

Quality Indicators

Handbook for

Registered Training

Organisations

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Introduction

Overview

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF 2007) Quality Indicators form part of the AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

Under the AQTF 2007, RTOs are required to collect and use data on these three Quality Indicators endorsed by the National Quality Council (NQC):

- Learner Engagement This indicator focuses on the extent to which learners are engaging in activities likely to promote high-quality skill outcomes and includes learner perceptions of the quality of their competency development and the support they receive or have received from RTOs.
- Employer Satisfaction This indicator focuses on employer evaluation of learner competency development
 and the relevance of learner competencies for work and further training, as well as employer evaluation of
 the overall quality of the training and assessment.
- Competency Completion This indicator shows the number of enrolments and qualifications completed and units of competency awarded in the previous calendar year by each RTO.

The NQC has endorsed the use of Quality Indicator data for two purposes:

- continuous improvement by RTOs
- risk assessments of RTOs by Registering Bodies.

The NQC has developed this Quality Indicators Handbook for Registered Training Organisations to provide advice to RTOs in how data from the Quality Indicators may be used as part of their continuous improvement activities, and to provide guidelines for reporting AQTF 2007 Quality Indicator summary reports to their Registering Body. For further information about how the Registering Body will use the information provided by RTOs as part of their risk assessment processes, see also the AQTF National Guideline for Use of the Quality Indicators by Registering Bodies and the AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Risk Management.

Policy background

The AQTF 2007 Quality Indicators underpin an evidence-based and outcomes-focused approach to quality assurance in Australian vocational education and training.

Collecting data from employers and learners helps RTOs to assess their performance against all of the AQTF Essential Standards for Registration and most of the underpinning Essential Elements. In short, the data can help support continuous improvement processes to ensure that:

- the RTO provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations
- the RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients
- management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders and the environment in which the RTO operates.

Data can also assist Registering Bodies assess risk associated with an RTO's operations and hence the scope of audit.

Standard learner and employer survey instruments and methodologies are available for RTOs to provide summary reports to Registering Bodies related to the AQTF 2007 Learner Engagement and Employer Satisfaction Quality Indicators. The Competency Completion Online System is available for RTO's to report their data on competency completion.

Ethical considerations

Surveys designed to measure learner engagement and employer satisfaction should be conducted ethically. "All human interaction, including the interaction involved in human research, has ethical dimensions. 'Ethical conduct' is more than simply doing the right thing; however, it involves acting in the right spirit, out of an abiding respect and concern for other people."

Consideration should be given to the following matters when surveying learners or employers:

- respecting the rights of the respondent
- safeguarding respondents' privacy
- maintaining the confidentiality of data and reports
- securing appropriate forms of consent
- · ensuring that surveys are well managed
- declaring potential conflicts of interest
- observing cultural and religious contexts
- · developing plans to manage unintended effects
- identifying dependent relationships
- managing appropriate use of incentives
- · providing feedback to respondents
- evaluating administrative operations and risks.

¹ National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (2007). *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. Canberra: Australian Government

Use of Quality Indicator data to support the RTO's continuous improvement activities

General considerations

The Quality Indicators give an overall picture of the outcomes being achieved by the RTO and how well it is meeting client needs. Information about the quality of training being provided by an RTO is relevant to a wide range of people. The key audiences are the RTO's management and their Registering Body. Other audiences may include learners, employers, senior management, individual staff members and potential learners and employers.

They provide valuable information that the RTO can use to assess their performance against the AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration and most of the underpinning Essential Elements. The data can contribute to evidence that:

- the RTO provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations
- the RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients
- management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO operates
- quality can be monitored over time to identify both improvements and any downward trends.

Learner and employer survey results provide RTOs with a basis for undertaking benchmarking activities with other RTOs, or to compare different respondent groups, if they decide to do this as part of continuous improvement processes.

Learner and employer survey data can be used to demonstrate the quality of the RTO's training operations, and to build confidence in the RTO.

Learner Engagement Quality Indicator

This measures several areas of education and training, including training quality, work readiness, training conditions and learner engagement. It taps into learner perceptions of competency development, the support provided by the RTO and learner engagement in activities likely to promote high quality skill outcomes.

