A guide to Australia’s vocational education and training system for teachers and trainers
Introduction

Australia has one of the world’s best vocational education and training (VET) systems. For someone new to the sector, there is a lot of information to absorb to operate effectively. This resource is an easy-to-read guide that simplifies the system.

Training Packages @ Work: Back 2 Basics provides a starting point to help VET practitioners navigate a path through the maze.

It is organised into three sections: ‘system basics’ covers administrative and regulatory aspects of the training system; ‘delivery basics’ covers issues relating to the delivery of training under the national training system; and ‘basics help’ has information on key contacts and resources, and a glossary.

Back 2 Basics content was compiled by the Training Packages @ Work project—a national communications project funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and managed by the Queensland Department of Education and Training. It provides specific information and resources (via a monthly newsletter and website) for VET practitioners who work in the sector or who are new to the sector. It also provides general information to help individuals better understand the Australian VET system.

In keeping with the approach taken by the Training Packages @ Work project, this publication:

• avoids jargon
• focuses on best practice
• provides contacts for more information.

This is by no means a definitive guide to the VET system in Australia, but it is a handy means of accessing a range of information needed on a daily basis.

To stay up to date with the latest training package news, visit www.tpatwork.com

To view this publication online, visit www.tpatwork.com_back2basics

For more information on the publication, contact info@tpatwork.com
The national VET system

What are the key elements of the national VET system?

There are four key elements of the Australian VET system. First it is a nationally agreed system for recognising qualifications and for registering and quality assuring training providers.

Secondly, it is industry-led because employers, unions and professional associations of an industry define the outcomes that are required from training.

Thirdly, it is a system focused on ensuring individuals gain the skills and knowledge they need for work, whether that be to enter the workforce for the first time, re-enter the workforce, get a new job or to upgrade their skills.

A final important element of the national training system is that it includes national standards frameworks for qualifications (the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF)), training products (training packages) and training providers (the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)). This three pronged structure supports quality assurance across the VET system.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

The AQF is a unified, quality-assured framework for qualifications across all sectors of education and training and all state and territory governments. It ensures the quality, consistency and portability of training outcomes across Australia. There are 16 national qualifications within the framework, including eight VET qualifications.

Under the AQF, students can start at the level that suits them and build upon it as their needs and interests develop and change over time.

Training packages

A training package is an integrated set of nationally endorsed units of competency, AQF qualifications and assessment guidelines designed for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Training packages are a key resource for registered training organisations (RTOs) in the delivery of structured, accredited training. They describe the skills and knowledge that individuals need to possess to be able to perform effectively in the workplace.

Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)

The AQTF is the national set of standards which assures nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment services for Australia’s VET system clients.

In December 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to amendments to the AQTF that strengthen the regulatory requirements underpinning the VET sector. The amendments introduced conditions and standards for initial registration of new training providers and strengthened the requirements for ongoing registration, including stronger financial viability and fee protection conditions.

The new AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration and Continuing Registration were endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE) in June 2010 and came into effect from 1 July 2010.
A new national VET regulator

From July 2011, a new national VET regulator (Australian Skills Quality Authority) will oversee registration of providers and accreditation of VET qualifications and courses. It will seek to ensure improved quality of data and information in the public domain about VET courses, cost and quality; training package reform; and stronger links with higher education quality systems.

The establishment of the national VET regulator will facilitate greater consistency of regulation and better coordinated responses to emerging quality issues in the sector.

More information

Key Resources
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- National Training Information Service (NTIS)
- AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies
- training.com.au
- Training Packages @ Work

Key contacts
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
- State and territory training authorities (STAs)

Related articles
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)
- Course accreditation
- Training packages

Glossary terms
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Training packages
- Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)
- Unit of competency
- Registered training organisations (RTOs)
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG)
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration
- Ministerial Council of Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE)
Training packages

A training package is a set of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications used to recognise and assess people’s skills in a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Training packages describe the skills and knowledge that individuals need to perform effectively in the workplace. Despite the name, a training package does not describe how an individual should be trained. Teachers and trainers develop learning and assessment strategies—the ‘how’—depending on learners’ needs, abilities and circumstances.

What are training packages?

Training packages consist of a set of endorsed components. Some training packages also have an associated collection of support materials—these are not endorsed (refer to Figure 1).

1. Endorsed components

Units of competency—define the skills and knowledge to operate effectively and how they need to be applied to perform effectively in a workplace context.

Qualifications—groups of units of competency ranging from Certificate I to Vocational Graduate Diploma level.

Assessment guidelines—the industry’s preferred approach to assessment, including the qualifications required by assessors, the design of assessment processes and how assessments should be conducted.

2. Non-endorsed support materials

Some training packages also have resources to support learning and assessment such as assessment materials, learning strategies and professional development materials. Where these resources are not included in the training package, RTOs can access resources that have already been developed by state and territory training authorities (STAs) and other training providers through Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) and TVET Australia.

Figure 1: Training package components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endorsed materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Units of competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-endorsed support materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the role of the RTO?

The training package does not state how training is to be delivered or what assessment methodology will be used. These considerations are the responsibility of the RTO. A training package provides guidance on assessment, but it is the responsibility of the RTO to certify that the person has been assessed as competent against the standards expressed in the training package.

Implementing training packages

While training packages are nationally endorsed, the guidelines and policies governing their implementation vary slightly in each state and territory. For example, training package qualifications may be eligible for state government funding arrangements in some states or territories and not in others depending on local priorities.

Implementation guides (also known as mapping or transition guides) provide additional general and state-specific information to assist RTOs, trainers and assessors in delivering training.

Implementation guides describe:

- qualifications included in the training package
- registration processes and requirements for RTOs
- how to transition from accredited courses or earlier versions of the training package to the latest endorsed qualifications
- timelines for transferring students from old qualifications to new ones (sometimes called transitioning)
- sample training programs
- industry licensing requirements
- contacts and resources
- apprenticeships and/or traineeships that include competencies or qualifications from the training package.
Why use training packages?
The benefits of using a training package include:

- Ensuring that training meets the needs and requirements of industry to the standard set by industry
- Delivering qualifications that are consistent and nationally recognised, making it easier for students to move between states and territories and for employers to hire people who have worked for other companies or moved from interstate
- Providing students with the flexibility to choose how, when and where the training is undertaken
- Providing individuals and businesses with assurance that the training may be contextualised to suit the needs of the enterprise and/or individual.

How is a training package developed?
The development of training packages is managed by ISCs on behalf of industry.

To gain national endorsement, developers must provide evidence of extensive consultation and support within the industry area or enterprise. On completion of a quality assurance process, training packages are endorsed by the National Quality Council (NQC) and placed on the National Training Information Service (NTIS).

