need to be made
- making improvements where analysis demonstrates that they are needed
- regularly reviewing data collection to assess its usefulness for improving products and services

- giving feedback to those who have contributed to the data.

### *Ensuring that data is relevant and sufficient*

You will gain a clear picture of the effectiveness of your client services if you collect sufficient data. In addition to collecting data from learners, you could collect data from trainers and assessors, employers, and other relevant stakeholders, to ascertain whether clients' needs are being met.

Matters relevant to improving client services could include:

- the effectiveness of assistance provided in the areas of language use, literacy and numeracy
- the clarity and accuracy of information provided to learners before enrolment
- processes for learner selection, enrolment and induction/orientation

## Element 2.1 The RTO continuously improves client services by collecting, analysing and acting on relevant data.

- clients' level of satisfaction with training and assessment services and with the support services provided, including external support
- the effectiveness of welfare and guidance services
- RPL processes
- complaints and appeals processes.

Data sources relevant to improving client services could include:

- client satisfaction surveys/questionnaires
- interviews, focus groups, and/or other data from consultation with learners, enterprise clients, industry organisations and licensing bodies
- records of complaints and appeals, and of their resolution
- internal audit reports and organisational self-assessment
- outcomes from benchmarking activities.

### *Systematically reviewing and making improvements*

Evidence of improvements to client services might include documentation to show:

- revisions to information provided to clients so that it is clearer or in a more suitable format
- streamlined enrolment processes
- improved referral information for clients with special needs
- revised induction/orientation processes
- improved results in assessments of language use, literacy and numeracy
- changes to complaints and appeals processes
- increased levels of engagement with employers, industry and/or regulators
- records of professional development undertaken by staff.

These improvements may be subject to further review and improvement as part of your continuous improvement cycle.

**Element 2.2** Before clients enrol or enter into a contract, the RTO informs them about the training, assessment and support services to be provided, and about their rights and obligations.

## Intent

Clients are provided with accurate and sufficient information to make an informed choice about their enrolment and/or contractual agreement.

## Key actions

The RTO ensures that information suits the needs of prospective clients, checks it for accuracy and provides it systematically.

## Evidence guide

**Information** provided to clients is clear and **sufficient to assist them to make an informed choice.**

Information provided to clients **accurately describes the services to be provided.**

**Improvements** to client information services **are demonstrated.**

## Relevant conditions of registration

The following conditions of registration relate to this element:

- compliance with legislation
- recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs
- accuracy and integrity of marketing.

## Explanatory notes

### *Providing sufficient, clear information*

Prospective clients will be able to make an informed choice about your services if you give them clear, accurate and timely information. Ideally, you will provide this information in a format that is easy to access and understand, taking into account the clients' abilities and access to information.

The following list is not exhaustive and may not apply in all contexts, but the types of information a client might expect could include:

- Course outcomes and pathways. Clients are better able to make decisions about which qualifications they will undertake if they know whether the course will provide them with a qualification or a specific skill set, and whether it will provide them with entry requirements to employment and/or to other qualifications
- Training and assessment arrangements, including RPL. Clients want to know how you will provide training and assessment; for example, you could explain how RPL works and the context and requirements for training and assessment
- Fees and charges, including refunds. Because the learner/organisation is entering into a contract with you, the provision of clear information about all fees, charges and refunds will help to protect both client and RTO
- Selection and enrolment of learners. Where there is clear information about selection, prospective learners can assess whether they will meet the requirements of a course. There will also be less likelihood of clients complaining that they have been unfairly excluded or that, after the course begins, it is inappropriate for

## Element 2.2 Before clients enrol or enter into a contract, the RTO informs them about the training, assessment and support services to be provided, and about their rights and obligations.

them. Clear information will help to streamline the enrolment process for everyone

- Client support services, for example assistance in the areas of language use, literacy and numeracy or for clients with a disability. If clients have support needs, they need to know either how you will provide the required support or how they can source this support externally
- Legislative and occupational licensing requirements. These could include pre-requisites and conditions related to training and assessment, such as the requirement to be employed in the industry
- Complaints and appeals procedures. A fair and transparent process for handling complaints and appeals will give clients more confidence that you will treat them fairly. In addition to describing internal complaints processes, you could also refer clients to external bodies such as the state or territory registering body and to the National Training Complaints Hotline, telephone: 1800 000 674.

### *Providing accurate information*

The accuracy of information provided to prospective learners can be assured by:

- reviewing information when you change your training and assessment strategies
- checking the accuracy of information with learners
- having a staff member responsible for checking the accuracy and currency of information before it is made available to prospective learners.

### *Demonstrating improvements to client information services*

Improvements to client information services could be demonstrated through:

- revisions to the information materials that you provide for clients
- responses to clients' feedback about information that you provided
- changes in the media you use to disseminate information to clients
- benchmarking your data with that of other providers.

## Element 2.3 Employers and other parties who contribute to each learner's training and assessment are engaged in the development, delivery and monitoring of training and assessment.

### Intent

Learners, including apprentices and trainees, receive support from all parties engaged in their training and assessment.

### Key actions

The RTO:

- involves workplace personnel in planning workplace programs, where they are relevant to the training and assessment program
- ensures that the training and assessment program makes full use of opportunities at the workplace
- monitors each learner's progress and the support provided to them by workplace personnel.

### Evidence guide

**Workplace personnel are consulted** in the development of workplace training and assessment processes.

**Workplace personnel are informed of their training and assessment** roles and **responsibilities** and accept these responsibilities, where relevant to the training and assessment program.

Both **support provided to each learner** by workplace personnel and the **learner's progress are monitored**.

**Information** from workplace personnel is used **to continuously improve training and assessment**.

### Explanatory notes

#### *Consulting workplace personnel*

Workplace personnel will be able to provide information on:

- opportunities for training and assessment at the workplace
- equipment and machinery that are used at the workplace, and their availability for training and assessment activities
- personnel at the workplace who can support the RTO and the learners in training and assessment, and who can provide any other support that the learners may require
- reasonable adjustments that can be made in the workplace for learners with a disability
- seasonal and shift times that might restrict opportunities for training and assessment
- opportunities that learners will have at the workplace to develop competency across the scope of the competency standards
- workplace induction processes provided to learners
- workplace policies and procedures that may need to be integrated into the training and assessment program
- any special projects that the learners could be involved in
- any conditions imposed on learners or on workplaces through licensing/regulatory requirements and industrial agreements
- whether personnel have the required competencies to conduct workplace assessment, where relevant.

## Element 2.3 Employers and other parties who contribute to each learner's training and assessment are engaged in the development, delivery and monitoring of training and assessment.

This information is invaluable to the RTO when developing a training and assessment program for trainees, apprentices and learners participating in work experience as part of an institution-based program.

### *Informing workplace personnel of their roles and responsibilities*

These roles and responsibilities could include:

- providing input to training plans
- providing learners with opportunities for skills development
- gathering evidence of on-the-job performance for assessment purposes
- providing opportunities for learners to be withdrawn from routine work for the purpose of developing competence in other ways
- completing documentation; for example, signing off on competence or verifying logbook entries to the satisfaction of the licensing authority (if applicable)
- ensuring duty of care and providing support.

It is helpful to provide workplace personnel with an outline of their agreed roles and responsibilities, together with yours, so that both parties have a record of what has been agreed.