Feedback from learners is used routinely in education systems and organisations to obtain information on the quality of education and training. Broadly, depending on the collection approach, such information can be used by RTOs to:

- support continuous improvement activities by helping RTOs assess their performance against the AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration and most of the underpinning Essential Elements, including whether:
 - the RTO provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations
 - the RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients
 - management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO operates
- provide alternative measures of education and training outcomes.
- attract, engage and retain learners.
- indicate whether learners are engaging in good learning practices.
- manage relationships with clients and stakeholders.

Employer Satisfaction Quality Indicator

This is designed to provide feedback on employers' perceptions of competency development, and training and assessment quality, including the relevance of learner competency to work and further training and overall quality of training and assessment.

Feedback from employers is used in education systems and organisations to obtain information on the quality of education and training. Broadly, employers' views provide a perspective on the quality of training and graduate outcomes that complement the perspective provided by learners and RTOs. In general, such information can be used by RTOs to support continuous improvement activities in the same way as data from the learner survey may be used. It can help RTOs:

- assess their performance against the AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration and most of the underpinning Essential Elements, including whether:
 - the RTO provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations
 - the RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients
 - management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO operates
- · provide proxy measures of education and training outcomes
- build and manage relationships with employers
- provide alternative measures of education and training outcomes
- attract, engage and retain learners
- indicate whether learners are engaging in good learning practices
- manage relationships with clients and stakeholders.

Competency Completion Quality Indicator

Competency completion data can be used by RTOs to:

- · gauge how well they are meeting client needs
- supplement information already collected by RTOs to inform continuous improvement planning
- develop relationships with key learner and employer stakeholders
- identify areas for improvement in training and assessment services.

Conditions of use

General considerations

AQTF 2007 Quality Indicator data and summary reports should be interpreted with caution and treated as indicative rather than definitive. Quality Indicator summary reports should not be used in false, deceptive or misleading ways, either because of what is stated or suggested, or because of what is omitted. All interpretations should be shaped by consideration of how the data has been collected, analysed and reported.

RTOs can make whatever declarations they feel are appropriate about their Quality Indicator data, provided disclosure accords with the Conditions of Use as outlined in this Handbook. The use of Quality Indicator data in public statements should only be for the purpose of assisting the public to develop informed judgements. Public comment must be supported by appropriate interpretation of the data and necessary qualifications and caveats.

The use of, or referral to, an RTO's data beyond that which is in the public domain requires the prior consent of the RTO, and prior consultation with the RTO to ensure accuracy of interpretation and reporting. Users of AQTF 2007 Quality Indicator data must not use the information to knowingly undermine the reputation or standing of an RTO.

Comparisons between RTO results are best made when RTOs are similar in terms of their organisational and educational characteristics. Quality Indicator information is not suitable for making simplistic comparisons between RTOs, and care should still be exercised even if comparisons are to be made across apparently comparable RTOs.

An RTO may find the most benefit to its quality improvement processes by looking at changes over time within the same qualification or organisational unit. The greatest value of the AQTF 2007 Quality Indicator information is likely to be derived when the information is considered over a period of years.

Requirement to provide Quality Indicator summary reports to Registering Bodies

Under their Conditions of Registration, RTOs agree to provide their Registering Body with accurate and timely data relevant to measures of their performance.

All RTOs will provide an annual summary report to their registering body against the three Quality Indicators. This return will be due on 30 June each year and will relate to the previous calendar year's activities.

The return will be in an agreed format and will comprise reports against the three Quality Indicators which each RTO may generate using the Survey Management, Analysis and Reporting Tool (SMART) and the Competency Completion Online System.¹

Templates for, and samples of summary reports which the RTO must provide to its Registering Body are found at Appendix 1 and 2 of this handbook.

In addition to the standard return relating to Quality Indicators, Registering Bodies may ask for additional information such as confirmation of management and contact arrangements. This is consistent with current arrangements about information sharing between RTOs and their Registering Bodies

A Statement of Assurance (Appendix 3) is provided for the information of RTOs. This outlines the arrangements for securing data provided by RTOs to Registering Bodies and to NCVER.

¹ In recognition of circumstances where the RTO is also an enterprise and where the use of the Employer Survey may be impracticable, these Enterprise RTOs may negotiate the provision of agreed relevant data, including enterprise specific data already collected, with their Registering Body. An Enterprise RTO is defined as an enterprise or organisation where training is not core business and where training is provided to their own employees.

