AQTF

Building Training Excellence

Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration

State and Territory Registering Bodies

Australian Capital Territory
ACT Accreditation and Registration Council
Tel: (02) 6205 7091
www.arc.act.gov.au

New South Wales
Vocational Education Training and Accreditation Board (VETAB)
Tel: (02) 9244 5335
www.vetab.nsw.gov.au

Northern Territory
Department of Education and Training
Tel: (08) 8901 1340
www.deet.nt.gov.au

Queensland
Department of Employment and Training
Tel: (07) 3247 5102
www.training.qld.gov.au/audit

South Australia
Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology
Tel: (08) 8226 3065
www.training.sa.gov.au

Tasmania
Tasmanian Qualifications Authority
Tel: (03) 6233 6364
www.tqa.tas.gov.au

Victoria
Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
Tel: (03) 9637 2806
www.vrqa.vic.gov.au

Western Australia
Training Accreditation Council WA
Tel: (08) 9441 1910
www.tac.wa.gov.au

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SECTION 1
INTRODUCTION TO AQTF

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 (VET) system. The AQTF was initially established in 2001 for implementation in 2002 and this version is effective from 1 July 2010.

The Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE), which includes all Ministers for VET in Australia, has approved these quality arrangements.

Components of the AQTF

The components of AQTF are:

AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration – Applicants seeking to become a registered training organisation (RTO) must meet these standards in order to be registered to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications. The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* includes nine Conditions of Registration and three Standards. The focus of these Standards is the demonstration of preparedness to deliver quality training and assessment services.

AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration – RTOs must meet these standards in order to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications. The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* includes nine Conditions of Registration and three Standards, with a strong focus on continuous improvement, as well as a requirement for RTOs to gather information on their performance against three Quality Indicators.

The Quality Indicators – The Quality Indicators have been designed to help RTOs conduct evidence-based and outcomes-focused continuous quality improvement, and assist a registering body to assess the risk of an RTO's operations. Under the AQTF, RTOs are required to collect and use data on three Quality Indicators which have been endorsed by the National Quality Council (NQC): Learner Engagement, Employer Satisfaction and Competency Completion.

AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies – The Registering Body is responsible for registering training organisations and for quality assuring the training and assessment services they provide, in accordance with the AQTF and relevant legislation within each jurisdiction. The Standards and a set of supporting National Guidelines provide a national quality assurance framework.

AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses – These standards apply to the course design for the vocational education and training (VET) accredited courses.

AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies – The AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies apply to course accrediting bodies that manage course accreditation under state and territory legislation. These standards focus on national consistency, client service and responsive management systems as well as specifying quality indicators and operating protocols for course accreditation functions.

AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria – These are criteria that RTOs may use voluntarily to continue improving the quality of their training and assessment and to gain recognition of their performance.

Key features of the AQTF

Outcomes focussed

The AQTF focuses on the quality of services and outcomes being achieved for clients rather than the inputs used to get there. This means that RTOs 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.

For this reason the AQTF includes national guidelines for a registering body to ensure consistent interpretation and implementation of AQTF.

Streamlined

The Standards for RTOs have been simplified and streamlined to focus on outcomes. The AQTF places the focus of quality assurance on training and assessment, client services and management systems.

Transparent

National guidelines, handbooks and guides are readily accessible through the national training website at www.training.com.au.

The beneficiaries of the AQTF

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 RTOs are delivering training and assessment services to 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, an RTO can also seek recognition of excellence.

Registering Body (the body which registers training organisations) is part of the national system of registration and audit that is outcomes-focused and risk-managed to streamline quality assurance processes. The registering body has clear Conditions and Standards by which to monitor and confirm that RTOs are providing quality training and assessment services.

SECTION 2
ABOUT THIS USERS' GUIDE

This guide supports the understanding and application of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* and explains its Conditions of Registration and the Standards. It also describes how the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* relates to the other parts of AQTF and the roles of the various stakeholders in supporting the framework.

The guide is to help RTOs interpret and apply the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* to their operations. RTOs can use the guide when conducting self-assessments against the Conditions and 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 describe the features of a compliant RTO and 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.

Auditors also use the guide, together with the AQTF Audit Handbook, to help them interpret and apply the Standards consistently when assessing applications for registration and conducting audits.

This Guide has been approved by the MCTEE National Senior Officials Committee (NSOC) and the National Quality Council (NQC), to support the operation of a national VET system. Associated guides include:

- *AQTF Audit Handbook*
- *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration*
- *AQTF National Guidelines for a Registering Body*, which includes:
  – AQTF National Guideline for Audit Consistency
  – AQTF National Guideline for Conducting Audits of the Inter-jurisdiction Operations of RTOs
  – AQTF National Guideline for Managing Non-compliance
  – AQTF National Guideline for Responding to Complaints about VET Quality
  – AQTF National Guideline for Risk Management
  – AQTF National Guideline for Industry Body Engagement

All AQTF national documents and templates are publicly available at www.training.com.au.

Terminology

Some terms used in this guide have been defined in Section 7. These terms are identified in the text in bold and coloured font.

SECTION 3
WHAT'S IN THE AQTF ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS AND STANDARDS FOR CONTINUING REGISTRATION?

The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* includes:

• Nine Conditions of Registration

• Three Standards, each comprising several elements

• Quality Indicators.

These are underpinned by:

A focus on outcomes

The Standards and their elements specify the key requirements to be met by each RTO. The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* 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.

The AQTF Quality Indicators support the outcomes focus of the Standards by giving an overall picture of how well an RTO is meeting client 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 Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing 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 the AQTF. Continuous improvement processes refer to the continual enhancement of an RTO's performance so that the changing needs of clients and industry continue to be met. Continuous improvement does not relate to actions to achieve compliance as such actions are considered rectifications.

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.

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 Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* are discussed in more detail in the following Sections of this guide.

SECTION 4
THE CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* includes 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 viability, as well as insurance

• Agreement to operate according to the requirements of the national VET system, for example, by observing the protocols of national consistency in issuing Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) certification, recognition of AQF certification issued by other RTOs, and data retention.

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 at renewal of registration in accordance with risk management guidelines. Risks would include an RTO's non-compliance with the AQTF Essential Standards, poor RTO performance against the quality indicators or complaints to a registering body about an RTO.

Section 5 provides suggestions in regards to each Condition under the following subheadings:

Explanatory notes

This is a brief explanation of how the Condition applies to the operations of an RTO.

Evidence of adherence to Condition

This section provides examples of how the RTO could respond to the requirements of the Condition as well as the evidence that could be presented at audit.

The conditions are detailed on the following pages.

Condition 1 – Governance

The RTO's Chief Executive must ensure that the RTO complies with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* and any national guidelines approved by the National Quality Council or its successors. This applies to all of the operations within the RTO's scope of registration, as listed on the National Training Information Service.

The RTO's senior officers and directors or substantial shareholders who are in a position to influence the management of the organisation must satisfy fit and proper person requirements unless these requirements have already been met through other legislative provisions.

The RTO must also explicitly demonstrate how it ensures the decision making of senior management is informed by the experiences of its trainers and assessors.

Explanatory notes

The RTO's Chief Executive is accountable for the way in which the RTO operates.

Senior officers and directors or substantial shareholders who are in a position to influence the management of the organisation must demonstrate that they satisfy 'fit and proper' person requirements.

The fit and proper person test is designed to identify any past behaviour of those who are in a position to influence, which may impact on the suitability of the RTO to be registered to provide vocational education and training.

Individuals who are in a position to influence include those who make or participate in making decisions that affect the business of the RTO or who have the capacity to affect significantly the RTO's operations and financial standing.

The RTO's core business is the provision of quality vocational education and training. Trainers and assessors provide input to business decisions so that these decisions promote quality vocational education and training. The RTO must have evidence that a process to include considerations of trainers and assessors experiences in decision making is consistently implemented.

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

Internal audit reports with RTO's Chief Executive sign off

- Minutes of meetings/similar where the RTO's Chief Executive takes a leadership role in monitoring and reviewing compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* and other relevant guidelines
- Communication by RTO's Chief Executive with RTO staff regarding requirements to maintain compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* and other relevant guidelines.

Deciding whether a person meets fit and proper person requirements

If the registering body deems that an applicant's senior officers, directors or substantial shareholders who are in a position to influence the management of the organisation do not meet fit and proper person requirements, the RTO's registration may be cancelled or suspended.

In assessing whether the applicant's senior officers, directors or substantial shareholders who are in a position to influence the management of the organisation meet fit and proper person requirements, the registering body may have regard to whether that person:

- has been convicted of a serious offence; and/or
- has ever had his, her or its RTO registration cancelled or suspended; and/or
- has ever had a condition imposed on his, her or its RTO registration; and/or
- has ever become bankrupt, applied to take the benefit of a law for the benefit of bankrupt or insolvent debtors, compounded with his or her creditors or assigned his or her remuneration for the benefit of creditors; and/or
- has ever been disqualified from managing corporations under Part 2D.6 of the Corporations Act 2001; and/or
- was involved in the business of the provision of courses by another provider who is covered by any of the above paragraphs at the time of any of the events that gave rise to the relevant prosecution or other action; and/or
- any other relevant matter.

Evidence of satisfying fit and proper person requirements could include:

- A Statutory Declaration by each of the RTO's senior officers, directors and substantial shareholders against the fit and proper person requirements established by the registering body (refer to *AQTF National Guidelines for a Registering Body*)
- A national police check for each of the RTO's senior officers, directors and substantial shareholders
- A record of satisfying fit and proper person requirements of other legislation.

Condition 2 – Interactions with the Registering Body

The RTO's Chief Executive must ensure that the RTO co-operates 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
- by providing information about significant changes to its ownership
- in the retention, archiving, retrieval and transfer of records consistent with its registering body's requirements
- by providing a statement demonstrating its financial viability, and/or its annual financial statements, and/or a business plan on request of the registering body.

Explanatory notes

RTOs are part of a system that requires them to be accountable for the management of their operations.

Accountability is tested, in part by the RTO's participation in external audits, through the data it reports and through the confirmation that the RTO remains financially viable.

It is the RTO's responsibility to ensure that the registering body is made aware of changes to its operations, for example, significant changes in management, change of address or company structure. These changes must be reported when they happen.

When an RTO ceases to operate the registering body must be provided with records of all students in the format required by the registering body.

The RTO must be able to demonstrate at the request of the registering body, that it has the financial capacity to deliver quality training and assessment outcomes at the time of request and into the future. The RTO may be asked to provide an independent assessment of its financial viability risk, or its annual financial statements, or business plans so that the registering body can complete an assessment of financial viability risk.

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence should demonstrate that the RTO has a history of co-operation with the Registering Body. This could include:

- The RTO's Chief Executive's cooperation with the registering body when scheduling audits, making relevant staff available for audit

- Collection and reporting of data, for example, National Quality Indicator data and client records, in the format required and in the required timelines

- Ensuring accuracy of information about the RTO on the National Training Information Service (NTIS) and other registers, for example, CRICOS

- Corresponding with the registering body regarding changes to the RTO's operations

- Providing financial viability risk assessments prepared by an independent accountant on request of the registering body (refer to *AQTF National Guidelines for Registering Body*)

- Providing financial statements as requested by the registering body

- Providing business and/or financial plans as requested by the registering body

- Providing regular, systematic review of legislative and regulatory requirements to ensure currency of information.