### *Providing workplace support for learners*

Learners need to be supported to get the most out of their training and assessment at the workplace. You can negotiate with workplace personnel the support that will be made available. This could include:

- pairing up the learner with a mentor
- providing extra time or opportunities for learning

- ensuring that the learner has access to workplace services such as counselling, if these are in place.

### *Monitoring learners' progress*

By monitoring learners' progress you can be assured that they are developing skills and knowledge as planned. This monitoring will also help you to confirm that learners are receiving the support they need.

Monitoring is most effective when you communicate regularly with learners and their workplace supervisors to:

- discuss progress
- identify further support needed
- adjust plans for training and assessment
- negotiate further opportunities for training and assessment.

There are often requirements to document this monitoring in learners' training plans when a government-registered training contract is in place for trainees and apprentices.

### *Getting help with continuous improvement*

Workplace personnel can provide feedback on how effectively your training, assessment and client services meet these requirements by:

- contributing to training and assessment strategies
- participating in assessment validation events such as seminars
- co-assessing with RTO staff
- providing feedback, through client satisfaction surveys, on your training and assessment approaches and client services.

## Intent

Learners have every reasonable opportunity to complete their training program.

## Key actions

The RTO ensures that:

- learners' needs are assessed
- learners know how to access the services they will require to successfully complete their training and assessment program.

## Evidence guide

**Learners' training and learning support needs are systematically assessed.**

Learners have **access to relevant learning support** services, including assistance with language, literacy and numeracy.

Training, assessment and learning support services provided to each client are **consistent with the training and assessment strategies.**

Learning, assessment and learning support services are **monitored and improved.**

## Relevant conditions of registration

The following conditions of registration relate to this element:

- compliance with legislation
- recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs.

## Explanatory notes

### *Systematically assessing needs*

You could assess learners' needs by:

- gathering information about each learner's prior formal and informal learning, and encouraging learners to seek recognition for this learning through RPL
- identifying the mode of delivery and attendance patterns (if relevant) best suited to each learner's needs
- asking learners to identify at interview or on their enrolment form anything that might

prevent them from progressing through the training and assessment program (for example, anything related to physical ability, cultural background or educational background)

- asking learners to complete a formal assessment of their language skills, literacy and/or numeracy.

Once you have established that a learner has specific training or training support needs, you can develop a strategy to assist them.

### *Providing learning support*

Support for learners could include a combination of:

- mentoring
- disability support
- IT support
- telephone, email, networking and tutorial support for learners engaged in flexible delivery programs
- job search and placement
- personal counselling
- career guidance
- study skills programs.

The extent of the support services that you provide will depend on your clients' needs and your capacity to provide these services.

In order to provide this access:

- you give learners information about your support services and any external support that you can arrange
- you provide this information in a timely and systematic manner, and it is easily accessed by learners (for instance at induction to the learning program, on your website, in handbooks or your marketing materials)
- you have staff and resources in place to assist learners. This could be, for example, a staff member who has expertise in language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) support; learning and assessment resources that are designed to develop LLN; a process where learners are referred to an outside agency that offers LLN support; or staff who have expertise in delivery to Indigenous learners.

### *Providing services consistent with your learning and assessment strategies*

The nature and extent of support services that you provide will vary according to:

- the type and depth of the training and/or assessment program
- where and how the training and assessment takes place (for example, at the workplace, or at the training organisation, or by distance delivery)
- whether learners are working with you for the first time or are continuing
- the requirements of the qualification (for example, language, literacy and numeracy support is more likely to be provided at lower AQF levels).

This information can be included in training and assessment strategies to help you determine what support is to be provided, when and by whom.

### *Monitoring and improving*

Evidence to demonstrate that training, assessment and learning support services are being monitored and improved could include:

- data from learners and clients on satisfaction with services received
- changes to processes for assessing clients' training and learning support needs
- improved access to and use of learners' support services
- modifications to resources, facilities and equipment
- improved rates of learner progression and completion.

## Element 2.5 Learners have timely access to current and accurate records of their participation and progress.

### Intent

Learners have access to their records.

### Key actions

The RTO:

- systematically manages learners' records
- ensures that staff understand and meet their responsibilities for record-keeping and records management
- monitors and reviews the records system.

### Evidence guide

**Learners are informed** about how to gain **access to their records**.

**Data** on learners' participation and progress through their training program is **systematically collected, recorded and stored**.

**Records management practices** are **monitored and improvements** are demonstrated.

### Relevant conditions of registration

The following conditions of registration relate to this element:

- Certification and issuing of qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

## Explanatory notes

### *Informing learners*

Learners need access to their records so that they can check their progress. Also, they need to know how to gain a replacement statement of attainment or qualification, should they require it. You could inform learners about how to gain access to their records in:

- course information sessions
- marketing materials
- handbooks
- website information
- learners' bulletins.

### *Systematically collecting, recording and storing learners' records*

Learners' records could include:

- enrolment details
- learning support needs
- attendance records
- records of complaints and appeals
- outcomes at unit of competence or module level and qualification level
- licences gained as a result of training
- statements of attainment and qualifications issued.

Records are systematically collected, recorded and stored when:

- administrative staff know what their record collection, recording and storage responsibilities are, and carry out these responsibilities effectively
- trainers and assessors keep accurate and current records of assessment results that lead to judgements about competence
- information collected from and about learners meets the requirements of state and territory registering bodies and licensing authorities, where relevant.

### *Monitoring and improving*

Evidence to demonstrate the effective management of learner records could include:

- data from continuous improvement activities
- data on client service standards for records
- changes to procedures and systems for managing learners' records, including privacy protection and security systems
- client feedback data and responses made to feedback
- staff feedback that records are easily accessed when needed.

## Element 2.6 Complaints and appeals are addressed efficiently and effectively.

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### Intent

Complaints and appeals are managed fairly, efficiently and effectively.

### Key actions

The RTO:

- develops and implements a process for handling complaints and appeals
- ensures that clients and staff know about and follow the system
- takes corrective action to deal with the identified causes of complaints
- monitors and improves the system.

### Evidence guide

**Effective management of complaints and appeals** and their **resolution** is demonstrated.

Complaints and appeals are monitored and reviewed to **prevent their recurrence** and to **improve the RTO's operations or services**.

## Explanatory notes

### *Handling complaints and appeals*

Complaints arise when a client is not satisfied with an aspect of your services and requests action to be taken to resolve the matter. Appeals arise when a client is not satisfied with a decision that you have made. Appeals can relate to assessment decisions but they can also relate to other decisions, such as a decision to exclude a learner from a program. Clients should be encouraged to resolve complaints and appeals through your complaint mechanisms. If they are not satisfied with the outcomes of these processes they should be referred to the state or territory registering body or the National Training Complaints Hotline, telephone: 1800 000 674.

Your clients will feel confident that they are being treated fairly when:

- they are clearly informed in a timely way about how to complain or appeal
- they have an opportunity to present their case
- they have access to an independent arbiter if this is needed
- they are clearly informed of the outcomes of the complaint or appeal
- complaints and appeals are resolved within realistic and fair timelines.

