

VRQA GUIDELINES FOR VET PROVIDERS

1. Governance, Probity and Compliance with Statutory Requirements

These measures have been designed to ensure that students can be confident that only providers that have appropriate educational governance arrangements, demonstrated management capacity and appropriate mechanisms to notify education regulators of significant changes to their ownership, management or operations, have been approved to provide vocational education and training.

GUIDELINE

1.1 The provider must present a current strategic plan and a detailed business plan which have been approved by its governing body.

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

A **strategic plan** that details the overall vision, mission, board of directors and strategic directions of the provider and clearly indicates that provision of vocational education is a primary purpose.

A **business plan** that details the operational and workforce development arrangements for a three year period and incorporates:

- description of the business including organisation chart, courses, location(s) and facilities
- continuous improvement plan or risk management strategy
- work force development plan
- student safety/security measures
- strategic alliances, with other education or service providers.

Required additional evidence for ESOS approval

The business plan must also detail

- international education agents, including appointment and monitoring arrangements which provide for a review of agent performance on an annual basis
- student recruitment processes including planned sources of students by country.

1.2 The provider must demonstrate its financial viability and its capacity to sustain quality VET operations into the future.

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

A three year financial plan that includes:

- projected student enrolments by qualifications
- a range of financial indicators, such as
 - cash flow
 - current ratio i.e. **Total Current Assets / Total Current Liabilities** (equal to or greater than 1)
 - debt ratio **Total Liabilities/Total Assets** (equal to or less than 1)
 - (if necessary) the provider shows that it has a financial guarantor with the capacity to service the guarantee and/or to demonstrate sufficient working capital to operate for at least 6 months without tuition fees.
- details of whether any person involved in the management or provision of courses by the provider meets any of the descriptions listed in section 4.3.11(2) of the Education & Training Reform Act 2006.

1.3 The provider must provide information about its management systems.

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

Details of

- management including:
 - evidence of company incorporation in Australia (alternatively evidence of being an incorporated body in receipt of government funds)
 - physical address of the company in Victoria for the purposes of serving notices
 - names of Directors, CEO/PEO and senior management members with associated police checks(and also working with children checks if students under 18 years)
 - evidence that shows that at least one Director or PEO/CEO have their principal residence in Victoria
 - contact arrangements for CEO/PEO including during holidays and other close down periods
 - physical addresses of the location of financial, student and staff records including archives and computer back up storage
- financial management system/s, including systems for managing student fee payments and student refunds.
- student records management system and administration capacity, including the capacity to provide the VRQA with AVETMISS compliant data and to ensure that copies of student records are
 - not able to be withheld from the provider
 - able to be provided in electronic and print versions, at no cost to the VRQA in the event that the provider ceases operations

- staff records management system and administration capacity, including arrangements that are in place to ensure that for each training and assessment staff member the following verified or certified and/or signed documents are held by the RTO
 - trainer skills matrix – signed by trainer/assessor
 - assessor qualifications – verified by RTO or otherwise certified
 - vocational qualifications – verified by RTO or otherwise certified
 - CV - signed by trainer/assessor
 - professional development activities – verified and/or signed by trainer/assessor
 - position description
 - employment contract/agreement.

Required additional evidence for ESOS approval

- details of any education and migration agents that have more than a 5% ownership in the operations of the RTO
- details of the extent of the involvement of agents in collecting, managing and refunding student fees
- mechanisms for securing student fee payments for the period from receipt of funds to the students' commencement of studies.

1.4 The provider must have appropriate governance structures in place.

For ESOS approval these structures must clearly demonstrate that the provider's principal purpose is education.

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

Details of :

- overall governance arrangements & ownership, which may include Board of Directors, governing council, academic board, executive management and/or academic management
- qualifications and educational experience of the PEO /CEO and members of the RTO's senior management team
- membership of committees established to oversight academic/educational integrity and assure quality.

Required additional evidence for ESOS approval

For ESOS approval these structures must clearly demonstrate that the provider's principal purpose is education.