Condition 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 ensures that its staff and clients are fully informed of these requirements that affect their duties or participation in vocational education and training.

Explanatory notes

The RTO must systematically identify the legislation that relates to its operations; ensure that it is complying with this legislation; and, that it continues to comply with it.

When staff commence working for the RTO (and on an ongoing basis as required) they are informed of the impact the legislation has on the way in which they carry out their duties.

Clients are provided with information about relevant legislation and their related rights and responsibilities.

Evidence of adherence to the Condition
Evidence could include:

- Records of participation by staff in induction and professional development programs. These programs should include information on relevant legislation and related rights and responsibilities

- Records of participation by learners in orientation programs that include information on relevant legislation and related rights and responsibilities

- Information provided to staff about legislation and its impact on the way they work

- Information provided to students that describes how legislation affects their participation in education and training

- Internal audit reports and workplace safety reports that identify any potential breaches of legislation and action taken by the RTO.

Condition 4 – Insurance

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

Explanatory notes

The RTO must have uninterrupted public liability insurance that is at a level suitable for the size and scope of its operations.

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- Certificates of currency for public liability insurance for each year that the RTO operates
- Correspondence with insurers recording the determinations made to ensure that insurance was at an appropriate level and that this level of insurance was reviewed at renewal and when the size and scope of the RTO's operations changed.

Condition 5 – Financial Management

The RTO must be able to demonstrate to its registering body, on request, that it is financially viable at all times during the period of its registration.

The RTO must provide the following fee information to each client:

- The total amount of all fees including course fees, administration fees, materials fees and any other charges
- Payment terms, including the timing and amount of fees to be paid and any non-refundable deposit/administration fee
- The nature of the guarantee given by the RTO to complete the training and/or assessment once the student has commenced study in their chosen qualification or course
- The fees and charges for additional services, including such items as issuance of a replacement qualification testamur and the options available to students who are deemed not yet competent on completion of training and assessment, and
- The organisation's refund policy.

Where the RTO collects student fees in advance it must ensure it complies with one of the following acceptable options:

- (Option 1) the RTO is administered by a state, territory or commonwealth government agency, or
- (Option 2) the RTO holds current membership of an approved Tuition Assurance Scheme, or
- (Option 3) the RTO may accept payment of no more than $1000 from each individual student prior to the commencement of the course. Following course commencement, the RTO may require payment of additional fees in advance from the student but only such that at any given time, the total amount required to be paid which is attributable to tuition or other services yet to be delivered to the student does not exceed $1,500, or
- (Option 4) the RTO holds an unconditional financial guarantee from a bank operating in Australia for no less than the full amount of funds held by the RTO which are prepayments from students (or future students) for tuition to be provided by the RTO to those students
- (Option 5) the RTO has alternative fee protection measures of equal rigour approved by the registering body.

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

Explanatory notes

Information about fees must be clearly expressed and in language that clients understand. All fees and charges must be included in this information, including possible fees and charges such as RPL charges and additional charges imposed if the learners do not successfully complete their programs. If this information is complete and clear both the client and RTO are protected.

Each year, RTOs are required to have their accounts certified by a qualified Accountant as being prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards. They must maintain records of the certification for each year of operation. The RTO may be asked to have its accounts audited by a qualified and independent auditor in accordance with Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards and should ensure that it can obtain such an audit if it is requested. An independent auditor is someone who does not have a personal connection to or interest (financial or otherwise) in the RTO.

An RTO must be able to demonstrate that it is financially viable at any time that it is requested to by its registering body. Financial viability is about being able to generate sufficient income to meet operating payments and debt commitments while delivering quality training and assessment services and outcomes.

The options available to RTOs if they collect fees in advance are designed to protect individual students in the event that an RTO is unable to deliver the training, assessment and support services as agreed. A tuition assurance scheme will provide the student with tuition by another provider if the RTO is no longer able to operate. A maximum on the amount of fees able to be collected in advance will limit the amount that a student may lose if an RTO collapses with no financial assets. A bank guarantee for an amount of no less than the amount that an RTO collects in advance will ensure that students are able to get back the money they have prepaid to an RTO. Any other proposed measures to protect student feeds paid in advance, must be approved by the registering body.

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- A fees, charges and refunds policy that should be clear and transparent
- Pre-engagement information for clients about fees, charges and refunds that is clear and accessible
- Invoices or receipts for clients that clearly state the components of the fees
- Financial accounts certified as being in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards
- Financial statements that have been audited in accordance with Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards
- A Tuition Assurance Scheme membership certificate or a bank guarantee
- Written confirmation from its registering body that the RTO has an approved fee protection mechanism in place, as per Option 5.

Condition 6 – Certification & Issuing of Qualifications & Statements of Attainment

The RTO must issue to persons whom 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 service.

The RTO must retain client records of attainment of units of competency and qualifications for a period of thirty years.

The RTO must have a student records management system in place that has the capacity to provide the registering body with AVETMISS compliant data.

The RTO must provide returns of its client records of attainment of units of competency and qualifications to its registering body on a regular basis, as determined by the registering body.

The RTO must meet the requirements for implementation of a national unique student identifier.

Explanatory notes

The RTO must have a system in place to issue compliant certificates or statements of attainment to learners as appropriate within a reasonable timeframe after they have been assessed as competent.

The *AQF Implementation Handbook* provides information on the format of testamurs and can be sourced at www.aqf.edu.au.

The Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo specifications provide information on the use and form of the NRT logo, and can be sourced at www.training.com.au.

The registering body requires RTOs to provide accurate and complete information on the attainment of each learner engaging in nationally recognised training. The RTO must therefore have an effective system in place to ensure that these records are kept and reported as required. Student records must be kept for thirty years; this requires the RTO to ensure that records are kept in an accessible format for this time period.

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- Compliant awards
- An implemented certification and issuing of qualifications and statement of attainment procedure
- An implemented records management procedure including requirements to review ongoing accessibility of records
- Records of induction of administrative staff, including information about issuing awards and records management
- Reports on learners' attainment to the registering body, which align with the information on the RTO'S records management system which is AVETMISS compliant (refer to Appendix 1).
- Capability to use the national unique student identifier (refer to Appendix 1).

Condition 7 – Recognition of Qualifications Issued by Other RTOs

The RTO must recognise the AQF Qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by any other RTO.

Explanatory notes

The RTO must ensure that potential learners are made aware of opportunities for recognition of AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by other RTOs.

The RTO must have a process in place so that this recognition occurs before commencement of the learning program.

As the recognition of qualifications and statements of attainment issued by other RTOs is a simple administrative process, students should not be charged fees for this recognition.

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- A recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs policy and procedure that is implemented
- Information about recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs in pre-engagement materials
- Learner files/enrolment forms/outcomes data that verify that recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs has been granted.

Condition 8 – Accuracy and Integrity of Marketing

The RTO must ensure 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.

Explanatory notes

Clients of the RTO must be protected as consumers. All information about services to be provided must be fully disclosed and the services advertised must match the services provided by the RTO. Permission must be gained and retained for the use of any person's image or name or any other organisation's identity in marketing materials.

The RTO must not advertise or market in any way accredited courses, qualifications or units of competency that are not on the RTO's scope of registration.

The conditions for using the NRT logo are clearly defined in the NRT logo specifications and must be adhered to. NRT logo specifications can be found at www.training.com.au.

Marketing includes any website information, advertising banners, flyers, faxes, emails, handbooks, prospectus or other materials that promote the services of the RTO.

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

• An implemented marketing procedure that aligns with the requirements of Condition 8

• Marketing materials

• Signed and dated records of permission to identify learners or organisations in marketing. This permission should include the terms of use.

Condition 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. The RTO must also manage the transition from superseded accredited courses so that it delivers only currently endorsed Training Packages or currently accredited courses.

Explanatory notes

RTOs cannot deliver and/or assess revised Training Packages or accredited courses unless they have gained approval from the registering body, confirmed by the inclusion of the revised Training Package or accredited course on the RTO's scope of registration on the National Training Information Service (NTIS) website.

RTOs must meet the requirements of the revised Training Packages or accredited course within the transition period.

RTOs must have the necessary strategies for training and assessment and related resources in place to deliver and assess in the Training Packages/accredited course.

RTOs must also update templates for qualifications and statements of attainment and marketing materials.

RTOs ensure that trainers and assessors are aware of changes in the revised Training Package or accredited course and related training and assessment strategies and resources. Learners, employers and other relevant stakeholders affected by these changes are advised of how the changes will affect them.

The RTO must ensure that students are not enrolled in qualifications that adversely affect their opportunities for employment and/or future study pathways. Where a Training Package has been revised and new qualifications developed, student enrolments within the new qualification should commence as soon as possible and no later than 1 year after publication of the revised Training Package. RTOs will need to ensure when enrolling students that they abide by transition requirements within the accredited course documentation.

RTOs must implement a strategy for transitioning students to the new qualification/course or 'teach out' students in the superseded qualification/course within a timely manner, within the timeframe designated by the registering authority.

RTOs' management system, including management of enrolment and student records management, relevant policies and procedures, must be reviewed to take into account the changes.

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- Records of continuous improvement related to the review of the RTO's management systems, products and services
- Information for students and trainers and assessors regarding the transition from superseded Training Packages or accredited courses and confirmation that they have received this information
- Current marketing materials and accurate award templates
- Current strategies for training and assessment and training and assessment resources
- Revised or renewed agreements with students with the new qualification or course.

SECTION 5
THE STANDARDS

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.

Each Standard describes continuous improvement requirements. Continuous improvement relates to RTOs achieving a standard of operations over and above compliance demonstrated at the previous audit.

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 (that is, training).

RTOs should refer to the relevant Conditions of Registration when considering the implementation of the elements. For example, Condition of Registration 8, Accuracy and Integrity of Marketing should be addressed when implementing element 2.3, which relates to pre-engagement information, and all of the Conditions of Registration should be addressed when implementing elements 3.1 and 3.3.

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.

Guide to compliance

An explanation of what should be in place for the RTO to demonstrate compliance with the element.

Explanatory notes

These further explain the words in bold in the Guide to compliance, 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.

Doing it better

This section contains some suggestions to assist RTOs to achieve good practice. The suggestions are not exhaustive and may not suit the operations of all RTOs.

Related elements

Identifies other elements that have an impact on the element being discussed.

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

Elements

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

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.

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.

1.4 Training and assessment is delivered by trainers and assessors who:

a)   have the necessary training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors, and

b)   have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and

c)   can demonstrate current industry skills directly relevant to the training/assessment being undertaken, and

d)   continue to develop their Vocational Education and Training (VET) knowledge and skills as well as their industry currency and trainer/assessor competence.