### *Demonstrating effective management and resolution*

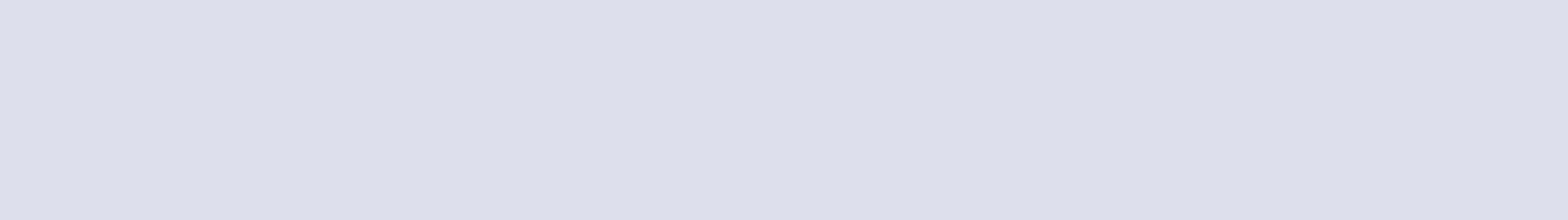
Evidence to demonstrate the effective management of complaints and appeals could include:

- data about complaints and appeals
- records of actions taken to address the root cause of complaints
- minutes of staff meetings at which actions arising from complaints were agreed on
- documented changes to your systems.

### *Preventing complaints and improving your practice*

Complaints and appeals can provide invaluable data about aspects of your operations that could be improved. To prevent the recurrence of similar complaints you could:

- ask for feedback from the complainant/appellant to determine whether they are satisfied with the way the complaint or appeal was dealt with
- change the practice that led to the complaint, and then check that this improvement is in place and that it is working
- review records of complaints and appeals to test whether there are specific issues (or staff or services) about which complaints and appeals are made, and whether complaints and appeals are being resolved in a timely manner
- integrate the monitoring and review of complaints and appeals with your continuous improvement cycle.



# Standard 3

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Management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the Registered Training Organisation operates

- Element 3.1 The RTO uses a systematic and continuous improvement approach to the management of operations.
- Element 3.2 The RTO monitors training and/or assessment services provided on its behalf to ensure that they comply with all aspects of the *AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration*.
- Element 3.3 The RTO manages records to ensure their accuracy and integrity.

## Element 3.1 The RTO uses a systematic and continuous improvement approach to the management of operations.

### Intent

The management system ensures that the RTO meets:

- the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*
- legislation and regulations under which it is registered.

### Key actions

The RTO ensures that:

- there is relevant and sufficient documentation of management systems for the scope and scale of its operations
- staff know and meet their responsibilities for implementing the system
- the system is systematically monitored and improved.

### Evidence guide

**Management systems** are:

- **appropriate for the size and scope** of the RTO's operations
- **focused on** providing **quality training and assessment** services
- **consistently implemented** across all of the RTO's operations
- **systematically monitored and improved.**

## Explanatory notes

### *Documenting management systems*

A systematic and continuous improvement approach to managing your operations will ensure that you provide quality training and assessment and client service across all of your operations. It will also ensure that you maintain compliance with the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* throughout your registration period.

### *Maintaining appropriate systems for your size and scope*

You can develop your own approach or adopt management practices based on and/or certified by recognised quality assurance bodies. The primary objective is to ensure that you have effective control over your operations so that you can continuously improve your services and consistently operate in accordance with the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.

### *Focusing on quality training and assessment*

Evidence that a management system is focused on quality training and assessment services could include:

- continuous improvement processes developed to achieve effective client and industry engagement; for example, arrangements are in place to meet regularly with industry and employer groups to seek feedback and make changes in response
- high value placed on the quality of teaching and learning through rigorous selection processes and ongoing professional development for trainers and assessors
- examples of management's commitment to maintaining and improving training and assessment environments and resources.

### *Consistently implementing your management systems*

Evidence of consistent implementation could include documentation showing that:

- communication throughout the organisation about management systems and decisions is effective
- staff are actively engaged in continuously improving the system
- key policies and processes are documented to an appropriate level and accessible to all relevant staff
- checks are made to ensure that key policies and procedures are being implemented appropriately
- regular and systematic reviews of key data are conducted by management.

### *Systematically monitoring and improving*

Monitoring and reviewing your management system as part of your continuous improvement cycle will help to ensure that your operations management is effective.

Strategies to monitor the effectiveness of your management system could include:

- establishing key performance indicators and monitoring organisational performance against them
- eliciting and analysing stakeholders' feedback about your organisation's overall performance
- benchmarking management systems and organisational performance with other RTOs
- internal audit and organisational self-assessment against the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* and other quality standards systems.

## Element 3.2 The RTO monitors training and/or assessment services provided on its behalf to ensure that they comply with all aspects of the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.

### Intent

Services delivered under partnership arrangements comply with the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.

### Key actions

The RTO manages training and assessment provided on its behalf by documenting or recording agreements that cover the responsibilities of both parties, monitoring the implementation of these agreements, and making improvements where required.

### Evidence guide

**Agreements** are in place with each organisation that provides training and/or assessment on the RTO's behalf.

Note: Agreements do not have to be in place in relation to this element when the RTO is engaging contract trainers/assessors. Contractors are included under Elements 1.3 and 1.4.

**Training and/or assessment services are monitored** to ensure that they are being adhered to and that improvements are made, where required.

**Improvements to arrangements** for the establishment, monitoring and implementation of agreements are demonstrated.

### Relevant conditions of registration

The following condition of registration relates to this element:

- governance.

## Explanatory notes

### *Setting up agreements*

You are accountable for the quality of training and assessment provided on your behalf. It is therefore essential that these arrangements be underpinned by a clearly articulated agreement that fully expresses the roles and responsibilities of each party. The level of documentation should be appropriate to the level of complexity of the arrangements with partners and the level of risk to the quality of training outcomes for clients. The roles and responsibilities specified in the agreements could include arrangements for:

- ensuring that training and assessment and client services are appropriate and continuously improved
- developing, monitoring and reviewing your training and assessment strategies
- ensuring that staff, facilities and equipment are in place, as described in training and assessment strategies
- providing information to clients on training, assessment and client support services, and on their rights and responsibilities
- where relevant, ensuring that employers and others are engaged in the development, delivery and monitoring of training and assessment
- providing support services to learners
- managing records
- issuing qualifications and statements of attainment
- managing complaints and appeals
- developing and implementing management systems.

### *Monitoring agreements*

Once agreements have been established they are monitored to ensure that both parties are meeting their obligations and that the services being provided comply with the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*. The manner in which you monitor quality within your organisation could be broadened to apply to any partner organisation(s). Monitoring activities could include:

- regular management data reports, including client feedback
- site visits to the organisation
- assessment validation processes
- sharing of professional development activities.

### *Improving arrangements*

Evidence that improvements to agreements are being made could include:

- clients' feedback on services and improvements
- documented redefinition of roles and responsibilities
- changes to accountability requirements
- changes to processes for the review of agreements.

Including the review of these improvements in your continuous improvement cycle will ensure that the agreements continue to satisfy the requirements of the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.

## Intent

Records maintained by the RTO support the continuous improvement of its operations and provide evidence of compliance with the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.

## Key actions

The RTO uses a systematic approach that ensures it maintains all records relevant to its operations as an RTO, including the continuous improvement of its operations.

## Evidence guide

Records are **systematically managed**.