Review of training packages
Training packages are monitored and reviewed by industry through national ISCs to ensure they are current and continue to meet the existing and emerging needs of industry. Training packages are reviewed through continuous improvement processes, and must be resubmitted for endorsement every three years to the NQC.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

The AQF is a comprehensive framework for all nationally recognised qualifications in schools, VET, and higher education.

Who is responsible for the AQF?

The AQF was introduced Australia-wide on 1 January 1995 and was phased in over five years, with full implementation by the year 2000. It was developed through agreement by the Australian, State and Territory Education and Training Ministers, meeting as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA, replaced by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) on 1 July 2009).

MCEETYA established an AQF Advisory Board to protect the AQF qualifications guidelines and to promote and monitor national implementation of the AQF.

In May 2008, MCEETYA agreed to replace the AQF Advisory Board with the AQF Council to provide Education and Training Ministers with strategic and authoritative advice on the AQF to ensure it is nationally and internationally robust and supports flexible cross-sector linkages and pathways.

On 1 July 2009 MCTEE was established with responsibility for the AQF.

The AQF Council provided advice on strengthening the AQF to MCTEE at its meeting on 19 November 2010. MCTEE accepted the AQF Council’s advice and approved the strengthened AQF, subject to some amendments. The final version, incorporating the amendments, was approved during MCTEE’s March 2011 meeting. An official launch of the revised AQF will be held on 23 June 2011 in Melbourne.

AQF qualifications

There are 16 national qualifications titles within the framework (refer to Table 1), including eight competency-based qualifications for the VET sector. Table 1 groups the qualifications according to the educational sector that has responsibility for accrediting each qualification.

Why is the AQF so important?

The AQF is used as the standard for decision making in the accreditation of Australian qualifications in all three education and training sectors.

The AQF helps all learners, employers, and education and training providers to participate in and navigate the qualifications system. Under the framework, learners can start at the level of learning that suits them and then build up their skills as their needs and interests develop and change over time. The framework assists learners to plan their career progression regardless of their life stage or location. In this way, it supports national standards in education and training and encourages lifelong learning.

What is a qualification?

A qualification is a formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, which recognises that a person has achieved learning outcomes relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs. Nationally recognised VET qualifications can be developed in two ways:

Training package qualifications—training packages are developed by industry through national ISCs to meet the identified training needs of specific industries or industry sectors or enterprises. Units of competency are combined into meaningful groups aligned to qualifications within the AQF. Learners who complete some, but not all, units of competency from a qualification are awarded a statement of attainment. When the remaining units of competency are completed, a qualification is issued.

Accredited courses—an accredited course, based on industry, enterprise and/or community needs, can be developed where no relevant training package or endorsed units of competency exist. Units of competency from one or more training package can be combined into an accredited course. Units of competency may also be developed where these do not already exist and these can be combined with training package units of competency into an accredited course. The units of competency are combined into meaningful groups aligned to qualifications within the AQF. Accredited courses are accredited by a state or territory accrediting body.
### What is a statement of attainment?
A statement of attainment is issued by a RTO when an individual has completed one or more units of competency from a nationally recognised qualification(s) and/or accredited course(s).

### Qualifications guide for developers
The *Australian Qualifications Framework Implementation Handbook (Fourth Edition, 2007)* provides a detailed guide for the practical implementation of the AQF.

The handbook contains guidelines to assist the developers of training packages and accredited courses to determine the appropriate level of a qualification. The handbook also explains the responsibilities for assessment and for issuing qualifications and statements of attainment.

### Issuing qualifications
Under the AQTF, only RTOs are able to issue qualifications or statements of attainment in the VET sector.

A qualification and/or statement of attainment issued under the AQF must follow the protocols for defining the form of a qualification and/or statement of attainment as specified in the *Australian Qualifications Framework Implementation Handbook*.

### Table 1: Australian Qualifications Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOLS SECTOR</th>
<th>VET SECTOR</th>
<th>HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vocational graduate diploma</td>
<td>doctoral degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vocational graduate certificate</td>
<td>masters degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>advanced diploma</td>
<td>graduate diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diploma</td>
<td>bachelor honours degree, bachelor degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>senior secondary certificate of education</td>
<td>certificate IV</td>
<td>associate degree, advanced diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>certificate III</td>
<td>diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>certificate II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>certificate I</td>
<td></td>
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What is the AQTF?

The AQTF is the national set of standards which assures nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment services for the clients of Australia’s VET system.

Strengthening the AQTF

In December 2009, COAG agreed to amendments to the AQTF that strengthen the regulatory requirements underpinning the VET sector. The amendments introduce conditions and standards for initial registration of new training providers and strengthen the requirements for ongoing registration, including stronger financial viability and fee protection conditions.

The new AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration and Continuing Registration were endorsed by MCTEE in June 2010 and came into effect from 1 July 2010.

The conditions of registration component focuses on setting clear, non-negotiable requirements. These requirements now put a strong emphasis on a RTO’s governance structure, business practices and financial viability.

The essential standards for registration focuses on maintaining clear, high standards to ensure that providers are delivering what learners have signed up for at initial registration.

Details on the new AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration and Continuing Registration are available on www.training.com.au

What are the quality indicators?

The AQTF includes quality indicators designed to provide information about RTO performance. Three quality indicators have been identified for use by RTOs for continuous improvement and by registering bodies to establish and monitor risk. The three indicators are:

- **Learner Engagement**—this indicator focuses on the extent to which learners are engaging in activities likely to promote high-quality skill outcomes and will include learner perceptions of the quality of their competency development and the support they receive or have received from RTOs.

- **Employer Satisfaction**—this indicator focuses on employer evaluation of learner competency development and the relevance of learner competency to work and further training, as well as employer evaluation of the overall quality of the training and assessment.

- **Competency Completion**—this indicator shows the number of enrolments and qualifications completed and units of competency awarded in the previous calendar year by each RTO.

The quality indicators are currently under review as part of further work to support implementation of the strengthened AQTF. The review is evaluating their usefulness as a monitoring tool to assist registering bodies in informing their risk assessment of RTOs, and RTOs in informing their continuous improvement processes.

The AQTF also includes a set of quality indicators for registering bodies. Registering bodies are required to report annually to the NQC through these indicators to assess their performance against the AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies.
What are the Excellence Criteria?
The AQTF Excellence Criteria are designed as a voluntary business framework that RTOs may use internally to continually improve the quality of their training and assessment. They are based on internationally recognised business excellence models and principles that have been customised to better reflect the unique characteristics and priorities of the VET sector in Australia, with a focus on quality training and assessment.