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

d)   is systematically validated.

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

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.

Continuous improvement processes refer to the continual enhancement of an RTO's performance so that the changing needs of clients and industry continue to be met. Continuous improvement does not relate to actions to achieve compliance as such actions are considered rectifications.

Guide to compliance

> The RTO's **continuous improvement** approach is systematic.
>
> **Data** on the quality of training and assessment services is collected.
>
> Data is **relevant and sufficien**t to make judgements about the quality of training and assessment across the RTO's scope of registration and operations.
>
> Data is **analysed** and **improvement**s to training and assessment **are demonstrated**.

Explanatory notes

Continuous improvement is systematic
This encompasses collection of data, its analysis, planning improvements and implementing them, monitoring and review.

Data is collected
The RTO should collect a range of data. Data includes:

- Feedback from stakeholders such as students and employers
- Quality indicator data
- Conclusions arising from assessment validation
- Results of internal/external audits
- Organisation self-assessment outcomes
- Records of complaints and appeals and their resolution
- End of program evaluation.

Processes for collecting data include:

- Assessment validation and/or moderation
- Benchmarking with high performing RTOs
- Collection of feedback through surveys, focus groups, SWOT analyses, telephone interviews and discussions

The size and the complexity of the RTO and the characteristics of the RTO's clients determine how much and what kind of data will be collected.

All registered training organisations are required to collect and report on the National Quality Indicators. The sampling process to be used is described in the Quality Indicators Resources Package, available at the national training website, www.training.com.au.

Analysis
The data collected will confirm good practice and highlight aspects of training and assessment that need to be improved. The RTO explores with learners, trainers, assessors and employers what improvements need to be made and what actions might be taken. The RTO plans and makes improvements in response to the lessons learnt from this analysis.

Improvement to training and assessment
Improvements to training and assessment could be demonstrated by, for example:

• Changes to training and assessment resources and processes, including adaptations made for specific groups of learners or candidates for assessment

• Re-development or review of strategies for training and assessment

• Changed processes for the validation and moderation of assessment

• Professional development of staff

• Higher levels of client satisfaction with training and assessment.

The RTO should monitor the improvements made to determine if the improvements were effective and make changes where they are warranted.

Doing it better
RTOs could consider:

• Comparing data collection methods with high-achieving RTOs

• Conducting a SWOT analysis with a range of stakeholders

• Identifying measurable objectives in relation to training and assessment and monitoring these objectives in relation to specific qualifications.

Related elements
Refer elements 1.2 −1.5

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.

Intent

All training and assessment strategies meet the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course. All training and assessment strategies are clearly informed by industry consultation and are systematically reviewed.

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 as well as current industry requirements.

Guide to compliance

> Each **strategy** for **training and assessment** is clearly defined and informed by **information** collected on industry requirements and **learners' needs** through effective consultation with **industry**.
>
> Each 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 unit/module).
>
> Each strategy is **monitored and improved** through effective consultation.

Explanatory notes

Strategy for training and assessment

Each training and assessment strategy is a 'roadmap' for the delivery and assessment of a qualification (or unit of competency) or accredited course (or unit/module). The strategy, which could be one consolidated document or a range of documents, shows how the requirements of the Training Package or the accredited course are addressed, and should include where relevant:

- Qualification packaging requirements
- Co-requisites and pre-requisites
- Entry requirements
- Required trainer and assessor competencies
- Assessment evidence requirements.

The strategy describes the training program and should include:

- The mode of delivery to be used by the RTO (for example, online, classroom, on-the-job, mixed mode)
- The learning approaches or styles that will be used to suit the identified needs of learners
- How the needs of groups or individual learners will be met
  (for example, reasonable adjustment in assessment)

- How Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be provided to participants
- Advice to assessors about how assessment will be conducted. The training and assessment strategies should accurately describe the assessment methods that relate to the tools used. A strategy should also indicate the characteristics specific to workplaces, or to candidates, that need to be accommodated in assessment.

Trainers and assessors should have input to the strategies for training and assessment. The RTO must ensure that trainers and assessors understand the strategies for training and assessment and apply them.

Information collected through consultation with industry 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
- Employer preferences about the way in which a program is delivered
- Information about how qualifications should be structured and delivered/assessed in communications from industry skills councils, licensing bodies and similar groups.
- Industry training needs identified in reports from industry bodies
- Characteristics of the client group that need to be accommodated in training and assessment.

Industry consultation should have a clear impact on the strategies for training and assessment.

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
- Their location
- Cultural or ethnic background
- Socio-economic factors.

Where learners' needs are identified and met programs will have a real 'customer focus'.

Industry
Industry could include:

- Industry organisations
- Industry training advisory bodies and skills councils
- Unions
- Specific enterprise/industry clients
- Occupational licensing bodies.

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

Resources

Resources specified in each training and assessment strategy should include:

• The training and assessment materials that will be used

• 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.

Monitoring and improvements

Evidence that RTOs monitor and review their training and assessment strategies should include:

• Training and assessment strategies and training programs revised in response to industry input

• Outcomes of consultations with trainers and assessors, learners, enterprise clients, industry organisations and, where relevant, licensing bodies, and the changes made to training and assessment and supporting resources in response to such consultations

• Records of staff meetings, dependant on the size and scope of the RTO's operations, about training and assessment strategies and programs, and the agreed actions.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

• Giving industry and enterprises the opportunity to collaborate in making joint decisions about training and assessment strategies

• Encouraging industry representation on committees and participation in award ceremonies

• Taking the initiative for the review of strategies for training and assessment and anticipating issues or requirements 'on the horizon' that will need to be addressed in training and assessment.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5

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.

Intent

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

Key actions

The RTO has resources in place whose appropriateness is confirmed as a result of thorough planning and systematic monitoring, and through implementing any necessary improvements.

Guide to compliance

The **resources** specified in each training and assessment strategy and training program for the relevant qualification (or unit of competency) or accredited course (or unit/module) 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 demonstrated.**

Explanatory notes

Resources

The RTO has determined that the resources specified in strategies for training and assessment will achieve quality training and assessment and therefore they should be consistently applied.
The RTO should ensure that:

- The most current version of training and assessment resources is used. RTOs will find that having effective version control processes will assist this, as well as having someone responsible to ensure that training and assessment resources are printed or purchased as needed and not stockpiled.

- Trainers and assessors and learners have access to the required resources, facilities and equipment

- If trainers and assessors are using their personal training and assessment resources that these are quality assured by the RTO and housed on the RTO's premises

- Where RTOs purchase commercial training and/or assessment resources, these are quality assured, contextualised and reviewed against the requirements of the Training Package/accredited course.

- Where the RTO operates across jurisdictions or offshore resources used in these contexts are consistent across the RTO's operations. Where resources need to be modified to suit local contexts, these changes should be quality assured.

Currency, sufficiency and effectiveness

The currency, sufficiency and effectiveness of resources may be affected by 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.

When such changes occur, the relevant strategies for training and assessment should be revised.

Systematically reviewing and making improvements

Reviews of resources should take place when there is a change of the kind listed above, and as part of the continuous improvement cycle.

Evidence of improvements

This should include, where relevant:

- Updated staff qualifications and experience
- Revised training and assessment resources
- New or different equipment and/or learning and assessment materials
- Re-designed simulated work environments
- Changed arrangements for industry placements
- Changed training and assessment facilities to better meet the requirements of learners.

To ensure that changes to resources are consistently applied, RTOs 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 mandate learning and assessment resources for use by RTOs. Auditors would be guided by such requirements when considering the continuous improvement of training and assessment services.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

- Conducting research with leading enterprises so that emerging changes in the industry are identified early and resources adjusted accordingly

- User-testing learning resources to confirm their appropriateness for specific groups of learners

- Developing and using resources for different learning styles

- Inviting industry representatives to participate in a review of industry-related equipment and infrastructure.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 2.3, 2.4.

Element 1.4   Training and assessment is delivered by trainers and assessors who:

a)   have the necessary training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors, and

b)   have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and

c)   can demonstrate current industry skills directly relevant to the training/assessment being undertaken, and

d)   continue to develop their Vocational Education and Training (VET) knowledge and skills as well as their industry currency and trainer/assessor competence.

Intent

All trainers and assessors of nationally recognised training meet nationally agreed competency requirements and continue to develop their competence (refer to Appendix 2 for the NQC policy in regards to training and assessing competencies for trainers and assessors).

Key actions

The RTO establishes and verifies that trainers and assessors meet nationally agreed 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 and in understanding the requirements of the VET system
- Fostering a culture of critical evaluation and innovation.

Guide to compliance

Trainers' and assessors' **competence**, including vocational currency, is **established**, **verified** and monitored.

In some instances, assessors who have the vocational competencies but not the assessment competencies required may **work together to conduct assessment** with a person who has the required assessment competencies.

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

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

Explanatory notes

Establishing competence

- RTOs establish staff competence by verifying that staff hold the required qualifications and experience. Trainers and assessors must:
- Have the training and assessment competencies determined by the National Quality Council or its successors (refer to Appendix 2)
- Have the vocational competencies they are delivering and/or assessing (or demonstrated equivalent competencies) (refer to Appendix 2). Where trainers and assessors demonstrate equivalent competency there must be a clear and verified relationship between the trainers' and assessors' formal and/or informal training and experience and each of the units/modules they are delivering/assessing.
- Be able to demonstrate that they hold the skills and knowledge required by industry
- Meet any additional competency requirements detailed in Training Packages or determined by regulatory or licensing bodies.

Competence is verified by the RTO:

- Carrying out referee checks, including confirming relevant and current industry experience and vocational competencies
- Sighting originals (or certified copies) of qualifications.

Where trainers and assessors do not hold the competencies they are delivering and assessing they can demonstrate equivalent competency. However, there must be a clear and verified relationship between the trainers' and assessors' experience and each of the units/modules they are delivering/assessing.

Working together to conduct assessment

If a person holds the relevant vocational competencies but does not have the appropriate assessor competencies or demonstrated equivalent competencies they may co-assess with an assessor who has these competencies.

The subject matter expert gathers evidence of the competence, which contributes to the assessment judgements by the assessor.

The assessor's role is to ensure that the assessment methodology used by the subject matter expert is consistent with Training Package requirements.

Together they make a decision that the principles of assessment were met and that the rules of evidence were met and together make a determination of competence.

The responsibilities of the assessor and the subject matter expert are clearly defined and co-assessment arrangements and implementation of these arrangements are recorded to demonstrate that NQC requirements are met.

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 (refer to 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. 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. The level and type of supervision is agreed between the supervising trainer and the trainer.

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

- Providing input to the preparation for training, including planning sessions
- Discussing strategies to support specific learners
- Assisting the trainer to locate appropriate resources
- Observing 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 services they provide.

RTOs should have a clear strategy in place so that all trainers and assessors:

- Understand the requirements of the VET environment and continue to develop this knowledge
- Continue to update their vocational skills and knowledge so that they are providing learning programs that are in line with current industry requirements and so that they are assessing to the standard required by industry
- Continue to improve the way in which they train and assess.