Records for **demonstrating compliance** with the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* are maintained.

**Staff** meet their **responsibilities** for records management.

The **effectiveness** of records management is **monitored and reviewed**.

The **continuous improvement** of record management systems is **demonstrated**.

## Relevant conditions of registration

The following conditions of registration relate to this element:

- interactions with the registering body
- compliance with legislation
- certification and issuing of qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

## Explanatory notes

### *Systematically managing records*

By managing records systematically, you ensure that they are accurate, can be easily accessed and that confidentiality is maintained.

You could demonstrate that you manage records systematically by providing documentation showing that:

- information is collected in accordance with documented procedures
- information collected from and about learners meets the requirements of state and territory registering bodies and licensing authorities, where relevant

- records are kept in a consistent format and can be easily accessed
- records are checked for accuracy and currency
- records are routinely backed up and effectively protected
- records are archived so that they are accessible and protected
- you meet requirements for retention, archiving and retrieval of information, in order to satisfy with licensing authorities' requirements.

### *Using records to demonstrate compliance*

Registration and audit is an evidentiary process and records can provide relevant evidence. You will need to determine which records are necessary to demonstrate that your operations comply with the

AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.

You could consider providing records for the following operations:

- managing continuous improvement activities and systems
- documenting training and assessment strategies
- establishing and verifying trainer and assessors' competencies
- managing assessment and assessment validation processes
- managing and responding to complaints and appeals
- managing training provided on your organisation's behalf
- issuing of appropriate certification, qualifications or statements of attainment to learners
- ensuring compliance with legislative requirements
- seeking and responding to feedback from clients and stakeholders.

### *Staff responsibilities*

When administrative and training and assessment staff are fully informed about their responsibilities they are more likely to apply your record management processes consistently. Evidence that staff meet their responsibilities for records management could include:

- work instructions to guide staff who are responsible for records
- information provided about records management during staff induction
- minutes of staff meetings at which records management is discussed.

### *Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of records management*

Evidence of monitoring and review could include:

- audits or spot checks on records to ensure that they are current and accurate
- documented discussions with staff to confirm that they are carrying out their records management responsibilities
- feedback collected from stakeholders about the effectiveness of your records management and your improvements in response to feedback.

This activity may highlight changes that need to be made to records management processes (including records protection and security access), the need for staff professional development, and/or changes to the information provided to staff about records management.

### *Demonstrating continuous improvement of records management systems*

Evidence of continuous improvement could include:

- revised work instructions and other records documentation
- changes to staff responsibilities for records
- updated, computer-based records management systems
- training for staff on records management
- revised arrangements for archiving records.

# Understanding the Quality Indicators

The quality indicators form part of the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*. The three standards in the Essential Standards all focus on continuous improvements. The quality indicators will provide valuable data for you to identify areas for improvement in your training and assessment services and to gauge how well you are meeting your clients' needs.

The quality indicator data that is collected will also be used by registering bodies in their monitoring of the quality of your operations to minimise the risk of poor quality performance having a negative impact on clients or the standing of the Australian VET system. As a result of this monitoring, each RTO will have a risk profile which will contribute to decisions about the scheduling and scope of auditing.

Three quality indicators have been identified as useful for continuous improvement and determining the risk profiles of RTOs.

The quality indicators are:

- **Employer satisfaction** (competency development, and training and assessment quality). This indicator focuses on employers' evaluations of learners' competency development, its relevance to work and further training, and the overall quality of the training and assessment
- **Learner satisfaction** (learner engagement and competency development). This indicator focuses on the extent to which learners are engaging in activities likely to promote high-quality skill outcomes, as well as learners' perceptions of the quality of their competency development and the support they receive from RTOs
- **Competency completion rate**. This is calculated for qualifications and units of competency/modules delivered, based on data provided by RTOs on the previous calendar year's number of enrolments and qualifications completed and/or units of competency/modules awarded.

## Understanding the Conditions of Registration

The Conditions of Registration consist of nine non-negotiable requirements that form an RTO's contractual agreement with the registering body. The obligations in the Conditions of Registration include:

- arrangements for consumer protection, such as financial management and insurance
- agreement to operate according to the requirements of the national VET system; for example, by observing the protocols for national consistency in issuing Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) certification, and recognition of AQF certification issued by other RTOs.

While compliance with the Conditions of Registration may be audited, in order to minimise the regulatory burden in the VET sector this kind of audit will be conducted only where the registering body has identified risks. Risks would include an RTO's non-compliance with the Essential Standards, poor RTO performance against the quality indicators or complaints to a registering body about an RTO.

When a training organisation applies for initial registration or renewal of registration, its delegate signs a declaration that binds the organisation to operate in accordance with the *AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration*.

The conditions are:

### 1. Governance

The RTO's chief executive must ensure that the RTO complies with the *AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration*, and with any other national guidelines approved by the National Quality Council. This applies to all of the operations in its scope of registration as listed on the National Training Information Service.

### 2. Interactions with the registering body

The RTO's chief executive must ensure that the RTO cooperates with its registering body:

- in the conduct of audits and the monitoring of its operations
- by providing accurate and timely data relevant to measures of its performance
- by providing information about significant changes to its operations
- in the retention, archiving, retrieval and transfer of records consistent with its registering body's requirements.

### 3. Compliance with legislation

The RTO must comply with relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation and regulatory requirements that are relevant to its operations and its scope of registration. It must ensure that its staff and clients are fully informed of these requirements where they affect their duties or participation in vocational education and training.

### 4. Insurance

The RTO must hold insurance for public liability throughout its registration period.

## 5. Financial management

The RTO must protect fees paid in advance and have a fair and reasonable refund policy.

The RTO must have its accounts certified by a qualified accountant to Australian Accounting Standards, at least annually, and provide the certificate of accounts to its registering body on request. If the registering body reasonably deems it necessary, the RTO's chief executive must provide a full audit report of its financial accounts from a qualified and independent accountant.

## 6. Certification and issuing of qualifications and Statements of Attainment

The RTO must issue to people it has assessed as competent in accordance with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course, a qualification or statement of attainment (as appropriate) that:

- meets the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) requirements
- identifies the RTO by its national provider number from the National Training Information Service
- includes the Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo in accordance with the current conditions of use.

The RTO must retain learners' records of attainment of units of competence and qualifications for a period of 30 years.

## 7. Recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs

The RTO must recognise the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by any other RTO.

## 8. Accuracy and integrity of marketing

The RTO must ensure that its marketing and advertising of AQF qualifications to prospective clients is ethical, accurate and consistent with its scope of registration. The NRT logo must be employed only in accordance with its conditions of use.

## 9. Transition to Training Packages / expiry of accredited courses

The RTO must manage the transition from superseded Training Packages within 12 months of their publication on the National Training Information Service and also manage the transition from superseded accredited courses so that it delivers only currently endorsed Training Packages or currently accredited courses.

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## Explanatory notes

### *Condition 1*

'Guidelines' include any relevant nationally agreed guidelines (including AQTF 2007 guidelines), determinations or policies of the NQC or the Ministerial Council of Vocational and Technical Education, to which the NQC provides advice. Examples include the 'Training and assessment competencies to be held by trainers and assessors' (Appendix 2) and the 'NQC policy on languages for delivering and assessing vocational education and training'.