What are the AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies?
These standards apply to registering bodies in quality assuring the training and assessment services that RTOs provide, in accordance with the AQTF and relevant legislation within each jurisdiction. The standards specify the three standards and associated elements; the quality indicators; and the operating protocols for undertaking registration and auditing functions.

How does a training organisation become registered?
To become registered, a training organisation must apply to the registering body in the state or territory where the organisation has its head office, and pay the relevant fees. Registration is for up to five years (unless suspended or cancelled).

What is the scope of registration?
An RTO's scope of registration specifies the AQF qualifications and/or units of competency for which the training organisation is registered to deliver, assess and issue qualifications. These details are recorded on NTIS.

How does auditing work under the AQTF?
Under the AQTF, registering bodies use a nationally consistent risk management approach to monitor the quality of training and assessment services provided by RTOs.

RTOs collect data on their performance, and registering bodies monitor this data to track the quality of outcomes. Based on this monitoring, registering bodies make decisions on frequency, scope and depth of audits of the RTO.

There are three primary sources of information used in the risk management process:

- **Risk assessment**, based on, for example, delivery of qualifications in areas subject to licenses, multi-site delivery including across jurisdictions, delivery to international students, and offshore delivery.
- **Annual data and information collected**, that is, performance against the learner engagement, employer satisfaction and competency completion quality indicators
- **Information collected during audits** of RTOs.

Audits are conducted for initial registration, within 12 months of initial registration, on re-registration, on a variation to scope, following a complaint, and on a risk basis during the registration period informed by the risk profiles that are developed for RTOs based on both the internal and external operating environment of an RTO.
More information

**Key resources**
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration
- National Training Information Service (NTIS)
- AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering bodies
- training.com.au

**Key contacts**
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
- State and territory training authorities (STAs)
- Ministerial Council of Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE)
- National Quality Council (NQC)

**Related articles**
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Training packages
- The national VET system and training system

**Glossary terms**
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG)
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration
- Ministerial Council of Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE)
- Registered training organisation (RTO)
- Unit of competency
- National Quality Council (NQC)
- AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering bodies
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- National Training Information Service (NTIS)
- Scope of registration
National Quality Council (NQC)

The NQC plays a key role in bringing together the major players in the VET sector—industry, unions, governments, equity groups and practitioners—to oversee and support the current and future quality of VET across Australia. It is also critical to ensuring the successful operation of the National Skills Framework.

The NQC, a committee of MCTEE, oversees quality assurance and ensures national consistency in the application of the AQTF standards for the audit and registration of training providers. It has specific decision-making powers in relation to the endorsement of training packages and other aspects of quality assurance under the National Skills Framework.

What are the functions of the NQC?

The functions of the NQC include:

- reporting to MCTEE on the operation of the National Skills Framework, including training packages, AQTF standards and other quality assurance arrangements
- advising Ministers on the endorsement of training packages
- recommending approaches to improve national consistency within the operation of the National Skills Framework.

Accountability requirements for the NQC include providing an annual report on its operations to MCTEE.

Who are the members of the NQC?

The membership of the NQC consists of:

- an independent chair appointed by the Australian Government following consultation with MCTEE
- four industry representatives and one Australian Council of Trade Unions representative appointed by the Australian Government following consultation with MCTEE
- three National Senior Officials Committee (NSOC) members as representatives for states and territories on a three-year rotational basis
- one representative from the Australian Government (DEEWR)
- two provider representatives—one public and one private, nominated by TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) and the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), and appointed by the Australian Government following consultation with MCTEE
- two equity representatives nominated by the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC).
Industry skills councils (ISCs)

The 11 ISCs are independent, not-for-profit companies run by industry-based boards of directors drawn from employer and employee representatives. They were first established in 2004. They receive funding from the Australian Government through a funding agreement with DEEWR to perform their role in the national training system.

What are the roles and priorities of ISCs?

The Australian Government currently funds ISCs to develop, maintain and continuously improve training packages. The development of flexible national training packages that incorporate employability skills, green skills and cross-industry Skill Sets is integral to meeting the current and prospective skills development needs of industry and business.

Through the network of ISCs, industry has a direct say in determining relevant skills for the industry and in defining the competencies required in the workplace.

The role of ISCs was expanded, and their funding increased, as part of the Australian Government Skilling Australia for the Future policy announced in 2007.

Under the Skilling Australia for the Future policy, in addition to their roles of developing and maintaining training packages, ISCs have a role in providing industry intelligence to government and enterprises on workforce development and skills needs.

The 11 ISCs are:
1. AgriFood Skills Australia
2. Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council
3. Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council
4. EE-Oz Training Standards
5. ForestWorks
6. Government Skills Australia
7. Innovation and Business Skills Australia
8. Manufacturing Skills Australia
9. Service Skills Australia
10. SkillsDMC

For more information on each ISC, visit www.isc.org.au

More information

Key contacts
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Key resources
www.isc.org.au

Glossary terms
Employability skills
Green skills (skills for sustainability)
Skills Sets
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
Training package
Accredited courses address skill requirements for industry, enterprises and the community where these are not covered in nationally endorsed training packages. They have the capacity to address changes in skill needs, and the needs of emerging and converging industries and industry sectors, in a responsive manner.

In the VET system, state or territory course accrediting bodies formally recognise these qualifications through the process of accrediting courses in line with the AQTF 2010 Standards for Accredited Courses.

What does accreditation mean?
When a course has been accredited it means it is nationally recognised and that a RTO can issue a nationally recognised qualification or statement of attainment following its full or partial completion. Once a course has been accredited, it is listed on NTIS by the course accrediting body.

Accreditation of a course is confirmation by a course accrediting body that the course:
- meets industry, enterprise or community needs
- provides appropriate competency outcomes and a satisfactory basis for assessment
- meets national quality assurance requirements
- is aligned to the appropriate level of the AQF where it leads to a qualification.

What can and cannot be accredited?
A course leading to an AQF qualification or statement of attainment will be accredited if:
- there is clear evidence that the course meets an identified industry, enterprise, education or community need
- the course is consistent with the AQF
- the course does not duplicate by title or coverage the outcomes of an endorsed training package qualification
- the courses meets the design requirements as established in the AQTF 2010 Standards for Accredited Courses
- the course is based on nationally endorsed units of competency where these are available, and where these are not available, the course is based on units of competency developed as part of the course; or modules.

(Note: modules may be included where the course developer can establish to the satisfaction of the course accrediting body, prior to development, that it is not possible to develop appropriate competency standards.)

A state or territory course accrediting body will not accredit a course if the intended course:
- duplicates, by title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed training package qualification and/or unit of competency
- outcomes can be achieved through the contextualisation of a training package qualification and/or unit of competency in accordance with the training package qualification packaging rules and contextualisation advice
- is a sub-set of a training package qualification that could be recognised through one or more statements of attainment.