Use of Quality Indicator summary report data by the Registering Body

Data from summary reports will be used for AQTF quality assurance and improvement processes only. Registering Bodies are bound by relevant legislation in their capacity to share data and will not release RTO Quality Indicator summary report data provided by the RTO to other parties except where required by legislation.

Each Registering Body requires the RTOs that are registered with them to provide a summary report of Quality Indicator data to assist in their risk assessment of the RTO. Regulatory activities are guided by the AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Use of the Quality Indicators by Registering Bodies and by the AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Risk Management which provides for risk assessment based on an RTO's performance against the nationally agreed Quality Indicators and assessment of the risk level attributed to their operations.

The risk assessment of an RTO by the registering body is a two-stage process.

Performance risk indicators determine the risk rating for an RTO. Each RTO is categorised as high, medium or low risk, based on current data for each of the performance risk indicators. This risk rating is used by the registering body as the starting point for determining whether additional quality assurance actions by the registering body are required. The risk rating is reviewed on the basis of new information about an RTO's performance and each time an application is received.

Supplementary risk indicators are used in conjunction with the performance risk indicators to determine the need for additional quality assurance by the registering body. Supplementary risk indicators are considered after the risk rating of an RTO has been determined by the performance risk indicators. .

Performance risk indicators focus on the performance of each RTO in delivering quality skills outcomes. The performance risk indicators are:

- history of audit compliance
- data from quality indicator summary reports
- history of complaints.

Supplementary risk indicators apply to the operating context of each RTO, to specified qualifications and units of competency, and also to particular regulatory contexts. The supplementary risk indicators are divided into two groups. The first group primarily influences the scheduling of audits and the second group primarily influences the scope of audits. This second group is integrated into the audit process and these risk indicators are examined during audit.

The responses by registering bodies to echo of these supplementary risk indicators are specified in Section 7.2 of the AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Risk Management.

The supplementary risk indicators that primarily influence the scheduling of audit include:

- the scope of the registration application
- delivery of training that leads to a licensed or regulated outcome

- the period since the RTO was last audited
- compliance with and value of government training contracts.

The supplementary risk indicators that primarily influence the scope of audit include:

- the RTO delivering training to overseas students studying in Australia
- the RTO having multiple sites
- the delivery of training offshore
- partnership or subcontracting arrangements
- the RTO accepting fees in advance from students
- the RTO delivering training to students under the age of 18
- the mode of delivery.

Tools included in the AQTF Quality Indicators Resource Package to assist RTOs in the use and reporting of Quality Indicator data

The Survey Management, Analysis and Reporting Tool (SMART)

SMART allows RTOs to enter, import, validate and analyse data, automate the production of data files and reports and access further survey resources and information. It helps RTOs to convert survey data into reports that they can use for quality management. SMART is a stand-alone program that provides features for:

- entering, importing, validating and analysing population and survey data
- · automated production of data files and reports
- accessing survey resources and information.

All resources can be accessed through www.training.com.au. For convenience, the list of resources on the following page has been hyperlinked to specific areas in the package.

hyperlink: www.training.com.au

SMART resources include:

- AQTF Online Survey System Guide
- AQTF SMART Guide
- Employer Guide
- Learner Guide
- RTO report
- SMART software

Registering Bodies will conduct information sessions for RTOs in regard to the AQTF 2007 Quality Indicators and in survey management, analysis and the reporting of data.

In addition, RTOs may contact the SMART System Administrator at HYPERLINK "mailto:aqtf2007@acer. edu.au" aqtf2007@acer.edu.au for further assistance.

Learner Engagement resources

The learner survey is designed to be conducted by RTOs on a routine basis to collect data from learners participating in nationally recognised training.

The learner survey and resources (see: http://www.acer.edu.au/aqtf/learnerqi.html) to assist the RTO in administering, coding and analysing the survey results include:

- Learner Questionnaire master
- Learner Questionnaire
- Learner Survey Codebook
- Learner Survey Guide

- Learner Survey Sample Cover Letter
- Learner Survey Sample Email
- Learner Survey System Guide.

Employer Satisfaction resources

The employer satisfaction survey (see: http://www.acer.edu.au/aqtf/employerqi.html) and resources to assist the RTO in administering, coding and analysing the survey results include:

Resources include:

- Employer Questionnaire master
- Employer Questionnaire
- Employer Survey Codebook
- Employer Survey Guide
- Employer Survey Sample Cover Letter
- Employer Survey Sample Email
- Employer Survey Sample Telephone Script
- Online Survey System Guide.