'All of its operations' includes those undertaken by other people or organisations on its behalf, such as those delivered through partnership arrangements.

### *Condition 2*

The registering body's authority to conduct audits and monitor operations is provided by the AQTF 2007 and the relevant state and territory training legislation that establishes the regulatory framework for the registration and audit of training organisations.

Nationally agreed arrangements govern the provision of data relevant to performance, including the quality indicators.

The information required when an RTO makes changes to its operations is set out in nationally agreed forms.

All nationally agreed arrangements and forms are available at <<http://www.training.com.au/AQTF2007>>.

### Condition 3

‘Relevant Commonwealth, state or territory legislation and regulatory requirements’ could include requirements about:

- (i) occupational health and safety
- (ii) workplace harassment, victimisation and bullying
- (iii) anti-discrimination, including equal opportunity, racial vilification and disability discrimination
- (iv) privacy
- (v) VET
- (vi) apprenticeships and traineeships (where applicable)
- (vii) child protection (where applicable)
- (viii) copyright.

### Condition 5

‘Qualified accountant’ means –

*either* a member of one of the following:

- (a) Certified Practising Accountants Australia
- (b) Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia
- (c) National Institute of Accountants

*or* someone who is otherwise registered as an auditor with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.

### Condition 6

‘Assessments’ include Recognition of Prior Learning.

‘Australian Qualifications Framework requirements’ means the current requirements as set out in the *AQF Implementation Handbook*, amended from time to time and available from <<http://www.aqf.edu.au>>.

The Nationally Recognised Training logo must be used in accordance with current specifications and conditions of use <<http://www.training.com.au>>.

### Condition 8

‘Ethical and accurate marketing’ means, at least:

- obtaining prior written permission from any person or organisation for use of marketing or advertising material which refers to them
- accurate representation of training products and services
- ensuring that advertised outcomes are consistent with AQF qualifications or Statements of Attainment
- only advertising AQF qualifications or units of competency if they are on the RTO’s scope of registration.

‘AQF qualifications’ broadly includes qualifications, units of competency, groups of units of competency such as skill sets, and accredited short courses.

## Terminology

The following terms are common to the VET sector and are used in the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* and this AQTF 2007 *Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration*. Each term is followed by a definition and, where appropriate, further explanation. If the definition of a word or phrase listed below is inconsistent with the definition of the same word or phrase used in state or territory legislation, the definition provided in that legislation takes precedence.

### *Access and equity*

Policies and approaches aimed at ensuring that vocational education and training are responsive to the individual needs of clients whose age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment or remote location may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of suitable outcomes. Access and equity do not mean that an RTO has to accept anyone as a client.

### *Accredited course*

A structured sequence of vocational education and training that has been accredited by a state or territory course-accrediting body and leads to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or statement of attainment.

### *Appeal*

A process whereby a client of an RTO, or other interested party, may dispute a decision made by the RTO. The decision made by the RTO may be an assessment decision or may be about any other aspect of the RTO's operations.

### *Apprenticeship/ traineeship*

A structured training arrangement for a person employed under an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract. It usually involves the person receiving training and being assessed both on and off the job.

### *Apprenticeship/ traineeship training contract*

A contract governing the terms of an apprenticeship or traineeship that is made between an employer and a person employed by them as an apprentice or trainee. The contract must be registered with the relevant state or territory's government department or agency in accordance with that state's or territory's legislation. The training provided under the contract must be delivered by an RTO approved by the state or territory's department or agency and a training plan developed by the RTO must form the basis of the person's training and assessment.

### *Articulation*

The arrangements that facilitate the movement or progression of learners from one qualification or course to another, or from one education and training sector to another.

### *Assessment*

The process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed by the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a Training Package or by the learning outcomes of an accredited course.

### *Assessment guidelines*

The endorsed component of a Training Package that underpins assessment and sets out the industry's approach to valid, reliable, flexible and fair assessment.

### *Assessment tools*

The instrument(s) and procedures used to gather and interpret evidence of competence:

- (a) Instrument – the specific questions or activity used to assess competence by the assessment method selected. An assessment instrument may be supported by a profile of acceptable performance and the decision-making rules or guidelines to be used by assessors.
- (b) Procedures – the information or instructions given to the candidate and the assessor about how the assessment is to be conducted and recorded.

<b>Audit</b>	A planned, systematic and documented process used to assess an RTO's compliance with the AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i> . State and territory registering bodies conduct independent audits as a condition of registration. RTOs can conduct internal audits to assess their compliance with the standards and their own policies and procedures as part of their continuous improvement process.
<b>Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)</b>	The policy framework that defines all qualifications recognised nationally in post-compulsory education and training in Australia. The AQF comprises titles and guidelines that define each qualification, as well as the principles and protocols covering cross-sectoral qualification links and the issuing of qualifications and statements of attainment.
<b>Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)</b>	<p>The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is a set of nationally agreed quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment services delivered by training organisations. The first version of AQTF was implemented in 2002. It was revised in 2005 and again in 2007 including the identification of excellence criteria.</p> <p>The AQTF 2007 comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i></li> <li>(b) AQTF 2007 <i>Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies</i></li> <li>(c) AQTF 2007 <i>Excellence Criteria</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Authenticity</b>	One of the rules of evidence. To accept evidence as authentic, an assessor must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the candidate's own work.
<b>Benchmarking</b>	The continuous process of measuring and comparing products, services and practices with comparable systems or organisations both inside and outside the VET sector for the purpose of continuous improvement.
<b>Chief executive</b>	The most senior executive of an RTO.
<b>Client</b>	A learner, enterprise or organisation that uses or purchases the services provided by an RTO.
<b>Client services</b>	The services provided by an RTO to clients in order to assist and support the successful achievement of learning outcomes.
<b>Competency</b>	The broad concept of industry competency concerns the ability to perform particular tasks and duties to the standard of performance expected in the workplace. Competency requires the application of specified skills and knowledge relevant to effective participation in an industry, industry sector or enterprise.
<b>Complaints process</b>	A process by which a client of an RTO, or other interested parties, may raise a concern about the RTO's policies, procedures, services or products with a view to having them changed and improved.
<b>Continuous improvement</b>	A planned and ongoing process that enables an RTO to systematically review and improve its policies, procedures, products and services to generate better outcomes for clients and to meet changing needs. It allows the RTO to constantly review its performance against the AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i> and to plan ongoing improvements. Continuous improvement involves collecting, analysing and acting on relevant information from clients and other interested parties, including the RTO's staff.