Applying for accreditation and delivering an accredited course
An organisation or individual responsible for the development of a course must apply to have a course accredited. The course developer does not need to be a RTO. Refer to the AQTF 2010 Standards for Accredited Courses for more information.
Once a course has been accredited by a course accrediting body and placed on NTIS, it will be recognised in all other states and territories without the need for further accreditation in those states and territories.

Only a RTO with the course listed in its scope of registration can deliver and/or assess an accredited course and issue a subsequent qualification or statement of attainment in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework Implementation Handbook.
A national coding system gives each training package, unit of competency and qualification a unique, nationally consistent identifier. It is a key factor in administering VET across states and territories, and across industries.

**Coding for training packages**

Each training package is assigned a unique alphanumeric identifier comprising three letters and two numbers (refer to Figure 2). The three letters identify the industry, and where appropriate, the sector of that industry. This code is determined by the ISC responsible for the training package development and continuous improvement.

The two numbers are assigned as a mechanism for version control, and identify the year in which the package was endorsed. For example: BSB07 is the Business Services Training Package, endorsed in 2007.

This three-letter industry identifier is then applied to all qualifications and competencies specific to that training package as a clear identification of their origin. The codes for enterprise-specific training packages always commence with 'Z'.

**Figure 2: Example of training package coding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BSB</th>
<th>07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDUSTRY</td>
<td>YEAR OF ENDORSEMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(BUSINESS SERVICES)</td>
<td>(2007)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coding qualifications**

Each qualification within a training package is assigned its own unique identifier, no more than eight characters in length, which starts with the three-letter industry identifier for the training package. This is followed by a single numeric code that reflects the level of the qualification within the AQF.

Each qualification is then assigned a two-digit identifier. If there are multiple qualifications at one level, they are numbered sequentially, starting at '01'. Finally, a two-digit code indicating the year in which the qualification was endorsed is added for version control.

For example: BSB40207 indicates the second certificate IV qualification endorsed in 2007 for the Business Services Training Package.

**Figure 3: Example of qualification coding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BSB</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>02</th>
<th>07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDUSTRY</td>
<td>AQF</td>
<td>QUALIFICATION</td>
<td>YEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDENTIFIER</td>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td>OF THIS</td>
<td>QUALIFICATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS NUMERIC</td>
<td>REFLECTED</td>
<td>WAS ENDORSED</td>
<td>LEVEL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coding units of competency**

Each unit of competency in a training package is assigned an identifier. It begins with the same three-letter identifier as the training package to which it belongs. This identifier can be no more than 12 characters in length and can include both numbers and capitalised letters.

Version control for coding units of competency is indicated by a single end letter (A, B, C, etc.) The code for the original version of any competency ends in 'A', and any subsequent versions are marked in alphabetical sequence. Any change to a unit of competency that alters the unit outcome requires the unit title to be changed and a new unit code assigned.

For example: BSB0HS407A (Monitor A Safe Workplace) indicates the unit is from the Business Services Training Package, is an occupational health and safety unit, was first packaged at a certificate IV level and is the seventh unit, first version.

**Other rules affecting coding**

Where units of competency or qualifications developed in one training package are imported into another, they must retain the original coding and title.

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**More information**

**Key resources**
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Training Package Development Handbook
- AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses
- AQF Implementation Handbook
- National Training Information Service (NTIS)

**Key contacts**
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

**Glossary terms**
- Training package
- Unit of competency
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
Australian Apprenticeships

Australian Apprenticeships are delivered through a cooperative arrangement between the Australian, state and territory governments, industry, employers and RTOs.

Australian Apprenticeships are an effective way to combine training and employment and can lead to a nationally recognised qualification through a competency-based system. This means individuals can complete training faster if they reach the required skill level. Anyone can undertake an Australian Apprenticeship in a range of qualifications, anything from aquaculture to zoo keeping, including traditional trades such as carpentry and plumbing.

The Australian Government also provides incentives to eligible Australian Apprentices, particularly in trades experiencing a skill shortage, to assist in the early years of their apprenticeship when their wages are at their lowest.

Training contracts

Australian Apprenticeships operate on the basis of a National Training Contract between an employer and an Australian Apprentice. The contract protects both employer's and employee's interests. It also outlines the employer's obligation to provide training, specifies the qualification to be achieved by the Australian Apprentice and explains the Australian Apprentice's obligations.

Training contracts are registered with STAs. For more information on National Training Contract requirements contact an Australian Apprenticeship Centre (AAC). To locate AACs, visit www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/search/aacsearch.asp

Who is responsible for Australian Apprenticeships?

DEEWR

DEEWR is responsible for:

- developing policy on support services for Australian Apprenticeships
- developing and providing advice on policy for the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program (AAIP)
- tendering and contracting organisations
- monitoring, reviewing and evaluating AACs’ performance and contractual compliance
- collecting, analysing, reporting and publishing information on outcomes achieved
- investigating allegations or evidence of fraud by AACs, employers, Australian Apprentices or others in relation to support services for Australian Apprenticeships.

AACs

AACs are contracted by the Australian Government (DEEWR) to:

- market and promote Australian Apprenticeships
- provide comprehensive information to Australian Apprentices, employers and other interested parties
- provide support to Australian Apprentices and employers throughout the Australian Apprenticeship
- work with STAs to provide streamlined support service for employers and Australian Apprentices
- establish effective relationships to encourage the commencement and successful completion of Australian Apprenticeships
- aim to achieve better participation in Australian Apprenticeships for Indigenous Australians, people with a disability, mature age workers, Australian School-based Apprentices and in skills needs occupations
- administer payments under the AAIP (ie Tools For Your Trade payment initiative, Support for Adult Australian Apprentices and Living Away From Home Allowance).
STAs

State and territory governments are responsible for Australian Apprenticeships policy, priorities, regulatory and administrative arrangements. STAs also determine what qualifications are suitable for Australian Apprenticeships in each state or territory, approve RTOs to deliver them, and distribute public funds to RTOs for training delivery.

Specific areas of state or territory responsibility in relation to Australian Apprenticeships include:

- registration and certification of Australian Apprenticeship training contracts
- registration and monitoring of Group Training Organisations
- employment arrangements for Australian Apprentices
- management of misuse of User Choice training funding.

Training cost - Who pays for the training cost?

The decision of who pays for the cost of the formal off-the-job training of an Australian Apprentice is an arrangement made between the employer and the Australian Apprentice. Training costs for selected Australian Apprenticeships can also be subsidised under User Choice.

What is User Choice?