Competency Completion resources

The Competency Completion Online System (see: www.acer.edu.au/aqtf /completionqi.html) contains resources to assist RTOs in the collection, interpretation and reporting of competency completion information. This resource enables RTOs to provide data annually on training activities that occurred in the previous calendar year, including:

- the number of enrolments for each qualification code
- the number of qualifications completed for each qualification code
- the number of enrolments for each unit of competency or module
- the number of units completed for each unit of competency or module, and
- an indication of offshore operations.

Appropriate reports may be generated through the use of this tool to reflect whether the RTO is delivering in one state only or delivering in more than one state.

Appendix 1

and

Registering body repor						
	τ					
17 Nov 2008						
RTO Information						
NTIS number						
Name						
Street Address						
City/town/suburb						
State						
Post code						
Response count (number)						
		Lea	rners		Employe	ers
Population count (number)						
Response rate (per cent)						
Learner and employer feedbac	k					
			Lear	ners	Emp	loyers
Scale		ŀ	Average score	Average variation		Averag variati
All scales						
All scales Trainer Quality						
Trainer Quality						
Trainer Quality Effective Assessment						
Trainer Quality Effective Assessment Clear Expectations						
Trainer Quality Effective Assessment Clear Expectations Learning Stimulation Training Relevance Competency Development						
Trainer Quality Effective Assessment Clear Expectations Learning Stimulation Training Relevance Competency Development Training Resources						
Trainer Quality Effective Assessment Clear Expectations Learning Stimulation Training Relevance Competency Development Training Resources Effective Support						
Trainer Quality Effective Assessment Clear Expectations Learning Stimulation Training Relevance Competency Development Training Resources						

Information	Explanatory notes
Specific contexts to consider when interpreting survey results	
Main ways data has been used for continuous improvement	

Sample summary report to Registering Bodies – Learner Engagement and Employer Satisfaction Quality Indicators

Registering body report

17 Nov 2008

RTO Information

NTIS number	123456789
Name	Joe Bloggs RTO
Street Address	999 Goodluck Road
City/town/suburb	Happyville
State	VIC
Post code	3999

Learner and employer response

	Learners	Employers
Response count (number)	50	13
Population count (number)	60	20
Response rate (per cent)	83.3	65.0

Learner and employer feedback

	Lea	rners	Empl	oyers
Scale	Average score	Average variation	Average score	Average variation
All scales	58.0	33.3	59.8	32.7
Trainer Quality	53.2	15.2	54.7	12.4
Effective Assessment	62.0	20.6	57.7	21.4
Clear Expectations	57.6	25.3		
Learning Stimulation	67.1	18.2		
Training Relevance	60.0	26.4	59.0	16.0
Competency Development	50.3	17.3	60.5	17.3
Training Resources	58.4	18.9	55.6	15.7
Effective Support	64.7	22.2	62.0	9.3
Active Learning	47.5	20.6		
Overall Satisfaction	68.7	18.2	68.4	15.6

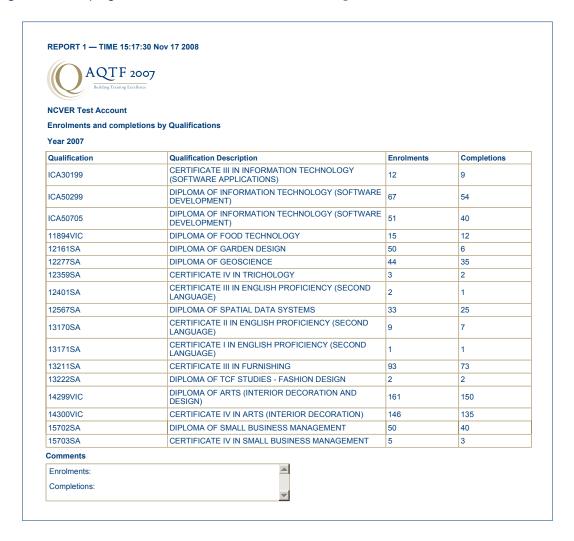
Survey contexts and use

Completion of this section is optional and may be used by the RTO to provide information and an explanation of the data provided.