<b>Contractors</b>	Individuals who are engaged by an RTO through a contractual arrangement to undertake training and assessment. Contractors are included in the group 'staff' for the purposes of the AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i> .
<b>Course accrediting body</b>	The authority responsible, under the VET legislation and decision-making framework of a particular state or territory, for accrediting courses for delivery both inside and outside Australia.
<b>Credit transfer</b>	Credit transfer assesses the initial course or subject that an individual is using to claim access to, or the award of credit in, a destination course. The assessment determines the extent to which the client's initial course or subject is equivalent to the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards in a qualification. This may include credit transfer based on formal learning that is outside the AQF.
<b>Currency</b>	One of the rules of evidence. In assessment, currency relates to the age of the evidence presented by a candidate to demonstrate that they are still competent. Competency requires demonstration of current performance, so the evidence collected must be from either the present or the very recent past.
<b>Data</b>	The information collected about aspects of an RTO's operations and performance.
<b>Dimensions of competency</b>	Dimensions are part of the broad concept of competency, which includes all aspects of work performance as represented by task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills.
<b>Direct supervision</b>	Means that a person conducting training who does not hold the training competencies determined by the National Quality Council (NQC) receives regular guidance, support and direction from a person designated by the RTO who does hold those training competencies determined by the NQC. It is not necessary for the supervising person to be present during all training delivery.
<b>Documented</b>	Recorded in written form.
<b>Essential Standards for Registration</b>	The standards an organisation must meet in order to become a registered training organisation (RTO) and maintain its registration. The AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i> comprise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) standards and underpinning elements</li> <li>(b) conditions of registration</li> <li>(c) quality indicators in relation to the standards.</li> </ul>
<b>Excellence criteria</b>	A set of criteria in the AQTF 2007 against which an RTO may self-evaluate for quality improvement, or be formally evaluated on a voluntary basis in order to seek recognition as either 'quality committed' or 'outstanding'.
<b>Fair and reasonable refund policy</b>	Criteria used by an RTO to develop its refund policy, and used by clients and interested parties to form a judgement of that policy. A fair and reasonable refund policy is one free from bias, dishonesty and injustice. While taking account of the RTO's business requirements, the policy also takes into account unforeseen circumstances that may befall a person and affect their ability to continue their training (for example, long-term illness or injury).

<i>Fairness</i>	One of the principles of assessment. Fairness in assessment requires consideration of the individual candidate's needs and characteristics, and any reasonable adjustments that need to be applied to take account of them. It requires clear communication between the assessor and the candidate to ensure that the candidate is fully informed about, understands and is able to participate in, the assessment process, and agrees that the process is appropriate. It also includes an opportunity for the person being assessed to challenge the result of the assessment and to be reassessed if necessary.
<i>Flexibility</i>	One of the principles of assessment. To be flexible, assessment should reflect the candidate's needs; provide for recognition of competencies no matter how, where or when they have been acquired; draw on a range of methods appropriate to the context, competency and the candidate; and support continuous competency development.
<i>Flexible learning and assessment</i>	An approach to VET that allows a range of learning and assessment strategies to be adopted in a variety of learning environments, in order to cater for differences in individual learning interests, needs, styles, and opportunities.
<i>Industry</i>	Representative bodies that have a stake in the training, assessment and client services provided by RTOs. These could include industry skills councils, industry associations, unions, regulatory bodies, licensing bodies and group training companies (not an exhaustive list).
<i>Learner</i>	An individual who is receiving, responding to and processing information in order to acquire and develop competence. This incorporates the processes of preparing and presenting for assessment.
<i>Learning</i>	The process followed by a learner. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) <b>Formal learning</b> refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of a formal qualification or award (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree)</li> <li>(b) <b>Non-formal learning</b> refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction but does not lead to the attainment of a formal qualification or award (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business)</li> <li>(c) <b>Informal learning</b> refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example, the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative).</li> </ul>
<i>Learning program</i>	See Training program.
<i>Management system</i>	The framework of structures, policies and processes used to ensure that the organisation can achieve its objectives.
<i>Moderation of assessment</i>	A process which involves assessors in discussing and reaching agreement about assessment processes and outcomes in a particular industry or industry sector. It enables assessors to develop a shared understanding of the requirements of specific Training Packages, including the relevant competency standards and assessment guidelines, the nature of evidence, how evidence is collected and the basis on which assessment decisions are made.

<b>National Quality Council (NQC)</b>	<p>A committee of the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education. The NQC has a role in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) providing the Ministerial Council with advice on the operation of the AQTF 2007 and any changes to it that are considered necessary</li> <li>(b) providing the state and territory registering and course-accrediting bodies with information and advice on implementation of the AQTF 2007</li> <li>(c) providing the Ministerial Council with information and advice on the operation of the AQTF 2007 in each state and territory, including advice on their registration, audit and related processes, and on the Commonwealth processes that support the AQTF 2007.</li> </ol>
<b>National recognition</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Recognition by an RTO of the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by all other RTOs, thereby enabling national recognition of the qualifications and statements of attainment issued to any person</li> <li>(b) Recognition by each state and territory's registering body of the training organisations registered by any other state or territory's registering body and of its registration decisions</li> <li>(c) Recognition by all state and territory course-accrediting bodies and registering bodies of the courses accredited by each state or territory's course-accrediting body and of its accreditation decisions.</li> </ol>
<b>National Skills Framework (NSF)</b>	<p>The system of VET that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) applies nationally</li> <li>(b) is endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education.</li> </ol>
<b>National Training Information Service (NTIS)</b>	<p>The national register for recording information about RTOs, Training Packages and accredited courses. NTIS is part of the National Skills Framework.</p>
<b>Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo</b>	<p>The logo used nationally to signify that training and assessment products and services meet the requirements agreed under the National Skills Framework.</p>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p>The consequences of actions implemented by an RTO to achieve quality training, assessment and client services.</p>
<b>Outcomes-focused auditing</b>	<p>An audit approach in which the primary role for the audit team is to confirm that outcomes from RTO processes meet the requirements of the standards. This decision will be informed by data collected in relation to quality indicators and other evidence provided by the RTO.</p>
<b>Partners/Partnership</b>	<p>Two or more parties in a working relationship who are creating added value for clients and the community.</p>
<b>Performance</b>	<p>The outcomes achieved from processes, products and services that permit evaluation relative to goals, trends and comparisons.</p>
<b>Policy</b>	<p>A documented statement of a definite course of action that is to be adopted and implemented.</p>
<b>Principles of assessment</b>	<p>To ensure quality outcomes, assessment should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fair</li> <li>• flexible</li> <li>• valid</li> <li>• reliable</li> <li>• sufficient.</li> </ul>

<i>Procedure</i>	A documented method or set of instructions that describes how a process is carried out.
<i>Process</i>	The systematic actions, people and resources required to achieve an outcome.
<i>Qualification</i>	Formal certification in the VET sector by an RTO that a person has satisfied all requirements of the units of competency or modules that comprise an AQF qualification, as specified by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a nationally endorsed Training Package, or</li> <li>(b) an accredited course that provides training for that qualification.</li> </ul>
<i>Quality</i>	The ability of a set of inherent characteristics of a product, system or process to meet specified standards or objectives and fulfil the expectations of customers and interested parties.
<i>Quality indicators</i>	The Quality indicators in the AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i> are a set of data which, considered in the context of the RTO's business, provide a measure of the RTO's performance and the quality of outcomes it is achieving for clients.
<i>Recognition of prior learning (RPL)</i>	An assessment process that assesses an individual's non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of, a qualification.
<i>Record</i>	A written, printed or electronic document providing evidence that activities have been performed.
<i>Registered Training Organisation (RTO)</i>	A training organisation registered by a state or territory registering body in accordance with the AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i> within a defined scope of registration. A training organisation must be registered in order to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications.
<i>Registering body</i>	The authority responsible, under the VET legislation and decision-making framework of a particular state or territory, and in accordance with the AQTF 2007 <i>Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies</i> , for registering training organisations, including all the processes relating to registration and the imposition of sanctions on RTOs.
<i>Registration</i>	Formal recognition by a state or territory registering body, in accordance with the AQTF 2007 <i>Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies</i> , that a training organisation meets the requirements of the AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i> . A training organisation must be registered in order to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications.
<i>Reliability</i>	One of the principles of assessment. Reliability refers to the degree to which evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and results in consistent assessment outcomes. Reliability requires the assessor to have the required competencies in assessment and relevant vocational competencies (or to assess in conjunction with someone who has the vocational competencies). It can only be achieved when assessors share a common interpretation of the assessment requirements of the unit(s) being assessed.
<i>Rules of evidence</i>	These are closely related to the principles of assessment and provide guidance on the collection of evidence to ensure that it is valid, sufficient, authentic and current.