User Choice is a national policy whereby state and territory governments fund RTOs to provide structured training to Australian Apprentices. These funds reduce the cost of the training that an Australian Apprentice or the employer will have to pay under an Australian Apprenticeship.

The amount of funding and training available under User Choice is different in each state and territory, with each state and territory having different priority areas to direct their User Choice funds.

Under User Choice arrangements Australian Apprentices and their employers may be able to select the private or public training provider of their choice.

This may allow:

- employers who operate in more than one state or territory to choose one provider that can meet all of their training needs
- employers to negotiate with providers on aspects of the timing, location and the mode of delivery, and about the trainer/facilitator who conducts the assessment
- employers scope to negotiate aspects of the selection and sequencing of units of competence within a training package to provide tailored training that is more specific to their needs
- employers to negotiate the purchase of flexible training over and above what is publicly funded through state or territory User Choice arrangements.

For more information on User Choice contact the AAC or STA in your region.
VET in Schools

Over the past 15 years, VET has increasingly become a mainstream part of senior secondary schooling in Australia. Responsibility for the delivery of VET in Schools sits with individual states and territories, leading to variations in terminology, registration and delivery. This section provides a basic overview of VET in Schools nationally. Specific information for each jurisdiction is available from their individual websites.

What is VET in Schools?

VET in Schools (VETiS) refers to school-based VET programs that provide students with the opportunity to gain credit towards their Senior Secondary Certificate of Education while at the same time gaining a nationally industry-recognised qualification or credit towards this qualification.

VETiS study can be at the Certificate I to IV level, however a significant proportion of activity is undertaken at Certificate I and II levels. VETiS can be done in two main ways:

• through institution-based course or subject programs
• through school-based apprenticeships and traineeships (Australian School-based Apprenticeships), where students become part-time paid employees under a training contract.

Students completing a VETiS program have the opportunity to complete their secondary education with the following:

• a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education
• (in some states and territories) a contribution towards their university entrance score
• practical work skills and credit towards, or attainment of, a VET qualification.

Note that there is not a consistent definition of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education across all states and territories.

What is the role of VETiS?

The study of VETiS subjects can provide an alternative to an academic pathway to achieve Year 12, widening the range of learning experiences which may appeal to young people, and contributing to their engagement in and completion of senior secondary studies. VETiS may help students to explore industry pathways, as well as enhance career education, develop generic employability skills and gain an understanding of the world of work.

VETiS provides a link to training pathways and can enable students to obtain pre-requisite certification necessary to pursue tertiary qualifications, in addition to their Senior Secondary Certificate of Education. Access to Certificates I and II as part of VETiS can be important for engaging young people who have been disengaged from education for some time.

VETiS training is delivered by a RTO. Some schools are registered as RTOs in their own right. The number of schools with this registration status varies greatly between the states and territories, reflecting different policy directions. The training that students receive reflects specific industry competency standards through the use of training packages, developed by industry and endorsed by government.

How many students are involved?

More than 95% of Australia’s schools with senior students now offer VET. In 2009, 229,500 secondary students participated in VETiS. This represents around 41% of the proportion of students undertaking a senior secondary certificate. These students comprised:

• 21,500 school-based apprentices and trainees
• 208,000 students enrolled in other VETiS programs.

(Source: Australian VET Statistics – Vocational Education and Training in Schools, 2009, NCVER)

In 2009 the management and commerce field of education accounted for the greatest proportion of subject enrolments undertaken by VETiS students. Limited information on VETiS is reported for...
individual schools on the myschool website. Data includes the number of students aged 15-19 years who, on leaving school, had successfully completed at least one unit of competency as part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above.

What are the state and territory differences?

States and territories have adopted different practices in the way that VETiS is organised and in the language used to describe these arrangements.

The delivery method—some jurisdictions deliver a VET qualification or unit of competency as a ‘stand alone’ course; others ‘embed’ the competencies within a general course curriculum; and some jurisdictions offer a combination of these delivery methods.

RTO status and external provider involvement—some jurisdictions allow all schools to become RTOs in their own right; others provide an administration unit (RTO) for a cluster of schools; while others have auspice arrangements with an external provider.

Recognition of VET for tertiary entrance purposes—Not all VETiS programs are recognised for tertiary entrance purposes. Some states require the completion of an additional exam by VET students, while in others the courses automatically contribute to a tertiary entrance score. Some states do both, but not all VETiS programs are recognised for tertiary entrance purposes.

Access to Australian School-based Apprenticeships—access varies markedly between the states and territories.

Other policy initiatives:

There are a number of policy initiatives that are focused on increasing participation in and quality of VETiS including:

- Trade Training Centres
- National Trade Cadetships, to commence in 2012
- Various national partnerships.

The Australian Vocational Student Prize and the Prime Minister’s Award for Excellence in School are further incentives to young people.

In addition to the following, information about these policy initiatives is available on the DEEWR website (www.deewr.gov.au).

Trade Training Centres

The Australian Government is providing $2.5 billion over 10 years for Trade Training Centres to help increase the proportion of students achieving Year 12 or an equivalent qualification and help address skill shortages in traditional trades and emerging industries.

Funding for secondary schools is provided through an annual national application process to build or upgrade metal, woodworking, automotive, building and construction, electronic technology and other trade workshops for secondary school students. The types of projects that may be funded are reviewed for each funding round. Funding is also extended to technical facilities such as commercial cookery and hairdressing facilities. In the initial stages, funds are being targeted to those secondary schools with the greatest need for, and capacity to benefit from, a new or upgraded trade training centre.

The program will help address national skills shortages in traditional trades and emerging industries by improving the relevance and responsiveness of trade training programs in secondary schools.

National Trade Cadetships

From 2012 all Australian students in years 9 to 12 will be offered the option of a new National Trade Cadetship to prepare for an Australian Apprenticeship while at school.

There will be two streams of National Trade Cadetship available:

1. National Trade Cadetship - Foundation which will focus on essential work readiness skills and laying the foundation for further training.
2. National Trade Cadetship - Pre-Apprentice which will focus on a specific trade or occupation area.

National Trade Cadetships will be nationally recognised under the AQF and will provide credit towards an Australian Apprenticeship or further training.
Australian Vocational Student Prize and PM’s Award for Skills Excellence in School

The Australian Vocational Student Prize promotes vocational education at school and recognises students who choose to pursue a practical training pathway while completing their senior secondary studies. Each year, up to 500 prizes of $2,000 each are awarded to outstanding Year 12 students.

The Prime Minister’s Award for Skills Excellence in School provides further recognition of the highest achieving recipients of the Australian Vocational Student Prize. Winners of this award are selected from the categories of highest achieving student in each state and territory, the highest achieving Indigenous student, and the highest achieving students in each represented industry group. Each winner receives a certificate and $2000.