RTOs can target opportunities for professional development by responding to:

- Reviews of Training Packages/accredited courses
- Data collected from learners and other stakeholders
- Outcomes of training needs analyses
- Staff self-assessment or peer-assessment
- Changing industry requirements
- Information from regulatory bodies
- Outcomes of assessment validation activities.

Evidence that trainers and assessors are maintaining and improving their competencies and knowledge of VET 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.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

- Setting benchmarks for excellence in training and assessment and encouraging and supporting staff to attain the benchmark

- Sponsoring casual and sessional staff or contractors to enable them to participate in professional development activities

- Encouraging staff to research a specialist area and lead related professional development activities

- Using a peer review process to provide feedback to trainers and assessors about their practice

- Verifying with industry the currency of trainer and assessor vocational skills.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3

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

d) is systematically validated.

Intent

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

Key actions

The RTO ensures that assessment meets the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course and that assessors systematically validate and improve assessment processes, tools and evidence requirements.

Guide to compliance

Assessment (which includes Recognition of Prior Learning [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.

Assessment is validated.

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

Explanatory notes

Meeting Training Package/accredited course requirements

The RTO demonstrates that all components of the Training Package or accredited course are addressed when planning assessment and designing assessment tools. They include:

- Assessment guidelines
- Employability Skills or Key Competencies
- Units of competency, including:
  – Elements
  – Performance criteria
  – Range statement
  – Evidence guide.

RPL is offered to clients to ensure that client needs are met and that assessment is fair and flexible. If an RTO elects not to offer RPL to its clients it must have a clear and defensible argument for this.

Assessing validly, reliably, flexibly and fairly

Validity, reliability, flexibility and fairness are the principles of assessment (refer Terminology Section for a definition of each term). Assessment processes and tools must satisfy these principles.

Determining the standard of performance required

Competency standards and assessment guidelines (or assessment requirements in accredited courses) provide advice on the application of knowledge and skills to the standard of performance required in the workplace. The whole of the unit of competency must be assessed and RTOs should refer to the Employability skills/key competencies, the range statement and the evidence guide – including the context of assessment and the critical aspects of evidence – to develop appropriate assessment tools.

The RTO consults with industry when developing training and assessment strategies to gain 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 addressing these requirements all the dimensions of competency should effectively be covered in training and assessment.

Ensuring that evidence is sufficient, valid, authentic and current

Sufficiency, validity, authenticity and currency are the rules of evidence. Providing comprehensive assessment tools including clear information to the assessor and the candidate about the conditions under which assessment is conducted and recorded, helps to ensure that these rules are met.

Incorporating workplace and regulatory requirements

Consultation with enterprises or industry will provide information about assessment requirements relevant to workplaces. Consultation with enterprises will provide information about when and how assessment can take place and the extent to which enterprise staff can contribute to assessment.

If the RTO is not assessing at the workplace, consultation with industry or enterprises will assist the RTO to understand how to best create a simulated work environment for assessment.

Any regulatory or licensing authority requirements that relate to specific units or the qualifications must be met.

Validating assessment tools and evidence

Validation involves focussing on assessment tools and evidence to review and make recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes (refer to Terminology Section for a definition).

Validation will be systematic if the RTO implements a comprehensive plan for assessment validation and/or moderation. The plan for assessment validation and moderation should identify representative samples of tools and judgements to be considered so that conclusions can confidently be made about quality assurance and quality control of assessment. The plan should include:

- When assessment validation and/or moderation will occur
- Which units of competency/modules will be the focus of the activity in proportion to associated risk
- Who will lead and participate in validation and/or moderation activities
- How the outcomes of these activities will be documented
- How lessons learnt from assessment validation and/or moderation will be acted upon.

Assessment validation should be integrated with the RTO's continuous improvement cycle so that improvements made to assessment tools and outcomes as a result of validation and/or moderation are subject to review in order to maintain quality.

Improving systems, processes, tools and practices

Evidence of improvements to assessment should include a combination of:

- 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 and moderation activities and action taken in response to these activities
- Benchmarking assessment with that of other RTOs.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

- Consulting with regulatory bodies and licensing authorities when developing and reviewing assessment strategies and tools in order to meet the requirements of those bodies.
- Training staff in streamlining RPL processes and supporting RPL applicants
- Establishing a staff exchange program to share and collaboratively improve assessment with other RTOs.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3

Standard 2
The RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients.

Elements

2.1 The RTO establishes the needs of clients, and delivers services to meet these needs.

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

2.3 Before clients enrol or enter into an agreement, the RTO informs them about the training, assessment and support services to be provided, and about their rights and obligations.

2.4 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.

2.5 Learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs.

2.6 Learners have timely access to current and accurate records of their participation and progress.

2.7 The RTO provides appropriate mechanisms and services for learners to have complaints and appeals addressed efficiently and effectively.

Element 2.1   The RTO establishes the needs of clients and delivers services to meet these needs

Intent
Client services meet clients' needs.

Key actions
The RTO identifies the services required by its clients and ensures that clients have access to these services.

Guide to compliance

The needs of clients are established.

Client services are put into place or accessed to address the identified needs.

The provision of services is **monitored** to ensure that they continue to address the identified need.

Explanatory notes

Establishing the needs of clients
Depending on how the RTO operates, clients could include enterprises, companies and/or groups of learners. Clients' needs could be identified through:

- Meetings with workplace supervisors and management
- Focus groups and market research
- Questionnaires before commencement of programs
- Research reports or studies.

Services for clients
Services provided to clients will vary according to the client group and the size and scope of the RTO's operations. Services include the following:

- Pre-enrolment materials
- Study support and study skills programs
- Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) programs or referrals to these programs
- Equipment, resources and/or programs to increase access for learners with disabilities
- Learning resource centres
- Mediation services or referrals to these services
- Flexible scheduling and delivery of training and assessment
- Counselling services or referrals to these services
- Information technology (IT) support
- Learning materials in alternative formats, for example, in large print
- Learning and assessment programs customised to the workplace.

Monitoring the provision of client services

The RTO ensures that the services provided to clients continue to meet the needs identified. This could include:

- Reviewing the progress of groups of learners to check that they are progressing satisfactorily and reviewing the support services provided where necessary
- Maintaining ongoing contact with workplace supervisors and management to gauge the effectiveness of services provided
- Monitoring the usage of services to ascertain whether learners are accessing these services.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

- Collaborating with other RTOs and sharing resources to provide a greater range of support services (smaller RTOs)
- Training trainers and assessors to identify students at risk and in need of support services.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7. 3.1, 3.2

Element 2.2 The RTO continuously improves client services by collecting, analysing and acting upon relevant data

Intent

Client services are continuously improved in accordance with data collected about their effectiveness.

Continuous improvement processes refer to the continual enhancement of an RTO's performance so that the changing needs of clients and industry continue to be met. Continuous improvement does not relate to actions to achieve compliance as such actions are considered rectifications.

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.

Guide to compliance

The RTO's **continuous improvement** approach is **systematic**.

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

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

Improvements to client services **are demonstrated**.

Explanatory notes

Continuous improvement is systematic

Continuous improvement is a cycle that includes:

• Planning, including identification of stakeholders and issues about which data needs to be collected so that performance can be evaluated

• Collecting data from the identified stakeholders about issues that affect the quality of the organisation's operations

• Collating and analysing this data to identify improvement opportunities

• Planning improvements and implementing them

• Monitoring the improvements made to gauge how effective they are

• Reviewing the improvements by collecting data, collating and analysing it

• Reviewing continuous improvement processes to determine whether they were effective and productive.

Systematically collecting and analysing data

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

The RTO plans what form the data will take, how it is to be collected, by whom, when, and how often, and implements this plan.

Types of data

The RTO should collect a range of data. The size and the complexity of the RTO and the characteristics of the RTO's clients determine how much and what kind of data will be collected.

Data includes:

• Feedback from stakeholders, such as students and employers

• Results of internal/external audits

• Organisation self-assessment outcomes

• Records of concerns, complaints and appeals and their resolution.

Processes for collecting data

All registered training organisations are required to collect and report on the National Quality Indicators. Additional processes for collecting data include:

• Benchmarking with other RTOs

• Collection of feedback through surveys, focus groups, SWOT analyses, telephone interviews and discussions

• End of program evaluation

• Client satisfaction surveys/questionnaires

• Interviews, focus groups

• Consultation with learners, enterprise clients, industry organisations and licensing bodies

• Records of complaints and appeals and their resolution

• Internal audit reports and organisational self-assessment

• Outcomes of benchmarking activities.

Sufficient and relevant data

RTOs gain a clear understanding of how effective client services are only if the data collected is sufficient and relevant to services provided. Data is collected to find out whether clients' needs are being met and whether client services could be improved. RTOs could collect data on matters such as:

• The clarity and accuracy of information provided to learners before enrolment

• Processes for learner selection, enrolment and induction/orientation

• Complaints and appeals processes

• The effectiveness of assistance provided in the areas of English language, literacy and numeracy

• The effectiveness of support provided to workplace based or online learners

• Support services such as disability, guidance and welfare services, including external services

• The extent to which learners were provided with access to their records of participation and progress

• RPL processes.

The data collected will confirm good practice and highlight aspects of client services that need to be improved. The RTO explores with learners, trainers, assessors and employers what improvements need to be made to client services and what actions might be taken. The RTO makes improvements in response to the lessons learnt from this analysis.

Making improvements

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

- Higher levels of client satisfaction

- Higher completion rates

- 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, researchers, industry and/or regulators to determine the characteristics and needs of specific groups of learners.

It is important to review the effectiveness of such changes as part of the RTO's continuous improvement cycle.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

- Measuring the effectiveness of support provided to individual learners, for example, the extent to which LLN programs improve LLN levels

- Consulting with organisations whose role it is to support people with specific needs – for example, relating to poor vision, hearing impairment or poor mobility – and adjusting client services accordingly

- Analysing and monitoring the student profile in relation to use of support services, including trend statistics to determine if there are groups of students who are not accessing services.

Relationship to other elements

Refer elements 1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2.

Element 2.3   Before clients enrol or enter into an agreement, 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 agreement.

Key actions

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

Guide to compliance

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

The **agreement** between the RTO and the client is clearly defined and accurate.

Improvements to client information services are demonstrated.

Explanatory notes

Providing sufficient, clear and accurate information

Prospective clients need clear, accurate and timely information to make an informed choice about the RTO's services. This information should be 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:

• Fees, including course fees, administration fees, materials fees and any other charges. The RTO must meet the requirements of Condition of Registration 5. The provision of clear information about all fees, charges and refunds will help to protect both client and RTO.

• Course outcomes and pathways. Clients are better able to make decisions about which qualifications they will undertake if they know: what skills and knowledge the course covers; 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 RTOs will provide training and assessment. This should include information about the RPL process and how to apply and where and how training and assessment will be carried out

• 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 them.