1.5 Consistent with its overall governance arrangements the provider must have appropriate academic/educational governance arrangements.

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

- details of individuals and/or boards or committees who can provide access to expertise to ensure the integrity of the educational process and to ensure that standards are consistent with industry and education expectations. Such details may include:
 - for domestic providers with anticipated on going operation(see financial plan) of less than 150 equivalent full time students or annual student fee turnover of less than \$1.5m per annum the names and qualifications and experience of appropriate individuals or
 - for all other domestic providers and ALL ESOS providers
 - the nomenclature, terms of reference and membership (names, qualifications and experience) of properly constituted academic/educational boards and/or
 - the nomenclature, terms of reference and membership (names, qualifications and experience) of properly constituted industry advisory committees.

In each case any such, individuals or voting members of boards and committees, must be independent of provider ownership or employment.

1.6 The provider must report significant changes in its control, management or operations to VRQA and other regulatory agencies.

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

- The provider's governance arrangements must meet it's RTO obligations under section 4.3.17 of the Education & Training Reform Act 2006 to notify the VRQA of any significant changes to its control, management or operations.
- In addition to those requirements, the provider must undertake to notify the VRQA of any significant change to the provider's
 - financial viability or debt ratio
 - financial Guarantor arrangements
 - membership status of any Tuition Assurance Scheme or fee insurance arrangement
 - mechanisms for securing student fee payments for the period from receipt of funds to the students' commencement of studies.

2. Quality Assurance, Review and Evaluation Processes

These measures have been designed to ensure that students are receiving appropriate & continuously improving education & training.

GUIDELINE

2.1 The provider must demonstrate that it is able to monitor course quality, externally moderate student performance and drive continuous improvement in course delivery.

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

Details of

- documented policies and procedures, that include
 - mechanisms to collect regular, valid and reliable feedback from stakeholders, such as students, graduates, staff and employers of graduates and agents
 - mechanisms to ensure that the feedback is acted upon to bring about improvements
 - mechanisms to ensure that moderation/validation of student performance is undertaken with parties external to the operation of the RTO
- moderation/validation parties including schedule/plan of moderation/validation activities.

2.2 The provider must demonstrate that it has measures in place to prevent and detect cheating and plagiarism amongst its students and to deal appropriately with any instances of these practices.

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

- policies and procedures including definitions of plagiarism and cheating and indicating forms of preventative and corrective actions.

2.3 The provider must demonstrate that they can provide quality education and training to students

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

Details of:

- policies and procedures and processes for the retention unit of competency training and assessment information *for a minimum period of 1years post completion of the unit, including
- mechanisms for the retention of master copies of student assessments and training resources
- mechanisms for the retention of sufficient samples of students' assessment to demonstrate that quality education and training has occurred.

*information **must** include

- the assessment schedule for that unit
- a copy of all assessment tasks, including tests, assignment, role plays, projects etc for the unit
- a copy of any workplace/flying log or workbook used by students to provide evidence of competency including a copy of at least one a sample completed workbook
- copies of samples of student assessments, including workplace/flying logs or workbooks, together with results. A Competent C and Not Yet Competent NYC assessment for each discrete assessment task. *(At a minimum the sample would comprise one piece of work assessed as C for each required assessment task)*
- a copy of the overall results by student, for that unit.

information **may** also include

- identification of the people involved in delivery and assessment of the unit (or cluster of competencies) during that study period
- a listing of all students enrolled in the unit of competency (or cluster of competencies) by group during that study period
- a delivery and assessment plan for the unit (or cluster of competencies) that shows the sequence of delivery and assessment, the number of sessions/hours planned for the unit of competency on a structured and planned basis, for that study period
- the unit of competency (or cluster of competencies) outline. A copy of the outline as distributed to students on the first session of the unit
- a copy of class materials used in the delivery of the unit of competency (or cluster of competencies) , during that study period, including overheads, website references, reference material and handout materials
- any case study material that has been used in class for that unit
- a copy of a student survey sheet together with any analysis of results
- a copy of any relevant employer survey sheets together with any analysis of results
- any results/comments from moderation/validation activities.