VET in Schools Program Excellence Award – Part of the National Focus Award through the Australian Training Awards

The VET in Schools Program Excellence Award aims to recognise eligible organisations including schools, RTOs, industry bodies, employers that have collaboratively delivered an excellent VET training program to secondary school students and can demonstrate local impact on one or more of the following:

- secondary school students accessing VET programs (number or diversity)
- meeting the student need, labour market and industry skill requirements
- achieving excellent outcomes for students
- maintaining or establishing community partnerships and collaborative enterprise
- innovation in the structure, content and delivery of programs.
Rewards and recognition

The Australian VET system has a variety of awards and competitions which provide an opportunity for apprentices, trainees, RTOs and industry to be recognised for their VET achievements.

**Australian Training Awards**

The Australian Training Awards are the peak, national awards for the VET sector, recognising and rewarding RTOs, employers and individuals for their outstanding contribution to skilling Australia.

The Australian Training Awards are the culmination of the state and territory training awards with winners from each state and territory eligible to compete at the national finals.

Australian Training Awards categories comprise:

- **five organisational categories:**
  - Small Employer of the Year
  - Employer of the Year
  - Large Training Provider of the Year
  - Small Training Provider of the Year
  - Industry Collaboration Award

- **seven individual categories:**
  - Australian School-based Apprentice of the Year
  - Vocational Student of the Year
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year
  - Australian Apprentice (Trainee) of the Year
  - Australian Apprentice of the Year
  - VET Teacher/Trainer of the Year
  - Lifetime Achievement Award

The presentation dinner is held in November in conjunction with the MCTEE meeting.

The 2011 Australian Training Awards will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre on Friday 25 November. For more information, visit www.australiantrainingawards.gov.au

**National Focus Awards**

In 2011, the Australian Training Awards will also present the inaugural National Focus Awards which showcase Australia’s national priorities in the VET sector. In particular, the National Focus Awards acknowledge the positive contributions made in the VET sector by individuals, schools, businesses and organisations.

The awards, which are nominated by the Australian Government Minister responsible for skills, may change each year in order to highlight the changing priorities of the VET sector in Australia.

In 2011 the National Focus Awards comprise of:

- Innovative Practices for Employers of Australian Apprentices Award
- Leadership in Quality Award
- Community Pathways to VET Award
- VET in Schools Program Excellence Award
- Skills for Sustainability - Educational Institution Award

Applications for the National Focus Awards are made direct to DEEWR and will open in May 2011.

**WorldSkills Australia**

WorldSkills Australia (WSA) is a national, not-for-profit organisation that provides young Australians (apprentices, trainees and VET students, aged 23 and under), the opportunity to gain new skills, compete against their peers in their chosen trade and fast track their skills and career development.

The purpose of WSA is to promote and build a skills respect culture by celebrating skills excellence, inspiring young people and providing them with an opportunity to showcase their trade and skill talent. This is achieved through competitions (which are aligned to training packages) held on a regional, national and international level.

WSA competitions operate on a two year cycle. Regional competitions flow into national competitions and winners, if eligible, will advance to the international competition to represent their country.

WSA is a member of WorldSkills International, which is the global network of nearly 50 countries who
participate in trade and skills competitions. Every two years the WorldSkills International community competes on the global stage to showcase and raise the standards of their country’s skills.

The next International Competition will be held in London on 5-8 October 2011. Thirty ‘Skillaroos’ were announced in November 2010 to represent Australia at this competition.

More information

Key contacts
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
State and territory training authorities (STAs)
Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE)
World Skills Australia (WSA)
World Skills International

Glossary terms
Registered training organisation (RTO)
Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE)
Training packages
WorldSkills Australia (WSA)
WorldSkills International
Implementation and use of training packages

When a new training package is developed, or an existing one is reviewed, the draft training package is submitted to the NQC for endorsement. Following endorsement, the training package is placed on the national register (NTIS). RTOs must transition to a new training package within 12 months of its placement on NTIS.

What are training package implementation guides?

Training package implementation guides are developed by STAs to help RTOs, trainers and assessors implement and use training packages. The information in these guides may vary between each state and territory.

ISCs may also develop User Guides which can include guidance from industry on appropriate delivery and assessment strategies for the qualifications within the training package.

Using a training package to develop a training program

To develop effective learning and assessment programs based on training package qualifications, it is first necessary to ‘unpack’ the training package.

Unpacking provides trainers with detailed knowledge of the training package’s components, helps them identify how the various units of competency relate to each other, and enables them to develop effective holistic learning and assessment strategies. Unpacking results in an understanding of the:

- units of competency and their delivery and assessment requirements
- qualification requirements
- relationship between individual units of competency, to aid the planning of delivery and assessment
- relationship between the qualification and its occupational outcome.

How to unpack a training package

In order to fully understand a unit of competency, the trainer or assessor should work through the following steps:

1. Thoroughly read the units of competency that make up the qualification and relate these to their experience of this type of work.
2. Review the AQF descriptor for the qualification being delivered. This descriptor details the distinguishing features and characteristics of the learning outcomes that people should be able to achieve upon completion of the training or assessment.
3. Unpack each unit of competency to identify any synergies and/or duplications across the range of units. Each unit has a number of components that require careful analysis. Figure 4 outlines the standard format of a unit of competency and briefly describes each component.
4. Review the dimensions of competency. The concept of competency includes all aspects of work performance, not just narrow task skills. The four dimensions of competency are:

1. Task skills—the discrete, meaningful components of work.
2. Task management skills—the ability to manage a number of different tasks/operations/activities within the job role or work environment.
3. Contingency management skills—the requirement to respond to irregularities and breakdowns in routine.
4. Job/role environment skills—the ability to deal with responsibilities and expectations of the workplace, including working with others.
Figure 4: Components of a unit of competency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT CODE:</th>
<th>It must conform to national coding requirements.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNIT TITLE:</td>
<td>It provides a description of the job function. (What is the work activity?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT DESCRIPTOR:</td>
<td>It expands on the information provided in the unit title and notes any relationships with other industry units. (What does the work activity involve?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS:</td>
<td>Employability skills are embedded within each unit of competency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABILITY:</td>
<td>ISC have adopted a range of approaches to embedding skills for sustainability in training packages. Some have revised qualifications to include sustainable work practices as a core unit, others are developing new qualifications and units of competency, while others are focusing on reviewing the pool of electives in selected training packages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPLICATION OF THE UNIT:</td>
<td>The application of the competency fleshes out the scope, purpose and operation of the unit of competency in different contexts, for example its application in the workplace and/or its relationship to licensing outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELEMENTS:</td>
<td>The elements describe the skill outcomes that contribute to a unit. (What skills are required to perform the work activity?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:</td>
<td>The performance criteria specify the required level of performance and are expressed as a standard. (What level of skill is needed?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE:</td>
<td>This section describes the essential skills and knowledge required to effectively perform in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANGE STATEMENT:</td>
<td>The range statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole, providing the range of contexts and conditions to which the performance criteria and the required knowledge and skill apply. It allows for different work environments and situations that will affect performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVIDENCE GUIDE:</td>
<td>The evidence guide describes the underpinning knowledge and skills that must be demonstrated to prove competence. It provides essential advice for assessment of the unit of competency and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria and the range statement of the unit of competency and the training package assessment guidelines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developing a training program