- Client support services, for example, support provided in LLN or for clients with a disability. If clients have support needs, they need to know either how the RTO 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. Clients need to know that there is a fair and transparent process in place for handling complaints and appeals and that they can raise concerns about their programs. In addition to describing internal complaints processes, the RTO could also refer clients to external bodies, such as the state or territory registering body and to the National Training Hotline, telephone: 13 38 73.

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

- Reviewing information when training and assessment strategies are changed
- Having a staff member responsible for checking the accuracy and currency of information before it is made available to prospective learners
- Collecting feedback from clients, including learners, about whether they received the services they understood they would receive.

Agreement

The written agreement between the client and the RTO describes the training, assessment and client services to be provided. Information provided to clients before enrolment or signing an agreement for services forms the basis of the agreement because this information defines the commitments made by the RTO.

The agreement must be in a format and use words that clients can understand.
The agreement should include:

- The qualification/accredited course and/or units of competency/modules to be provided
- Fees and charges and refund policy details and process for requesting refunds
- Information on the RTO's concerns, complaints and appeals processes and how to access them
- Other services that the RTO has committed to provide to clients.

Demonstrating improvements to client information services

Improvements to client information services could be demonstrated through:

- Revisions to the agreement to improve its clarity and the accuracy of the information
- Revisions to the pre-engagement information provided to clients
- Responses to clients' feedback about information provided
- Changes in the media used to disseminate information to clients
- Benchmarking RTO data with that of other providers.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

- Analysing research about characteristics of specific groups of learners (for example, Generation Y) and adjusting pre-engagement information where appropriate
- Engaging current students to speak at information sessions and/or act as a point of contact for prospective students
- Benchmarking with high-performing RTOs.

Related elements

Refer elements 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1.

Element 2.4 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 relevant workplace personnel in planning workplace programs

- 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.

Guide to compliance

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**, where relevant to the training and assessment program.

The RTO monitors the contribution of workplace personnel in supporting each learner's training and assessment

The RTO monitors the learner's progress.

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

- Information about job roles and the range of conditions under which employees work

- 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 for assessment in the workplace

- 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
- Personnel who have the required competencies to conduct workplace assessment, where relevant.

This information is invaluable to the RTO when developing a training and assessment program for trainees, apprentices and learners participating in work experience/placement 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 third party evidence or verifying logbook entries to the satisfaction of the licensing authority (if applicable)
- Acting as a point of contact for the RTO
- Ensuring duty of care and providing support.

Workplace personnel should be provided with an outline of their agreed roles and responsibilities, together with the RTO's, so that both parties have a record of what has been agreed.

Monitoring contribution of workplace personnel

Learners need to be supported to get the most out of their training and assessment at the workplace. The RTO negotiates with workplace personnel the support that will be made available and the contribution that will be made to supporting training and assessment. This could include:

- OHS induction
- Pairing up the learner with a mentor
- Providing extra time or opportunities for learning
- Providing opportunities for assessment and/or being involved in the assessment process
- Ensuring that the learner has access to workplace services, such as counselling, if these are in place.

The RTO is responsible for ensuring that workplace personnel are providing the agreed support to learners.

Monitoring learners' progress

Learners' progress must be monitored to ensure that they are developing skills and knowledge as planned. This monitoring will also help the RTO to confirm that learners are receiving the support they need.

The key to effective monitoring is communicating regularly with learners and their workplace supervisors to:

Discuss progress

- Confirm that the agreed roles and responsibilities are being carried out
- 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-funded training contract is in place for trainees and apprentices.

Getting help with continuous improvement

Workplace personnel can provide feedback on how effectively training, assessment and client services meet workplace 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 the RTO's training and assessment approaches and client services.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

- Discussing training and assessment resources with workplace supervisors before assessment to discuss opportunities for workplace support during training and assessment
- Provide professional development to workplace personnel via coaching and mentoring
- Having award presentations at the workplace to acknowledge the support of employers
- Designing learning and assessment activities that add value to the organisation, such as projects developed to achieve enterprise objectives.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2.

Element 2.5 Learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs.

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.

Guide to compliance

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.**

Explanatory notes

Systematically assessing learners' needs

Learners' needs can be assessed by:

- Gathering information about each learner's prior 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), combined with an assessment of the learner
- Asking learners to complete a formal assessment of their language skills, literacy and/or numeracy.
- Once the RTO has established that a learner has specific training or training support needs, it should develop a strategy to assist them.

Providing access to learning support

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

Learners should be encouraged to access these services. Access is improved where:

• Learners are provided with information about support services and any external support available. This information is provided before enrolment, for example, in marketing materials, on the RTO website and, where relevant, at commencement – for example, at induction or orientation.

• Personnel and resources are in place to assist learners. These could be, for example, a staff member who has expertise in disability support, learning and assessment resources that are designed to develop LLN, a process where learners are referred to an outside agency that offers counselling support, or staff who have expertise in delivery to Indigenous learners.

Providing services consistent with strategies for training and assessment

The nature and extent of support services RTOs 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 or online delivery

• Whether learners are working with the RTO for the first time or are continuing

• The requirements of the qualification (for example, LLN support is more likely to be provided at lower AQF levels).

This information should be included in training and assessment strategies so that it is confirmed what support is to be provided, when and by whom.

Monitoring and improving

The RTO should review learners' progress during their programs to evaluate their use of support services and the effectiveness of these services. If the services are not sufficient to support the learners they should be adjusted accordingly.

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

• Improved access to and use of learners' support services during the program

• Changes to processes for assessing clients' training and learning support needs

• Modifications to resources, facilities and equipment

• Improved rates of learner progression and completion

• Improved levels of satisfaction data on services received.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

• Providing study skills or LLN programs, concurrently with the VET program

• Assigning each learner a mentor or coach

• Providing staff training in cross cultural communication.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.2, 2.1, 2.2.

Element 2.6   Learners have timely access to current and accurate records of their participation and progress.

Intent
Learners have access to their records.

Key actions
- Systematically manages learners' records
- Ensures that staff understand and meet their responsibilities for record-keeping and records management
- Monitors and reviews the records system.

Guide to compliance

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

Records of learners' participation and progress through their training program are **systematically collected, recorded and stored.**

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

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.

The RTO 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 should include:

- Enrolment details
- Learning support needs
- Attendance records
- Records of complaints and appeals
- Outcomes at unit of competency 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
- The RTO keeps accurate and current records of assessment results that lead to judgements about competence
- Records can be easily accessed
- Privacy is protected
- 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:

- Outcomes of internal audits relating to records
- 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.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

- Providing professional development to staff about managing records
- Providing learners with access to their records through learner portals
- Regular written reports on progress that also identify strengths and improvement required.

Related elements

Refer elements 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3.

Element 2.7   The RTO provides appropriate mechanisms and services for learners to have complaints and appeals addressed efficiently and effectively

Intent

Complaints and appeals are managed fairly, efficiently and effectively. The RTO creates an environment where clients' views are valued.

Key actions

The RTO:

- Develops and implements a process for handling complaints and appeals

- Ensures that clients and staff know about and follow this process

- Takes corrective action to deal with the identified causes of complaints

- Monitors and improves the system.

Guide to compliance

Effective management of complaints and appeals and their resolution are demonstrated.

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

Explanatory notes

Managing complaints and appeals

Learners and other clients are most likely to raise issues (for example, about a trainer who cannot be contacted or training resources that are difficult to understand) if the RTO creates an environment where all feedback is welcome and where openness is valued.

The benefits of creating this environment include:

- The RTO gains more valuable feedback on which to base continuous improvement activities

- Issues are less likely to be escalated into formal complaints

- Learners and other clients are more likely to be satisfied with the RTO's performance, which is likely to reduce attrition rates and to promote return business.

RTOs can assist learners and other clients to raise issues by:

- Providing information to them about how feedback is valued

- Providing avenues for them to provide feedback, for example, student forums, suggestion boxes, scheduled feedback meetings with a staff member whose role it is to support learners, weekly phone calls to workplace supervisors

- Thanking them for their feedback, responding to issues raised quickly and providing them and other clients with information about how such issues have been addressed.

Complaints arise when a client is dissatisfied with an aspect of the RTO's services and requires action to be taken to resolve the matter.

Appeals arise when a client is not satisfied with a decision that the RTO has 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 the RTO's 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 Hotline, telephone: 13 38 73.

Learners and other 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 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 and resolution of concerns, 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
- Documented changes to the RTO's systems.

Preventing complaints and improving practice
Complaints and appeals can provide invaluable data about aspects of the RTO's operations that could be improved. To prevent the recurrence of similar complaints RTO's should:

- Ask for feedback from the client 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 the continuous improvement cycle.

Doing it better
RTOs could consider:

- Creating the role of learner representative/advocate for groups of learners
- Using focus groups of learners and other clients or conduct SWOT analyses with these groups to identify issues at each stage of the learners' 'life-cycle' with the RTO
- Providing comprehensive professional development to staff relating to eliciting and providing feedback.

Related elements
Refer elements 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1.

Standard 3

Management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO operates.

Elements

3.1 The RTO's management of its operations ensures clients receive the services detailed in their agreement with the RTO.

3.2 The RTO uses a systematic and continuous improvement approach to the management of operations.

3.3 The RTO monitors training and/or assessment services provided on its behalf to ensure that it complies with all aspects of the AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration.

3.4 The RTO manages records to ensure their accuracy and integrity.

Element 3.1   The RTO's management of its operations ensures clients receive the services detailed in their agreement with the RTO.

Intent
Clients' rights as consumers are protected.

Key actions
The RTO confirms that it fulfils the commitments it makes to its clients.

Guide to compliance

Agreements are in place with each client.

The RTO ensures that clients' **rights as consumers are protected.**

The RTO's **systems** are sufficient to support the provision of quality training, assessment and client services.

The RTO **monitors and reviews** the provision of services to clients and demonstrates **improvements**.

Explanatory notes

Agreement
An agreement between the client and the RTO regarding the training, assessment and services that a client is to receive is documented. Information provided to clients before enrolment or signing an agreement for services forms the basis of the agreement because this information defines the commitments made by the RTO.

The RTO ensures that consumer clients' rights are protected
The RTO has processes in place so that it that it is protecting clients' rights. The RTO should ensure that:

• Prospective clients know what they are agreeing to

• Fine print and disclaimers are clearly explained

• It does not behave in a misleading or deceptive manner

• Clients are not forced or coerced into an agreement

• Services provided match those in the agreement and are fit for purpose

• It deals fairly with disadvantaged or vulnerable clients.

The RTO should check that:

• •Its agreements state clearly: its fees, charges and refund policy; contain the qualification or single units of competency/modules that the agreement relates to; as well as the responsibilities of the client and the RTO

• It has processes in place to ensure that clients understand the terms of the agreement.

Processes for checking that consumers' rights are protected include:

• Training staff in how to administer agreements with clients

• Clearly documenting procedures for entering into an agreement with clients and ensuring that the client understands the agreement

• Asking for feedback from clients about the training, assessment and support services provided periodically and making adjustments to services where there is an identified need.