<b>Sanction</b>	An action that a state or territory registering body imposes on an RTO for non-compliance with the AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i> . Sanctions may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the imposition of specific conditions on the RTO's registration (which can cover any aspect of its registration, including its scope of registration, the locations where it may provide training, or the type of delivery and assessment activities it may provide)</li> <li>(b) amendment of registration (including a reduction in the RTO's scope of registration)</li> <li>(c) suspension of registration</li> <li>(d) cancellation of registration.</li> </ul>
<b>Scope of registration</b>	The particular services and products an RTO is registered to provide. The RTO's scope defines the specific AQF qualifications, units of competency and accredited courses it is registered to provide, and whether it is registered to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) both training delivery and assessment services, and to issue the relevant AQF qualifications and statements of attainment, or</li> <li>(b) only assessment services, and to issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff</b>	Individuals working for the RTO, including contractors.
<b>Stakeholders</b>	Individuals or organisations affected by, or who may influence, the RTO's services but who are not directly involved in purchasing or using the RTO's services.
<b>Statement of Attainment</b>	Formal certification in the VET sector by an RTO that a person has achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) part of an AQF qualification, or</li> <li>(b) one or more units of competency from a nationally endorsed Training Package, or</li> <li>(c) all the units of competency or modules comprising an accredited short course (meaning an accredited course that does not meet the requirements for a full AQF qualification).</li> </ul>
<b>Sufficiency</b>	One of the principles of assessment and also one of the rules of evidence. Sufficiency relates to the quality and quantity of evidence assessed. It requires collection of enough appropriate evidence to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly. Supplementary sources of evidence may be necessary. The specific evidence requirements of each unit of competency provide advice on sufficiency.
<b>System</b>	A series of processes that are inter-related and repeatedly provide quality outcomes.
<b>Training</b>	The process used by an RTO to facilitate learning.
<b>Training and assessment strategy</b>	A framework that guides the learning requirements and the teaching, training and assessment arrangements of a vocational education and training qualification. It is the document that outlines the macro-level requirements of the learning and assessment process, usually at the qualification level.
<b>Training Package</b>	A nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment guidelines and AQF qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.
<b>Training plan</b>	A documented program of training and assessment required for an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract. It is developed by an RTO in consultation with the parties to the contract as the basis for training and assessing a person undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship.

### *Training program*

A program (also known as a learning program), developed by an RTO, that meets the training and assessment requirements of a qualification from a Training Package, one or more designated units of competency, or an accredited course. The training program may specify such matters as essential and elective units, the sequence and timing of training and assessments, and the resources required. It may form part of a training and assessment strategy.

### *Unit of competency*

Specification of industry knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance expected in the workplace.

### *Validation of assessment*

A process for ensuring that the way a unit of competency or group of units is assessed, and the evidence collected through these assessments, is consistent with the requirements of the unit or group of units, of competency and of industry. It includes validating the assessment process, the assessment tools and instruments, the evidence collected using tools and instruments, and the interpretation of that evidence to make a judgement of competence in relation to the same unit(s) of competency.

Validation may be undertaken before, during and after the actual assessment activity occurs and may include both formative and summative assessment. The latter includes assessment for the purpose of granting RPL.

### *Validity*

One of the principles of assessment and also one of the rules of evidence. Assessment is valid when the process is sound and assesses what it claims to assess. Validity requires that:

- (a) assessment against the units of competency must cover the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance
- (b) assessment of knowledge and skills must be integrated with their practical application
- (c) judgement of competence must be based on sufficient evidence (that is, evidence gathered on a number of occasions and in a range of contexts using different assessment methods). The specific evidence requirements of each unit of competency provide advice on sufficiency.

### *Vocational competency*

Vocational competency in a particular industry consists of broad industry knowledge and experience, usually combined with a relevant industry qualification. A person who has vocational competency will be familiar with the content of the vocation and will have relevant current experience in the industry. Vocational competencies must be considered on an industry-by-industry basis and with reference to the guidance provided in the Assessment Guidelines of the relevant Training Package.

## Key AQTF 2007 documents explained

AQTF 2007 is a streamlined, nationally consistent system for maintaining and improving the quality of training and skills outcomes for clients of the training system. The AQTF 2007 standards, supporting resources and guidelines for stakeholders in the system are described below.

Document title	Content/Purpose
<i>AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration</i>	<p>Lists the AQTF 2007 requirements for RTOs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a set of conditions (Conditions of Registration) to be met while operating as a training provider</li> <li>• three standards relating to training and assessment, client services and management systems</li> <li>• a set of quality indicators, or data to be collected, to help the RTO continuously improve its training and assessment, and to help the registering body to monitor the quality of the RTO's operations.</li> </ul>
<i>AQTF 2007 Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration</i>	<p>This AQTF 2007 <i>Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration</i> has been prepared to help RTOs, registering bodies and auditors to interpret and apply the standards.</p> <p>The guide explains what the AQTF 2007 is, and gives guidance on evidence which might indicate that an RTO is achieving and continuously improving the outcomes required.</p> <p>A number of other nationally agreed tools will be available on-line to assist RTOs in the continuous improvement of their services, including an RTO self-assessment guide and an RTO guide to preparation for audit.</p>
<i>AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria</i>	<p>Contains guidelines for RTOs wishing to apply for recognition as either a quality-committed or an outstanding RTO by meeting the Excellence Criteria of the AQTF 2007. Application for assessment against the Excellence Criteria is voluntary, and is made under a separate process from registration against the Essential Standards. RTOs achieving this recognition will still need to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i>.</p> <p>Additional supporting documents for the Excellence Criteria will provide guidance for applicants, evaluators and administrators.</p>
<i>AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies</i>	<p>The standards for registering bodies consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• three standards</li> <li>• quality indicators for assessing performance against the standards</li> <li>• a set of operational protocols to ensure national recognition of registration decisions.</li> </ul> <p>As in the AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i>, continuous improvement is integrated into the Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies. Registering bodies are required to report annually to the National Quality Council on their performance against the standards.</p> <p>Nationally agreed guidelines and tools support registering bodies in implementing the streamlined regulatory model, and in engaging industry and regulators of licensed occupations to build confidence in training outcomes.</p>