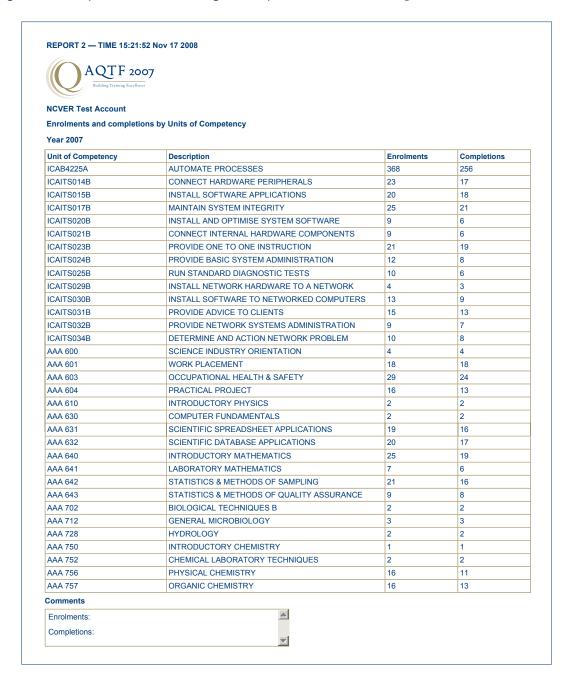
Information	Explanatory notes
Specific contexts to consider when interpreting survey results	
Main ways data has been used for continuous improvement	

Appendix 2

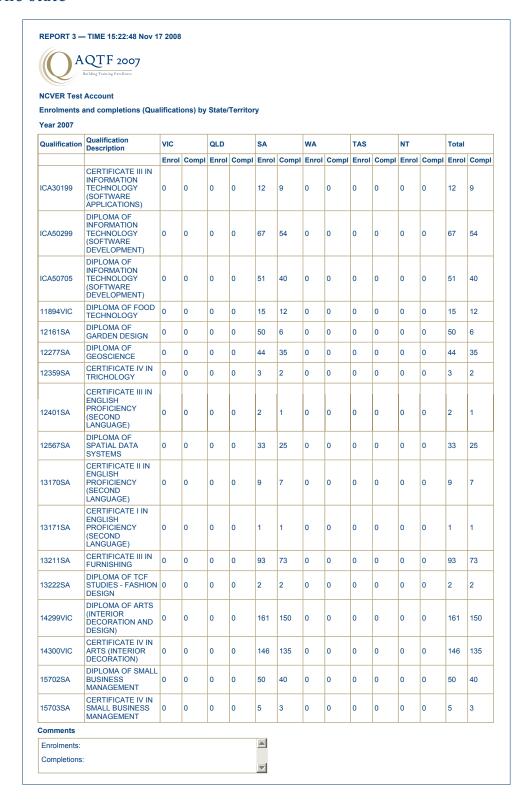
Sample report 1: RTOs complete this report to show enrolments and completions by qualifications when delivering in one state



Sample report 2: RTOs complete this report to show enrolments and completions by Units of Competency when delivering in one state



Sample report 3: RTOs complete this report to show enrolments and completions by (qualifications) by State/Territory when delivering in more than one state



Sample report 4: RTOs complete this report to show enrolments and completions (Units of Competency) by State/Territory when delivering in more than one state