RTO Systems

'Systems' the RTO implements will vary according to the RTO's complexity and scope of operations. The systems required to support the provision of quality training and assessment could relate to:

• Administration, including enrolment and records management

• Continuous improvement of training and assessment, client services and the management of the RTO

• Staffing

• Management of partnering arrangements

• Management of client services

• Financial management.

Monitoring and review
The RTO should systematically check the services provided to clients to ensure that they match those that the RTO committed to. The RTO:

• Should consult with clients to gauge their satisfaction with services. This should occur early in the life of the agreement so that corrective action can be implemented where necessary.

• Monitor the activities of staff to ensure that they are providing the administration, support and training and assessment services in the agreement.

Improvements to the management of the RTO's operations
Evidence that the management of the RTO's operations have been improved and reviewed include:

• Client feedback and subsequent adjustments to services

• Revised processes/procedures for administering client contracts

• Revised pre-enrolment materials

• Records of professional development programs for staff.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

• Inviting clients to staff meetings to represent the views of learners and/or employers

• Supporting the formation of a student representative council/similar and ensuring that there is an avenue for feedback to management.

Related elements

Refer elements 2.3, 2.5, 2.7.

Element 3.2 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 Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*

• Legislation and regulations under which it is registered.

Continuous improvement processes refer to the continual enhancement of an RTO's performance so that the changing needs of clients and industry continue to be met. Continuous improvement does not relate to actions to achieve compliance as such actions are considered rectifications.

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.

Guide to compliance

Management systems are:

• **Appropriate for the size and scope** of the RTO's operations

• **Focused** on providing **quality training, assessment and support** services

• **Consistently implemented** across all of the RTO's operations

• **Systematically monitored and improved.**

Explanatory notes

Management systems

A systematic and continuous improvement approach to managing the RTO's operations will ensure that it provides quality training and assessment and client service across all of its operations. It will also ensure that the RTO maintains compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* throughout its registration period.

Systems need to be documented so that they can be implemented consistently and so that they can be easily reviewed. The amount of documentation an RTO uses will vary according to its size and complexity.

An RTO's operations refers to all of the RTO's activities, including partnering arrangements and offshore and inter jurisdictional activity.

Maintaining appropriate systems for the size and scope of the RTO

RTOs can develop their own approaches or adopt management practices based on and/or certified by recognised quality assurance bodies. The primary objective is to ensure that the RTO has effective control over its operations so that it can continuously improve its services and consistently operate in accordance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.

Focusing on quality training, assessment and support

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
- High value placed on providing client services that meet clients' needs though strong customer service standards
- Maintenance of and improvements to training and assessment environments and resources, and to client services
- Management systems that are consistently implemented across the scope of the RTO's operations.

Consistent implementation

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 the management system as part of the continuous improvement cycle will help to ensure that the RTO's operations management is effective.

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

- Establishing key performance indicators and monitoring organisational performance against them
- Eliciting and analysing stakeholders' feedback about the RTO's overall performance
- Benchmarking management systems and organisational performance with other RTOs
- Internal audit and organisational self-assessment against the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* and other quality standards systems.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

- Participating in Australian Training Awards
- Seeking a rating under the Excellence Criteria
- Seeking accreditation through additional quality assurance bodies.

Related elements

Refer all elements.

Element 3.3 The RTO monitors training and/or assessment services provided on its behalf to ensure that it complies with all aspects of the AQTF Essential Standards for Continuing Registration.

Intent

Services delivered under partnering arrangements comply with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing 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, quality assuring the agreements, monitoring the implementation of these agreements, and making improvements where required.

Guide to compliance

Documented agreements are in place with each organisation that provides training and/or assessment on the RTO's behalf. The agreements describe the responsibilities of each party and the **management strategies** to be implemented, including monitoring arrangements.

The implementation of the agreement is **monitored** to ensure that it is being adhered to and that improvements are made, where required.

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

Explanatory notes

Documented agreements

In the vocational education training sector a partnering arrangement is an agreement between an RTO and another organisation, such as a school, enterprise, industry body, non-registered training organisation or professional association for the provision and/or sharing of training and/or assessment services. This allows an organisation that is not registered to have the outcomes of their training recognised through partnering with an RTO. It also allows RTOs to outsource training and/or assessment to another organisation.

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.

The RTO is accountable for the quality of training and assessment provided on its behalf.

It is essential that these arrangements are clearly described in a documented agreement that fully expresses the agreed quality assurance strategies, the arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the agreement, and 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.

Responsibilities and management strategies

The agreement should contain clear and agreed roles for each party to the agreement. Commitment from relevant managers and staff in all of the organisations party to the agreement should be confirmed. Additional issues to consider when developing an agreement include:

- Whether it is necessary to form a committee to oversee the establishment of the agreement and provide support and direction throughout its life

- Whether legal advice about the viability of the agreement is required

- Intellectual property rights of all parties to the agreement

- The availability of a person from each organisation to be responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the agreement

- Processes for dispute resolution

- How the partnering organisation will be informed about the compliance requirements of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*

- The availability of suitably qualified trainers and/or assessors to deliver and/or assess the relevant competencies/modules

- Legislation that may have an impact on the agreement

- Who will be legally responsible for the agreement.

The roles and responsibilities specified in the agreements could include arrangements for:

- Ensuring that marketing is accurate and potential learners receive comprehensive and accurate

- pre-engagement materials

- Ensuring that training and assessment and client services are appropriate and continuously improved

- Developing, monitoring and reviewing training and assessment strategies

- Ensuring that staff, facilities and equipment are in place, as described in training and assessment strategies

- 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

- Ensuring that qualifications and statements of attainment are issued

- Managing complaints and appeals

- Developing and implementing management systems.

It is essential that the agreement or its supporting documentation describe the processes to be used for monitoring the implementation of the agreement. The agreement should also include the lifespan of the agreement and a review process as well as grounds for terminating the agreement and any sanctions to be applied to either party if the terms of the agreement are not met.

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 Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*. The manner in which the RTO monitors the quality of its own operations 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 to confirm partner practice
- Assessment validation processes
- Moderation of assessment decisions with the partner
- Audits of the partner's training, assessment and administration
- Sharing of professional development activities.

Improvements

Demonstrated improvements could include:

- Reviewed agreements
- Changes to processes for monitoring the agreements
- Provision of professional development to partnering organisations' staff.

If the RTO includes the review of these improvements in its continuous improvement cycle it will ensure that the agreements continue to satisfy the requirements of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider:

- Staff exchanges between the RTO and the partnering organisation to promote a consistent approach to training, assessment, student support or administration
- Inviting partnering organisations to staff meetings to improve communication and the sharing of good practice
- Establishing an advisory committee that has oversight of the arrangement, provides advice and acts as a point of reference for reporting purposes.

Related elements

Refer all elements.

Element 3.4   The RTO manages records to ensure their accuracy and integrity.

Intent

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

Guide to compliance

Records are **systematically managed**.

Records for **demonstrating compliance** with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing 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**.

Explanatory notes

Systematically managing records

The RTO must have systems in place for the maintenance and reporting of student records to meet the requirements of Condition 6 in the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.

Records are managed systematically, if they are accurate, can be easily accessed, and confidentiality is maintained. This is demonstrated when:

• Information is collected in accordance with documented procedures

• Information collected from and about learners meets the requirements of registering body 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

• The RTO meets requirements for retention, archiving and retrieval of information, in order to satisfy licensing authorities' requirements.

Using records to demonstrate compliance

Audit is an evidentiary process and records can provide relevant evidence. RTOs need to determine which records are necessary to demonstrate that its operations comply with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.

Records kept by RTOs typically relate to:

- Managing continuous improvement activities and systems
- Documenting training and assessment strategies
- Establishing and verifying trainer and assessors' competencies
- Managing assessment and assessment validation and/or moderation processes
- Managing and responding to concerns, complaints and appeals
- Managing training provided on the RTO'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 other stakeholders.

Staff responsibilities

Administrative and training and assessment staff need to be fully informed about their responsibilities so that they apply the RTO's 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
- Registering body reporting requirements are satisfied
- 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 the RTO's records management and improvements made 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.

Doing it better

RTOs could consider benchmarking data processes with high performing RTOs.

Related elements

Refer element 2.6.

SECTION 6
UNDERSTANDING THE QUALITY INDICATORS

The Quality Indicators form part of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*. The three standards in the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* all focus on continuous improvement. The Quality Indicators provide valuable data for RTOs to identify areas for improvement in training and assessment services and to gauge how well it is meeting its clients' needs.

The Quality Indicator data that is collected will also be used by the registering body in its monitoring of the quality of the RTOs' 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:

1. 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

2. Learner engagement (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

3. 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.

SECTION 7
TERMINOLOGY

The following terms are common to the VET sector and are used in the AQTF documents. 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 particular 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 principles 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 (AQF) qualification or statement of attainment.
Appeal	An appeal is where 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 that state's 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	An assessment tool includes the following components: the context and conditions for the assessment, the tasks to be administered to the candidate, an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the candidate and the evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (i.e. the assessment decision making rules). It also includes the administration, recording and reporting requirements.
AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration	The requirements an organisation must meet in order to become a registered training organisation (RTO). The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* comprise: a) Conditions of Registration b) Standards and underpinning elements. c) Quality Indicators.
AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration	The requirements an RTO must meet in order to maintain its registration. The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* comprise: a) Conditions of Registration b) Standards and underpinning elements. c) Quality Indicators.
Audit	A planned, systematic and documented process used to assess an applicant's or an RTO's compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* or the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*. Registering bodies conduct 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.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	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.

Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)	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, and revised in 2002 and 2007. This version of the AQTF was implemented 1 July 2010. The AQTF comprises: a) *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* b) *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* c) *AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies* d) *AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria* e) *AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses* f) *AQTF Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies.*
Authenticity	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.
AVETMISS	The Australian Vocational Education Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) for VET Providers is a national data standard that ensures the consistent and accurate capture of VET information about students, their courses, units of activity, and qualifications completed. It provides the mechanism for national reporting of the VET system.
Benchmarking	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.
Chief Executive	The most senior executive of an RTO.
Client	A learner, enterprise or organisation that uses or purchases the services provided by an RTO.
Client services	The services provided by an RTO to clients in order to assist and support the successful achievement of learning outcomes.
Complaint	A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with an action product or service of an education and training provider (or of the registering body) made to the registering body.
Compliance	The requirements of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* and the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* have been met, based on the evidence reviewed.

Competency	Competency is the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.
Continuous improvement	A planned and ongoing process that enables an RTO to systematically review and improve its policies, procedures, products and services in order to generate better outcomes for clients and to meet changing needs. It allows an RTO to constantly review its performance against the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* and to plan ongoing improvements to its performance. Continuous improvement involves collecting, analysing and acting on relevant information collected from clients and other interested parties, including the RTO's staff.
Contractors	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 Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* and the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.
Co-assessment	If a person does not have the assessment competencies determined by the NQC and the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed, one person with all the assessment competencies as determined by the NQC 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.
Co-requisites	A co-requisite is a unit of competency that must be undertaken as part of the same program of training delivery and/or assessment as another unit, unless it has already been completed.
Course accrediting body	The authority responsible, under the VET legislation and decision-making framework for accrediting courses for delivery both inside and outside Australia.
Credit transfer	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.
Currency	One of the rules of evidence. In assessment, currency relates to the age of the evidence presented by candidates to demonstrate that they are still competent. Competency requires demonstration of current performance, so the evidence must be from either the present or the very recent past.
Data	The information collected about aspects of an RTO's operations and performance.