Once the training package qualification has been unpacked, trainers or assessors will be able to cluster appropriate sections of knowledge and skills for delivery and assessment. It may be possible to deliver and assess certain units within the context of other units. For example, an occupational health and safety unit could be delivered and assessed simultaneously with other units. This is known as holistic training and assessment.

To ensure a learning program meets the outcomes of the training package qualification, trainers or assessors may need to consider contextualising qualifications and/or units of competency to suit the specific learning needs of individuals and/or enterprises.

Where can training packages be purchased?

Training packages are available for purchase from either TVET Australia Product Services or the relevant ISC. Training packages are also freely (i.e. at no cost) available for download from NTIS: www.ntis.gov.au

When must RTOs transition to a new training package?

The scope of registration of a RTO must be updated shortly after a new training package is endorsed.

The new training package qualifications should be implemented as soon as practicable, with enrolments in the old version of the training package ceasing within 12 months after publication of the reviewed training package. The old package is then referred to as 'superseded'.

More information

Glossary terms
- Training package
- National Quality Council (NQC)
- National Training Information Service (NTIS)
- State and territory training authorities (STAs)
- Registered training organisation (RTOs)
- Industry Skill Councils (ISCs)
- Unit of competency
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Employability skills
- Skills for Sustainability (Green skills)
- TVET Australia
- Scope of registration
- Superseded
- Training package
- User Choice
Contextualisation and packaging of training packages

Contextualisation means tailoring units of competency, or packaging elective units into a qualification, to suit specific needs. It is about flexibility, and this is inherent in the way training packages are constructed and delivered.

What is contextualisation?

In practice contextualisation means that RTOs may:

• Modify components of units of competency to reflect the local outcome required by an individual and/or enterprise. This may involve the provision of additional information to suit particular learner profiles, specific enterprise equipment requirements or other local needs.

• Package units of competency into a qualification, using the elective options available, to suit a particular outcome.

In all cases of contextualisation, the integrity of the outcome of the endorsed unit(s) of competency must be maintained.

When contextualising units of competency RTOs may add to the range statement or the evidence guide. They must not:

• remove the content of any of the elements and performance criteria

• distort or narrow the competency outcomes and limit its use

• diminish the breadth of application of the competency and reduce its portability.

How to contextualise units of competency

Contextualisation is achieved by including, modifying or substituting text within the range statement or evidence guide of units of competency. It is about providing training and assessment that is specific to an enterprise or individual learner.

Any modifications to a unit of competency must maintain the integrity of the industry skill and portability requirements, including all legislative, licensing and any other regulatory requirements.

The following are some suggestions for contextualising units of competency to make them more relevant for specific industries or workplaces:

• Refer to the guidelines in the relevant training package. Usually, it will be possible to replace generic terms and general descriptions of equipment or processes and procedures with specific examples. These are often identified by the bold italics in the performance criteria, and the replacement would occur in the range statement.

• Identify the kinds of evidence that candidates may be able to provide in their job roles to satisfy the requirements of a particular unit of competency and add this information to the evidence guide.

• Prepare evidence plans for the candidates, showing how they might collect the identified kinds of evidence.

• Identify any specific knowledge that would be required to meet a specific industry or enterprise need, and add this information to the required knowledge and skill in the evidence guide.

• Modify the delivery and assessment strategy to suit learners with special needs.

How to contextualise a qualification

What is meant by packaging and packaging rules?

Packaging means selecting units of competency within the qualification packaging rules to suit local clients and/or conditions. Most qualifications have a common ‘core’ set of units of competency, and then allow a choice of ‘electives’. The choice of electives will enable a RTO to select units that are particularly relevant to the client (student or enterprise). These qualification rules are an endorsed part of the training package and changes to the rules can only be made through training package review or continuous review processes.
How to package a qualification?

Advice is provided in training packages (in the qualification packaging rules section) about what units must be in a particular qualification and what units could be included in the qualification. The advice may include:

- suggested elective units for particular job roles
- suggested units for importing from other training packages
- allowable substitutions within elective units
- suggested sequencing of particular units for work functions.

Some training packages—for example, the Business Services Training Package (BSB07)—have excellent generic guidelines for training and assessment of people with special needs and within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts.

What if existing qualifications do not suit an identified need?

If an identified need cannot be met by contextualising or packaging a training package unit of competency or qualification, it may be necessary to explore the option of developing a course for accreditation—but only if the qualifications or Skill Sets needed are not duplicated within an existing training package.
Skill Sets

Skill Sets are a way of identifying logical groupings of units of competency which meet an identified need or industry outcome. Skill Sets are not qualifications.

Skill Sets included within training packages are identified by ISCs through their national consultation processes and comprise units of competency from within a training package which undergo rigorous quality assurance prior to endorsement by the NQC.

RTOs can also identify Skill Sets in response to the needs of enterprises or individuals.

The Training Package Development Handbook defines Skill Sets as 'single units of competency, or combinations of units of competency from an endorsed training package, which link to a licence or regulatory requirement, or defined industry need'.

Skill Sets identified and developed within training packages are formally recognised on a statement of attainment. Where a RTO packages a group of units into a Skill Set, a statement of attainment is awarded on successful completion of one or more of those units. RTOs are able to note that the Skill Set has been delivered for a specific purpose.

Background to Skill Sets

Before 2007, when individuals completed a particular combination of units to meet a required industry or job need, the skills attained were not easily recognisable to employers. In most cases the statement of attainment made reference to 'partial completion of a qualification' rather than acknowledging that the completed units constituted a Skill Set.

COAG directed that, where appropriate, Skill Sets be incorporated into all national training packages by 31 December 2008. The NQC had the task of leading Skill Sets policy development.

How Skill Sets are developed

Skill Sets are identified during the development, review or continuous improvement of nationally endorsed training packages by ISCs in consultation with industry and regulatory and/or licensing authorities.

The units of competency that form a Skill Set can be drawn from one or more training packages. Skill Sets identified within a training package must have industry support.