3. Student Enrolment Records and Certification

These measures have been designed to ensure that students studying in Victoria are provided with enhanced consumer protection.

GUIDELINE

3.1 The provider must have a written student acceptance agreement that includes details of ALL fees and charges that may be applied to students and the circumstances in which they apply. In particular details of fees and circumstances for resit and re assessments must be included

Required evidence for ESOS approval

- written student acceptance agreement.

3.2 The provider must stipulate in its written agreement that students are entitled, at no additional cost, to a formal Statement of Attainment on withdrawal, cancellation or transfer, prior to completing the qualification , provided the student has paid in full for the tuition related to the units of competency to be shown on the Statement of Attainment.

Required evidence for ESOS approval

- written student acceptance agreement.

3.3 The provider must demonstrate that it will be keeping copies of all student acceptance agreements along with details of any fees and charges and refunds for a period of 2 years after the cessation of students' study.

Required evidence for ESOS approval

Details of:

- policies and procedures
- mechanisms for keeping original and/or scanned signed copies of all student acceptance agreements along with details of any fees and charges and refunds for a period of two years after the cessation of students' study.

3.4 For provision of courses to domestic students (students who do not hold Student Visas) a provider who is not exempt under the provisions of any Ministerial Direction, Order, Regulation or Act must:

- be a member of a Tuition Assurance Scheme for domestic students or
- obtain appropriate tuition fee insurance, or bank guarantee sufficient to meet refund of fees paid in advance or
- only accept student tuition payments in arrears.

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

Details of:

- Domestic Tuition Assurance Scheme membership covering all courses
- tuition fee insurance cover adequate to meet a refund of fees paid in advance or
- provider fee policy stating that fees are only charged in arrears.

3.5 For ESOS Approval, where a school seeks to apply for or extend their CRICOS approval into the delivery of VET courses they must take out Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS) coverage.

Required evidence for ESOS approval

- *evidence of TAS coverage from TAS provider.*

4. Student Learning Outcomes and Welfare Services

These measures have been designed to ensure that students are provided with better support services and have better experiences living, studying and working in Victoria.

GUIDELINE

4.1 A provider must not require or permit students to attend scheduled classes (including time allocated for self paced or online studies) for more than eight hours in any one day (other than in courses where the VRQA has issued the provider a specific written exemption for a course-related reason, specifying different maximum hours for that course).

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

- policy and procedure (including exemption arrangements & VRQA approval where relevant)
- delivery plans and or class schedules
- statements in policies and procedures
- information on websites and other promotional materials.

4.2 A provider must not require or permit full time students to attend scheduled classes (including time allocated for self paced or online studies) outside of 0800hrs to 2200 hrs on any day (other than in courses where the VRQA has issued the provider a specific written exemption for a course-related reason, approving a different schedule for that course and with the written agreement of the student).

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

- policy and procedures (including any exemption arrangements and mechanisms for gaining students agreement where relevant)
- delivery plans and or class schedules
- information on websites and other promotional materials.

4.3 A provider must demonstrate that it is providing students with sufficient and relevant student services.

Required evidence for ESOS approval:

Details of :

- the range of student services, such as welfare services, accommodation services, academic and career advice, IT support, and student learning assistance, English language support and social inclusion activities
- disclosure arrangements for any student service options in which the provider has a commercial interest
- information about accessibility for all students to both training and assessment staff as well as support service staff
- the names and qualifications of proposed student support personnel
- offers and acceptance of employment to a sufficient number of student support services staff to meet needs of the requested number of students (*offers and acceptances of employment can be subject to VRQA approval of RTO registration*) and/or contracts or agreements for the provision of such services with external bodies
- the basis on which the provider has determined that the level of student services is sufficient
- the processes for review and improvement of student services.