Desk audit	An audit where an applicant seeking registration or an RTO submits documents or information to the registering body to be assessed as evidence for compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* or the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.
Dimensions of competency	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.
Direct supervision	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.
Director	Director of an RTO is a person who controls or governs the affairs of the RTO. A director may be appointed to the position of director or an alternate director and is acting in that capacity, regardless of the name that is given to their position. It also includes those who may not have been validly appointed as a director but act in the position of a director.
Documented	Recorded in written form
Entry requirements	Specified prior knowledge, skill, and experience, expressed in terms of competency, and may include licensing or industry recognised standards. Where entry requirements are identified, these are mandatory. Entry requirements: • Do not form part of a qualification for training and assessment purposes • Must be completed prior to enrolling in a qualification • Must be specific to the knowledge, skills or experience required to enter a qualification.
Excellence criteria	A set of criteria in the AQTF 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'.

Fairness	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, 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.
Flexible scheduling and delivery of training and assessment	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.
Flexibility	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.
Financial viability risk	An assessment of the current and probable future financial health of an applicant or RTO which indicates the likelihood that it will be unable to operate in the future. This requires an assessment of financial projections at initial registration, and an assessment of the liquidity, financing and other financial risk indicators at continuing registration.
Fit and proper person requirements	Individual characteristics or past behaviour standards that must be met by individuals who are in a position to influence the management of an RTO. Failure to meet the requirements may impact on the suitability of the individual to contribute to the delivery of education and training. A test of whether an individual satisfies fit and proper person requirements may consider past criminal convictions, any record of registration cancellations or conditions on registration, a history of personal bankruptcy or insolvency, disqualifications under the Corporations Act 2001 and other relevant matters.
Industry	Representative bodies that have a stake in the training, assessment and client services provided by RTOs. These representative bodies could include industry skills councils, industry associations, unions, regulatory bodies, licensing bodies and group training companies (not an exhaustive list).
Industry Skills Councils (ISC)	National bodies recognised and funded by the Australian Government to develop and maintain Training Packages specific to the industry area(s) for which they have coverage.

Learner	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.
Learning	
Learning program	See Training program.
Management system	The framework of structures, policies and processes used to ensure that the organisation can achieve its objectives.
Moderation	The process of bringing assessment judgements and standards into alignment. It is a process that ensures the same standards are applied to all assessment results within the same Unit(s) of Competency. It is an active process in the sense that adjustments to assessor judgements are made to overcome differences in the difficulty of the tool and/or the severity of judgements.
Module	A group of learning outcomes in an accredited course where the copyright owner can establish that it is not possible to develop an appropriate unit of competency.
Multi-site delivery	An arrangement in which an RTO manages delivery and assessment from a site or sites other than its head office. This definition includes inter-jurisdiction delivery as well as transnational/offshore delivery.
National Recognition	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. 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. Recognition by all state and territory course-accrediting bodies and registering bodies of each other's accredited courses and accreditation decisions.

National Skills Framework (NSF)	The system of VET that sets out the system's requirements for quality and national consistency in terms of qualifications and the delivery of training. The NSF applies nationally, and has been endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE).
National Training Information Service (NTIS)	The national register for recording information about RTOs, Training Packages and accredited courses. NTIS is part of the National Skills Framework.
Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo	The logo used nationally to signify that training and assessment products and services meet the requirements agreed under the National Skills Framework.
Non-compliance	The requirements of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* or the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* have not been met, based on the evidence reviewed. There are three categories of non-compliance, each explained below.
	Minor non-compliance The requirements of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* or the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* have not been met, based on the evidence reviewed, but there is no, or minor, adverse impact on learners and/or other consumers of goods and services produced in the training environment or the current (or future) workplace.
	Significant non-compliance The requirements of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* or the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* have not been met, based on the evidence reviewed, and there are indications of a significant adverse impact on learners and/or other consumers of goods and services produced in the training environment or the current (or future) workplace.
	Critical non-compliance The requirements of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* or the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* have not been met, based on the evidence reviewed, and there is a critical adverse impact on learners and/or consumers of goods and services produced in the training environment or the current (or future) workplace.
Operations	An RTO's operations includes training, assessment and support services related to its scope of registration, including those delivered across jurisdictions and offshore.
Outcomes	The consequences of actions implemented by an RTO to achieve high-quality training, assessment and client services.

Outcomes-focussed auditing	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.
Packaging requirements	The process of grouping competencies in a Training Package into meaningful combinations which represent whole jobs or key functions in the workplace.
Partnering	Partnering arrangements apply to situations where an organisation conducts training and/or assessment services on behalf of the RTO, or vice versa.
Policy	A documented statement of a definite course of action that is to be adopted and implemented.
Pre-requisites	Units of competency that are critical to achieving the subsequent competency.
Principles of assessment	To ensure quality outcomes, assessment should be fair, flexible, valid, and reliable. See also: Fairness, Flexibility, Reliability and Validity.
Procedure	A documented method or set of instructions that describes how a process is carried out.
Process	The systematic actions, people and resources required to achieve an outcome.
Qualification	Qualification is defined as follows: formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes or competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.
Quality	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.

Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators are a set of three indicators which are part of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*. When considered in the context of the RTO's business, data against the Quality Indicators provides a measure of the RTO's performance and the quality of outcomes it is achieving for clients.
	
	Three Quality Indicators have been identified as being useful for the purpose of continuous improvement within RTOs and to inform the risk profile of RTOs as established by registering bodies. The quality indicators are:
	
	• Employer satisfaction (including satisfaction with competency development and the quality of training and assessment). This indicator focuses on employers' evaluations of learners' competency development, its relevance to work and further training, and the overall quality of training and assessment.
	• Learner engagement (learner engagement and competency development). This indicator focuses on the extent to which learners are engaging in the types of activity that are likely to promote high-quality skills, as well as on learners' perceptions of the quality of their competency development and the support they receive from the RTO.
	• Competency completion rate. This will be calculated for qualifications and units of competency or modules delivered, based on data provided by RTOs about:
	  – the number of enrolments in the previous calendar year, and
	  – the number of qualifications completed and/or units of competency or modules awarded in the previous calendar year.

Reasonable adjustment	Adjustments that can be made to the way in which evidence of candidate performance can be collected. Whilst reasonable adjustments can be made in terms of the way in which evidence of performance is gathered, the evidence criteria for making competent/not yet competent decisions (and/or awarding grades) should not be altered in any way. That is, the standards expected should be the same irrespective of the group and/or individual being assessed; otherwise comparability of standards will be compromised.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	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.
Record	A written, printed or electronic document providing evidence that activities have been performed.
Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	A training organisation registered by a state or territory registering body in accordance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* within a defined scope of registration. See also Scope of registration.

Registering body	The authority responsible, under the VET legislation and decision-making framework, and in accordance with the AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies, for registering training organisations, including all the processes relating to registration and the imposition of sanctions on RTOs.
Registration	Formal recognition by a registering body, in accordance with the AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies. A training organisation must be registered in order to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications.
	Initial registration is when a training organisation meets the requirements of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration*.
	Continuing registration is when a registered training organisation continues to meet the requirements of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.
	Renewal of registration refers to the process of seeking another registration period as a registered training organisation.
Reliability	One of the principles of assessment. There are five types of reliability: internal consistency; parallel forms; split-half; inter-rater; and, intra rater. In general, reliability is an estimate of how accurate or precise the task is as a measurement instrument. Reliability is concerned with how much error is included in the evidence.
Risk indicators	**Performance risk indicators** Performance risk indicators are indicators that reflect the performance outcomes from audit compliance, data from quality indicators and complaints history. They are indicators of the likelihood that quality skills outcomes will not be achieved.
	Financial risk indicators Financial risk indicators are indicators that reflect the financial health of an applicant/RTO and the potential impact on the delivery of quality skills outcomes. They are indicators of the likelihood that quality skills outcomes will not be achieved.
	Governance risk indicators Governance risk indicators are indicators that reflect the adequacy of governance structures in place to deliver quality skills outcomes. Indicators of Governance risk include quality of business planning and transparency of ownership and management structure. They are indicators of the likelihood that quality skills outcomes will not be achieved.
	Supplementary risk indicators Supplementary risk indicators are indicators that reflect aspects of the applicants/RTO operations. They are indicators of the potential impact if quality skills outcomes are not delivered and may also influence the scope of an audit or monitoring activity.

Rules of evidence	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.
Sanction	An action that a registering body imposes on an RTO for non-compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*. Sanctions may include: • 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) • Amendment of registration (including a reduction in the RTO's scope of registration) • Suspension of registration • Cancellation of registration.
Scope of registration	The particular services and products that 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: • Both training delivery and assessment services, and to issue the relevant AQF qualifications and statements of attainment, or • Only assessment services, and to issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment.
Senior officer	A senior officer includes directors, secretaries and other people who manage an RTO. A senior officer of an RTO that is neither an individual nor a corporation means a partner in the partnership if the entity is a partnership or an office holder of the unincorporated association if the entity is an unincorporated association. It can also include a person who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part, of the business of the entity or who has the capacity to affect significantly the entity's operations or financial standing.

Simulated work environment	The requirement for a unit of competency to be assessed in a simulated workplace environment may be identified either within the unit of competency itself or within the relevant Training Package Assessment Guidelines.
	A simulated workplace may be required for the following reasons:
	• The learner may not have access to a workplace.
	• The available workplace may not use the relevant skill, equipment or process.
	• Conducting assessments may be disruptive or interfere with work requirements, e.g. there may be ethical, privacy or confidentiality issues to consider.
	• It may not be appropriate to apply the skills in the workplace due to potential risks such as health and safety or equipment being damaged.
	For the purposes of assessment, a simulated workplace may be described as one in which all of the required skills are performed with respect to the provision of paid services to an employer or the public can be demonstrated as though the business was actually operating.
	In order to be valid and reliable, the simulation must closely resemble what occurs in a real work environment. The simulated workplace should involve a range of activities that reflect real work experience. The simulated workplace should allow the performance of all of the required skills and demonstration of the required knowledge.
	It is critical that when a simulated workplace is being set up, the assessor is thoroughly familiar with the competency standard/s as well as experienced in the current circumstances and environment of the workplace.
	In deciding whether a simulation or an assessment environment has been adequately set up, the following should be considered.
	Are there opportunities to:
	• Test the full range of equipment
	• Use up-to-date equipment and software
	• Reflect times and deadlines
	• Show the complexity of dealing with multiple tasks
	• Involve prioritising among competing tasks
	• Deal with customers, including difficult ones
	• Work with others in a team
	• Communicate with diverse groups
	• Find, discuss and test solutions to problems
	• Explore health and safety issues
	• Answer practically oriented, applied knowledge questions
	• Show the level of written and verbal expression sufficient for, but not exceeding, the work requirements.