	OTF 2007														
	Building Training Excellence														
NCVER Test															
	and completions (Unit	s of Co	ompete	ncy) by	y State/	Territo	ry								
Year 2007	B	140		01.0				1000							
Unit	Description	VIC	Compl	QLD	Compl	SA	Compl	WA	Compl	TAS	Compl	NT	Compl	Total	Compl
ICAB4225A	AUTOMATE PROCESSES	0	0	0	0	368	256	0	0	0	0	0	0	368	256
ICAITS014B	CONNECT HARDWARE PERIPHERALS	0	0	0	0	23	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	17
ICAITS015B	INSTALL SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS	0	0	0	0	20	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	18
ICAITS017B	MAINTAIN SYSTEM INTEGRITY	0	0	0	0	25	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	21
ICAITS020B	INSTALL AND OPTIMISE SYSTEM SOFTWARE	0	0	0	0	9	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	6
ICAITS021B	CONNECT INTERNAL HARDWARE COMPONENTS	0	0	0	0	9	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	6
ICAITS023B	PROVIDE ONE TO ONE INSTRUCTION	0	0	0	0	21	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	19
ICAITS024B	PROVIDE BASIC SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION	0	0	0	0	12	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	8
ICAITS025B	RUN STANDARD DIAGNOSTIC TESTS	0	0	0	0	10	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	6
ICAITS029B	INSTALL NETWORK HARDWARE TO A NETWORK	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3
ICAITS030B	INSTALL SOFTWARE TO NETWORKED COMPUTERS	0	0	0	0	13	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	9
ICAITS031B	PROVIDE ADVICE TO CLIENTS	0	0	0	0	15	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	13
ICAITS032B	PROVIDE NETWORK SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION	0	0	0	0	9	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	7
ICAITS034B	DETERMINE AND ACTION NETWORK PROBLEM	0	0	0	0	10	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	8
AAA 600	SCIENCE INDUSTRY ORIENTATION	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
AAA 601	WORK PLACEMENT	0	0	0	0	18	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	18
AAA 603	OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY	0	0	0	0	29	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	24
AAA 604	PRACTICAL PROJECT	0	0	0	0	16	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	13
AAA 610	INTRODUCTORY PHYSICS	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
AAA 630	COMPUTER FUNDAMENTALS	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
AAA 631	SCIENTIFIC SPREADSHEET APPLICATIONS	0	0	0	0	19	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	16
AAA 632	SCIENTIFIC DATABASE APPLICATIONS	0	0	0	0	20	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	17
AAA 640	INTRODUCTORY MATHEMATICS	0	0	0	0	25	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	19
AAA 641	LABORATORY	0	0	0	0	7	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	6

AAA 642	STATISTICS & METHODS OF SAMPLING	0	0	0	0	21	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	16
AAA 643	STATISTICS & METHODS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE	0	0	0	0	9	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	8
AAA 702	BIOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES B	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
AAA 712	GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
AAA 728	HYDROLOGY	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
AAA 750	INTRODUCTORY CHEMISTRY	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
AAA 752	CHEMICAL LABORATORY TECHNIQUES	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
AAA 756	PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY	0	0	0	0	16	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	11
AAA 757	ORGANIC CHEMISTRY	0	0	0	0	16	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	13
Comments															
Enrolments	S:														
Completion	ns:														
						$\overline{}$									

Sample 5: RTOs complete the Offshore Indicator field to show whether or not they are delivering nationally recognised training in an overseas location to learners who are not residents in Australia

Offshore Indicator The Offshore Indicator applies to nationally recognised VET delivered by RTOs in an overseas location to learners who are not residents of Australia. Selections made in this page will appear in the Summary table on the Home page. To maintain the Offshore Indicator: 1. Under RTO Details in the blue menu, click Offshore Indicator details 2. Select a Year 3. If your organisation is delivering offshore within the selected year, select Yes at Offshore Delivery Otherwise select No. 4. Click Save. Otherwise click Cancel and any changes made will be disregarded.

Appendix 3

Use of AQTF Quality Indicator Data

Statement of Assurance

The National Quality Council has agreed that Quality Indicator Data will only be used by Registered Training Organisations to undertake continuous improvement processes, and by state and territory Registering Bodies to inform RTOs' risk assessments. ACER and NCVER developed the three Quality Indicators and their associated data collection instruments under funding agreements with DEEWR on behalf of the National Quality Council.

Any use of the Quality Indicator data for any other purpose by any other organisation would be unauthorised and a clear breach of the decision reached by the NQC on behalf of the national training system.

Current Data Storage, Access and Security Situation

Data for the Learner Engagement and Employer Satisfaction Quality Indicators are held and managed locally by Registered Training Organisations. By holding and managing these data locally, RTOs ensure that third parties will not have access to Learner Engagement and Employer Satisfaction data unless provided to them by the provider.

Data for the Competency Completion Quality Indicator are held centrally in a secure online database managed by NCVER. Access to an RTO's data is password protected to ensure no third parties are able to gain access to these data.

The secure, centrally managed, Competency Completion data repository allows for the pre-population of AVETMISS data into the Competency Completion Online System. In keeping with the AQTF's goal of reducing the regulatory burden, pre-population of AVETMISS data will significantly reduce an RTO's compliance burden in relation to reporting competency completion for publicly funded training.

No third parties, including Registering Bodies, will have direct access to any RTO's Quality Indicator data held either centrally or locally. Registering Bodies will only have access to Quality Indicator data after it has been provided to them directly by the RTO.