4.4 Providers must indicate the measures they intend to take to address matters of student safety

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

All providers must give a general overview of student safety issues considered and the proposed measures to be taken to address these issues

Providers operating after 1800 hours, or at weekends, or with facilities that are located in industrial areas or remote from built up areas or further than 500 metres from regular scheduled public transport, or with substantial gardens and car parking areas must:

- detail the security /safety measures to be taken to maximise student security and safety in attending and in travelling to/from the provider's premises
- demonstrate that information about the security/safety measures is available to students prior to and after enrolment.

5. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

These measures have been designed to ensure that students have access to appropriate learning resources, are taught by fully qualified staff and attend institutions where the buildings and equipment meet all regulatory standards.

GUIDELINE

5.1 The provider must demonstrate that they have the capacity to deliver and assess ALL the courses requested/on the scope of registration.

Required evidence for registration of all RTOs

- a comprehensive delivery and assessment plan for each qualification that indicates the modes of delivery and specifies the extent of work based and on-line or self paced training and assessment
- training and assessment* materials, resources and equipment for all units of competence necessary for the award of all qualifications requested for initial registration/re-registration
- identification of any units that require assessment in the workplace
- structured and relevant delivery and assessment materials for all units identified to be delivered and assessed in the workplace
- agreements with appropriate workplaces who can provide hours of work that matches or exceeds the required hours of workplace delivery and assessment for the intended number of students undertaking work based training
- identification of any units** that are intended to be delivered and assessed by on-line or self paced approaches
- structured and relevant delivery and assessment materials, including specifying nominal hours for all units identified to be delivered and assessed online; demonstrating particularly how the assessment requirements of the units are being met and assessments are being authenticated
- structured and relevant delivery and assessment materials, including specifying nominal hours, for all units identified to be delivered and assessed by self paced approaches; demonstrating particularly how the assessment requirements of the units are being met and assessments are being authenticated
- offers and acceptance of employment to a sufficient number of training and assessing staff to undertake delivery and assessment of the requested number of students in each qualification (offers and acceptances of employment can be subject to VRQA approval of RTO registration) including a statement as to why the number of staff proposed is deemed to be sufficient
- verified evidence that all proposed training and assessing staff meet NQC requirements.

Required additional evidence for all domestic RTOs providing institution based programs:

- dedicated and operational educational facilities including classrooms, library/information resource centre, laboratories, administrative areas and staff office accommodation, appropriate in scope and quality for the size, mode of delivery and nature of the institution
- a provider facility utilisation schedule that clearly shows hours of use on a daily basis that adequately provides for transition and movement of students
- evidence from appropriate authorities that all educational facilities meet the appropriate building, fire safety, OH&S, and other codes for educational premises including relevant Class 9B certificates
- evidence that the educational facilities are either owned or leased for a period at least equivalent to the duration of the qualifications.

***Assessment material *must* include but is not limited to**

1. *Delivery and assessment plan for each qualification that includes a matrix (or other presentation technique) that clearly shows the specific assessment requirements/tools for each unit of competency (or cluster of units of competency) consistent with the requirements of the training package*
2. *For each unit of competency(or cluster of competencies):*
 - *clear advice to students as to how the unit(s) will be assessed*
 - *assessment tasks for the unit(s) that are consistent with and meet the requirements of the unit(s) of competency*
 - *a mapping of skills and knowledge and critical aspects of evidence against assessment tasks*
 - *a mapping of employability skills against assessment tasks*
 - *an indication of how industry has been involved in the development of the assessment approaches*
 - *a clear set of assessment criteria/model answers for each assessment task*
 - *an assessment record sheet for each assessment task*
 - *an overall assessment record sheet for the unit(s) of competence to show achievement of the participant against each of the specified assessment tasks, signed by both assessor and student*
 - *a documented assessment validation approach*
 - *an information guide for assessors on the process of assessment used by the RTO*
 - *a rigorous process to ensure that no student can be recorded as competent without clear evidence that they have successfully completed all specified assessment requirements including ensuring that assessment record sheets include reference to all required assessments consistent with the matrix developed in 1 above.*

**** The VRQA will only approve whole units- *not* part units of competency – for delivery and assessment by on-line or self paced approaches.**

Dated and signed on this 23rd day of December 2009 by Lynn Glover, Director, VRQA