Site audit	An audit conducted by a registering body at the premises of an applicant seeking registration or an RTO and/or at locations where it delivers training and assessment.
Staff	Individuals working for the RTO, including contractors.
Stakeholders	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.
Statement of attainment	A statement of attainment is issued by a registered training organisation when an individual has completed one or more units of competency/modules from nationally recognised qualification(s)/course(s).
Strategic audit	Where a specific area of risk has been identified, a strategic industry audit is conducted to confirm that a RTO's training and assessment services are meeting the requirements of a particular industry or licensing authority.
Substantial shareholder	Substantial shareholders in a listed company are those who hold an interest in 5% or more of the total number of votes attached to the voting shares in a company. Substantial shareholders in an unlisted company are those who hold an interest in 25% or more of the total number of votes attached to the voting shares in a company.
Sufficiency	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.
System	A series of processes that are inter-related and repeatedly provide quality outcomes.
Training	The process used by an RTO to facilitate learning.
Training and assessment strategy	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.
Training Package	A nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment guidelines and AQF qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Training Plan	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.
Unique student identifier	A unique national VET student number for all nationally recognised training. The system and details are yet to be implemented. However, some jurisdictions have a state VET student number. If RTOs are required to submit data as part of funding arrangements then this will be part of the reporting requirements. RTOs will need to contact the appropriate jurisdiction which will advise on collection requirements.
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	Validation is a quality review process. It involves checking that the assessment tool produced valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of the relevant aspects of the Training Package or accredited course have been met. It includes reviewing and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes.
Validity	One of the rules of evidence and one of the principles of assessment. There are five major types of validity: face, content, criterion (i.e. predictive and concurrent), construct and consequential.
	In general, validity is concerned with the appropriateness of the inferences, use and consequences that result from the assessment. In simple terms, it is concerned with the extent to which an assessment decision about a candidate (e.g. competent/not yet competent, a grade and/or a mark), based on the evidence of performance by the candidate, is justified. It requires determining conditions that weaken the truthfulness of the decision, exploring alternative explanations for good or poor performance, and feeding them back into the assessment process to reduce errors when making inferences about competence.
	Unlike reliability, validity is not simply a property of the assessment tool. As such, an assessment tool designed for a particular purpose and target group may not necessarily lead to valid interpretations of performance and assessment decisions if the tool was used for a different purpose and/or target group.

Vocational competency	Vocational competency is defined as 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 competency 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.

APPENDIX 1
AVETMISS COMPLIANCE

What is AVETMISS?

The Australian Vocational Education Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) for VET Providers is a national data standard that ensures the consistent and accurate capture of VET information about students, their courses, units of activity, and qualifications completed. It provides the mechanism for national reporting of the VET system.

Broadly speaking, it provides answers to the following questions about students in the VET system:

• Who they are – basic demographics like age, sex, indigenous and disability information, geographic location

• Where they study – type of provider (for example, government or private), location of training delivery

• What they study – enrolments in Units of Competency, as part of a qualification, the result obtained for unit (outcome), how it was studied (for example, classroom, workplace or online) and how it was funded.

An example enrolment form which contains suggested questions in AVETMISS format to include on your student enrolment forms (to be used in conjunction with your own local needs) is available from <http://www.ncver.edu.au> by selecting Statistical Standards – AVETMISS Support.

Periodically the AVETMIS Standard is reviewed to ensure it remains relevant to the VET system. Releases of the Standard generally have a lifespan of 3–5 years due to the time and cost of implementing changes.

What does AVETMISS compliance mean for RTOs?

To be AVETMISS compliant RTOs must:

EITHER

• Have a student record management system in place that provides data that meets the AVETMIS Standard. Data extracts from the RTO's system need to pass a set of data validations. Free validation software is available from <http://www.ncver.edu.au/>, by selecting Statistical Standards – Validation Software.

OR

• Successfully submit data to the relevant state/territory training authority under current reporting arrangements with states and territories. It is important to note that some jurisdictions have additional reporting requirements and arrangements regarding validation and acceptance of data. RTOs will need to contact the appropriate jurisdiction for advice on collection requirements and reporting process.

How do RTOs become AVETMISS compliant?

RTOs may adopt one or more of these options for a student record management system to collect information in regard to training activity:

- Commercial software
- In-house developed software
- State and territory provided software.

The system chosen will be based upon local needs and the reporting requirements of the state/territory training authorities, where relevant. Some jurisdictions have additional publicly funded reporting requirements and their own arrangements regarding validation and acceptance of data the RTO receives government funding.

A list of known commercial software providers that registered training organisations use to provide AVETMISS compliant data to states and territories is available from <http://www.ncver.edu.au> by selecting Statistical Standards – AVETMISS Support.

When selecting software, it is important to consider on-going maintenance and upgrade arrangements as changes are made to AVETMISS from time to time.

Where do RTOs go for more information?

For

- An overview of the Australian VET statistical collections and surveys go to <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1967.html>
- AVETMISS information and details of all state/territory training authorities go to <http://www.ncver.edu.au> and select Statistical Standards – AVETMISS Support
- Frequently asked questions go to <http://www.ncver.edu.au> and select Statistical Standards – AVETMISS Support
- A copy of the latest AVETMIS Standard go to <http://www.ncver.edu.au> and select Statistical Standards – VET Providers.

For help in applying the AVETMIS Standard or using the validation software, RTOs can contact the AVETMISS helpdesk: Email: support@ncver.edu.au, Phone: 1800 649 452.

Unique student identifier

The development of a national unique student identifier is currently underway. This is an important initiative aimed at better capturing information on student pathways, student entitlements, and qualifications completed. RTOs will not be required to capture this information until a national system is in place.

However, some jurisdictions have or are implementing a unique VET student number at the state level. If RTOs are required to submit data as part of their funding arrangement this will be part their reporting requirements. RTOs will need to contact the appropriate jurisdiction which will advise on collection requirements.

APPENDIX 2
TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT COMPETENCIES TO BE HELD BY TRAINERS AND ASSESSORS

Determination of the National Quality Council
17 June 2010

The NQC has agreed to a transition period of two years to allow providers time to adopt a planned approach to ensuring all trainers and assessors meet the requirements of Standard 1.4(a) as agreed by the Council on 17 June 2010 and set out below. Therefore, until June 2012, the NQC's Determination of 18 December 2009 (at Appendix 3) in relation to Standard 1.4(a) will also continue to apply

The AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing 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 Standard 1.4(a) 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 necessary training and assessment competencies determined by the National Quality Council or its successors; and

b)   have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and

c)   can demonstrate current industry skills directly relevant to the training/ assessment being undertaken, and

c)   continue to develop their Vocational Education and Training (VET) knowledge and skills as well as their industry currency and trainer/ assessor competence.

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

Trainers must:

i)   hold the TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment from the TAE10 Training and Education Training Package; or

ii)   be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies; or

iii)   work under the direct supervision* of a person who has the competencies specified in (i) or (ii) 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) or (ii) 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 TAE10 Training and Education Training Package:

    a) TAEASS401A Plan assessment activities and processes

    b) TAEASS402A Assess competence

    c) TAEASS403A Participate in assessment validation; or

ii) be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies to all three units of competency listed in (i).

Note: If a person does not have the assessment competencies as defined in (i) or (ii) above and the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed, one person with all the assessment competencies listed in (i) or (ii), 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.

Vocational competency

Vocational competency is defined as 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 competency 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.

Training Packages include advice specific to the industry related to the vocational competencies of assessors. This may include advice on relevant industry qualifications and experience required for assessing against the Training Package or for specific qualifications within the package. The Training Package will also provide specific industry advice outlining what it sees as acceptable forms of evidence to demonstrate the maintenance of currency of vocational competency.

APPENDIX 3
TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT COMPETENCIES TO BE HELD BY TRAINERS AND ASSESSORS

Determination of the National Quality Council 18 December 2009

The AQTF Essential Standards for Registration specifies 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 Standard 1.4(a) 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

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

v)   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.

Vocational competency

Vocational competency is defined as 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 competency 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.

Training Packages include advice specific to the industry related to the vocational competencies of assessors. This may include advice on relevant industry qualifications and experience required for assessing against the Training Package or for specific qualifications within the package. The Training Package will also provide specific industry advice outlining what it sees as acceptable forms of evidence to demonstrate the maintenance of currency of vocational competency.

AQTF NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Registered Training Organisations will use these documents	
AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration	The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* applies to applicants seeking registration as an RTO. This publication lists AQTF requirements including: • Conditions of Registration • Three Standards relating to training and assessment, client services and management systems
AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration	The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* applies to all RTOs. This publication lists AQTF requirements for RTOs including: • Conditions of Registration • Three Standards relating to training and assessment, client services and management systems • A set of RTO Quality Indicators.
AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration	This guide assists applicants seeking registration, registering bodies and auditors to interpret and apply the Standards.
AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration	This guide assists RTOs, registering bodies and auditors to interpret and apply the Standards.
Registering Body will use these documents	
AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies	This document lists the standards that apply to a registering body. It includes: • Three Standards • Quality Indicators for assessing registering body performance • A set of operational protocols to ensure national recognition of registration decisions.
AQTF National Guidelines for a Registering Body	The *AQTF National Guidelines for a Registering Body* includes six guidelines that relate to various operations of a registering body: • AQTF National Guideline for Audit Consistency • AQTF National Guideline for Conducting Audits of the Inter-jurisdiction Operations of an RTO • AQTF National Guideline for Managing Non-compliance • AQTF National Guideline for Responding to Complaints about Vocational Education and Training Quality • AQTF National Guideline for Risk Management • AQTF National Guideline for Industry Body Engagement

	AQTF National Guideline for Audit Consistency This guideline provides a framework for capacity building and for the development and continuous improvement of auditor performance. It describes the processes used to ensure that auditors have a consistent approach to audit.
	AQTF National Guideline for Conducting Audits of the Inter-jurisdiction Operations of an RTO This guideline describes the national agreed processes related to conducting audits of the inter jurisdiction operations of RTOs. It includes principles and protocols for conducting audits in other jurisdictions.
	AQTF 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 Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* and *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration.*
	AQTF 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 the complaints handling process.
	AQTF National Guideline for Risk Management This guideline describes the nationally consistent risk management approach to be used by a registering body in decisions about scheduling and scope of audits.
	AQTF National Guideline for Industry Body Engagement This guideline describes how industry bodies can be engaged in the quality assurance arrangements. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of the registering body and regulators and includes a set of principles, protocols and options for industry engagement.
Auditors will use this document	
AQTF Audit Handbook	This Handbook is a key tool for auditors in applying the outcomes-focused audit model. It describes the principles that underpin a nationally consistent, risk-managed approach to AQTF audits. Auditors will also use the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* and the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration.* Auditors will also use the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* and the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration.*

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

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 AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria documents is also available from www.training.com.au.