Document title	Content/Purpose
<i>AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Risk Management</i>	<p>The AQTF 2007 <i>National Guideline for Risk Management</i> establishes a nationally consistent risk-management approach to be used by all state and territory registering bodies in monitoring the quality of training provided by RTOs. They will inform decisions about targeting, frequency, scope and depth of audits, including which conditions of registration, if any, are targeted for audit. RTOs with a low risk rating and high-quality outcomes against the standards can expect less regulatory intervention from registering bodies.</p> <p>Consistent with the spirit and intent of the AQTF 2007 to drive continuous improvement, the guideline specifies that actions taken by the RTO and the registering body must focus on enabling the RTO to move along a pathway towards a low-risk rating.</p>
<i>AQTF 2007 Audit Handbook</i>	<p>Registering bodies promote national consistency in the conduct of audits by their auditors and engage industry stakeholders in the auditing process to build their confidence in training outcomes.</p> <p>Several nationally agreed guides and tools promote audit consistency. The AQTF 2007 <i>Audit Handbook</i>, together with this AQTF 2007 <i>Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration</i>, provides key tools for auditors in applying the outcomes-focused audit model. The handbook describes the principles that underpin a nationally consistent, risk-managed approach to AQTF 2007 audits and has information about the administration of the audit process, to assist staff working in registering bodies.</p>
<i>AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Audit Moderation</i>	<p>This document provides a framework for capacity building and for continuous improvement in auditors' performance. It also describes the moderation processes used to ensure that auditors have a consistent approach.</p>
<i>AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Managing Non-Compliance</i>	<p>This guideline describes how a registering body responds to an RTO's non-compliance with the AQTF 2007 <i>Essential Standards for Registration</i>. The objectives in responding to non-compliance are to manage risks to clients and to the integrity of the training system, and to ensure that an RTO takes steps to rectify the non-compliance and prevent its recurrence.</p>
<i>AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Industry Regulator Engagement</i>	<p>This document is for registering bodies and regulators of licensed occupations. It establishes how industry regulators and registering bodies can work together in quality assurance arrangements.</p> <p>The specific arrangements for each particular occupation are documented in a Memorandum of Agreement between the registering body and each industry regulator body in the registering body's jurisdiction.</p>

<i>Document title</i>	<i>Content/Purpose</i>
<i>AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Responding to Complaints about Vocational Education and Training Quality</i>	<p>There is a nationally agreed complaint-handling process available to resolve concerns of any clients of the vocational education and training system. The AQTF 2007 <i>National Guideline for Responding to Complaints about Vocational Education and Training Quality</i> document the approach to complaint handling and resolution for complaints that are lodged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about the quality of training and services from RTOs</li> <li>• from all clients including learners, employers, industry and occupational licensing bodies</li> <li>• about the actions and services of a state or territory registering or course accrediting body.</li> </ul>

## Training and assessment competencies to be held by trainers and assessors

### Determination of the National Quality Council 29 March 2007

The AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* specify the requirements to be met by RTOs throughout their period of registration. The National Quality Council is responsible for determining the training and assessment competencies to be held by trainers and assessors in accordance with Element 1.4 of the standards, as set out below.

**Standard 1** The RTO provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations.

**Element 1.4** Training and assessment are delivered by trainers and assessors who:

- (a) have the training and assessment competencies determined by the National Quality Council or its successors
- (b) have relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and
- (c) continue to develop their vocational and training and assessment competencies to support continuous improvement in the delivery of RTO services.

The current National Quality Council policy in relation to Standard 1.4 (a) is shown below.

#### Trainers must:

- (i) hold the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104) from the Training and Assessment Training Package, or
- (ii) be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies, or
- (iii) hold the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training from the superseded Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98), or
- (iv) be able to demonstrate that prior to 23 November 2005 they had been assessed as holding equivalent competencies to the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training from the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98), or work under the direct supervision\* of a person who has the competencies specified in (i) or (ii) or (iii) or (iv) above, and  
be able to demonstrate vocational competencies at least to the level of those being delivered.

**Note:** Direct supervision is achieved when a person delivering training on behalf of the RTO has regular guidance, support and direction from a person designated by the RTO who has the trainer competencies in (i), (ii), (iii) or (iv) above and who monitors and is

accountable for the training delivery. It is not necessary for the supervising person to be present during all training delivery.

**Assessors must:**

- (i) hold the following three competencies from the Training and Assessment Training Package (TAA04):
  - (a) TAAASS401A Plan and organise assessment
  - (b) TAAASS402A Assess competence
  - (c) TAAASS404A Participate in assessment validation, or
- (ii) be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies to all three units of competency listed in (i), or
- (iii) hold the following competencies from the superseded Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98):
  - BSZ401A Plan assessment,
  - BSZ402A Conduct assessment, and
  - BSZ403A Review assessment, or
- (iv) be able to demonstrate that prior to 23 November 2005 they had been assessed as holding equivalent competencies to all three units of competency listed in (iii) above.

**Note:** If a person does not have the assessment competencies as defined in (i) (ii), (iii) or (iv) above and the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed, one person with all the assessment competencies listed in (i) (ii), (iii) or (iv) above and one or more persons who have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed may work together to conduct the assessments.

# AQTF 2007 National Publications

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## Registered Training Organisations will use these documents

### *AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration*

The Essential Standards apply to all RTOs from 1 July 2007. This publication lists AQTF 2007 requirements for RTOs including:

- three standards relating to training and assessment, client services and management systems
- a set of RTO quality indicators
- Conditions of Registration.

### *AQTF 2007 Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration*

This guide assists RTOs, registering bodies and auditors to interpret and apply the standards.

## State and Territory Registering Bodies will use these documents

### *AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies*

This document lists the standards that apply to the Registering Bodies in each state and territory. It includes:

- three standards
- quality indicators for assessing registering body performance
- a set of operational protocols to ensure national recognition of registration decisions.

### *AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Risk Management*

This guideline describes the nationally consistent risk management approach to be used by all state and territory registering bodies in decisions about scheduling and scope of audits.

### *AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Audit Moderation*

This guideline provides a framework for capacity building and for the development and continuous improvement of auditor performance. It describes the moderation processes used to ensure that auditors have a consistent approach to audit.

### *AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Managing Non-Compliance*

This guideline describes the nationally consistent approach each registering body uses to respond to the outcomes of audit that highlight any non-compliance with the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.

### *AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Industry Regulator Engagement*

This guideline describes how industry regulators can be engaged in the quality assurance arrangements. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of the registering bodies and regulators and includes a set of principles, protocols and options for industry engagement.

### *AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Responding to Complaints about Vocational Education and Training Quality*

This guideline describes the nationally agreed complaint handling process available to resolve concerns about Vocational Education and Training Quality. It sets out principles, protocols and responses for investigating and resolving complaints and learning from the outcomes.

## Auditors will use this document

### *AQTF 2007 Audit Handbook*

This handbook is a key tool for auditors in applying the outcomes-focused audit model. The handbook describes the principles that underpin a nationally consistent, risk-managed approach to AQTF 2007 audits.

Auditors will also use the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* and the AQTF 2007 *Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration*

AQTF 2007 is underpinned by the principle of transparency. All stakeholders in the VET system should have access to documents detailing the different components of AQTF 2007. All national documents are available for download from the national website <<http://www.training.com.au/AQTF2007>>.

Excellence Criteria are effective from 1 January 2008. The Excellence Criteria focus on encouraging and recognising overall high performance in training providers. Application for assessment against the excellence Criteria is voluntary. The full suite of Excellence Criteria documents are also available from <<http://www.training.com.au/AQTF2007>>.