The Training Package Development Handbook includes a section on Skill Sets. It outlines advice on how to identify and develop Skill Sets for inclusion within a nationally endorsed training package.

There are three possibilities in relation to the inclusion of Skill Sets in training packages. The ISC determines on the basis of industry consultation that:

- no national Skill Sets are identified
- one or more Skill Sets can be identified using units of competency from within a single training package
- Skill Sets can be identified by combining units from two or more training packages.

More information

Key resources
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
Training Package Development Handbook
training.com.au

Key contacts
National Quality Council (NQC)
Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

Glossary terms
Unit of competency
Training packages
National Quality Council (NQC)
Registered training organisation (RTO)
Training Package Development Handbook
Statement of attainment
Council of Australian Governments (COAG)
Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)
Employability skills are non-technical skills which play a significant part in contributing to an individual’s effective and successful participation in the workplace.

What are employability skills?
Employability skills are also sometimes referred to as generic skills, capabilities, enabling skills or key competencies. In Australia employability skills are:
- communication skills, which contribute to productive and harmonious relations between employees and customers
- teamwork skills, which contribute to productive working relationships and outcomes
- problem-solving skills, which contribute to productive outcomes
- initiative and enterprise skills, which contribute to innovative outcomes
- planning and organising skills, which contribute to long-term and short-term strategic planning
- self-management skills, which contribute to employee satisfaction and growth
- learning skills, which contribute to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes
- technology skills, which contribute to effective execution of tasks.

The history of employability skills
Australia’s employability skills were developed through a national project managed by the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The project featured consultation with other peak employer bodies and businesses and resulted in the Employability Skills for the Future report produced in 2002. The report indicated that industry required a broader range of skills than that previously provided in the ‘key competencies’ framework that was developed in the early 1990s. The report featured an Employability Skills Framework which identified the skills noted above.

The Employability Skills Framework
The Employability Skills Framework, which details the employability skills, also identifies elements, or facets, of those skills that employers identified as important. Facets are examples of skills which contribute to the overall application of each employability skill. The nature, emphasis and context of these facets vary across industries and qualifications.

Employability skills and training packages
Following consultation and research on approaches to incorporating employability skills into training packages, the National Training Quality Council (now the NQC) agreed that the preferred approach was to explicitly embed the applicable employability skills into each individual unit of competency. In 2005-2006 specifically developed tools were used by ISCs to review and embed employability skills into training package qualifications.

In many cases ISCs found that the skills and knowledge identified by the Employability Skills Framework already existed in training packages. ISCs reviewed each training package unit of competency and, where gaps existed or changes were required, modifications were made to units of competency.

All new and revised training packages must include employability skills. The Training Package Development Handbook provides policy and guidance on how this is to be achieved.

How are employability skills to be assessed and reported?
The NQC endorsed an integrated approach to assessment and descriptive reporting which was implemented in 2008.
The integrated approach to assessment involves assessing employability skills in an integrated manner with technical skills, within a qualification and the corresponding units of competency. This integrated approach is made possible because employability skills are embedded in the unit of competency.

Reporting on employability skills involves learners downloading qualification specific employability skills summaries for training package qualifications from an online repository; and RTOs adding a mandatory, single standard sentence to all qualification testamurs for training package qualifications which advises that ‘A summary of the employability skills developed through this qualification can be downloaded from www.employabilityskills.training.com.au’.

More information

**Key resources**
- Employability Skills: An Introductory Guide for Trainers and Assessors
- Employability Skills for the Future
- Training Package Development Handbook
- training.com.au
- Employability skills summaries

**Key contacts**
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
- National Quality Council (NQC)
- Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)

**Glossary terms**
- Training packages
- National Quality Council (NQC)
- Unit of competency
- Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)
- Training Package Development Handbook
- Registered training organisation (RTO)
Skills for sustainability and the COAG Green Skills Agreement

Skills for sustainability (also known as green skills), are the technical skills, knowledge, values and attitudes needed in the workforce to develop and support sustainable social, economic and environmental outcomes in business, industry and the community.

What are skills for sustainability?

As Australia moves to a sustainable, low carbon, resource efficient economy, a range of skills for sustainability will be required in existing, emerging and new industries. And workers across the economy will need new skills to increase resource efficiency, reduce waste, conserve water and develop and implement new technologies and practices for a more sustainable world.

Skills for sustainability will be important to all industries and sectors, not just to the trades. For example:

- lawyers, accountants and economists will need to respond to the demand for environmental reporting and accounting practices
- planners, architects and engineers will need to respond to demand for sustainable design and new green materials
- business owners and operators will need to respond to rapidly escalating energy, water and waste costs
- retailers, service providers and procurement managers will need to respond to increasing consumer and client demand for green products and services
- primary producers will need to respond to rising input costs and land degradation.

COAG Green Skills Agreement and training packages

To build the capacity of the VET sector to deliver high quality, industry-relevant skills for sustainability, the Australian and state and territory governments have negotiated the Green Skills Agreement. The agreement was endorsed by COAG in December 2009.

The agreement commits the Australian and state and territory governments to working with training organisations and business to ensure skills for sustainability are an integral part of all VET and are relevant to the needs of industry.

The four objectives of the agreement are:

- developing national standards for skills for sustainability instruction within the requirements of the national regulatory framework
- upskilling VET practitioners so they can provide effective training and facilitation in skills for sustainability
- reviewing and revising training packages to incorporate skills for sustainability
- implementing strategies to re-skill vulnerable workers in the transition to a low carbon economy.

In June 2010 the Green Skills Agreement Implementation Group, representing key stakeholders, presented the Green Skills Agreement Implementation Plan to MCTEE.

Progress so far

Review and revision of training packages

In 2010, all 11 ISCs undertook a strategic review of training packages to identify gaps in the provision of sustainability knowledge, skills and principles.

The review and revision of training packages to include skills for sustainability, a key objective of the agreement, was substantially completed by January 2011.
ISCs have adopted a range of approaches to embedding skills for sustainability into training packages. Some have revised qualifications to include sustainable work practices as a core unit; others are developing new qualifications and units of competency, while others are focussing on reviewing the pool of electives in selected training packages.

**Sustainability training unit developed**

In June 2010, the Innovation and Business Skills Australia ISC, funded by DEEWR, developed a sustainability training unit to underpin professional development programs for VET practitioners in providing effective training and facilitation in skills for sustainability. This unit of competency, *Analyse and apply sustainability skills into learning programs (TAESUS501A)*, has been included in the new Training and Education Training Package (TAE10) as an elective and is designed to underpin professional development programs for VET practitioners.

**Up-skilling VET practitioners is the highest priority for action**

With the revision of training packages largely completed, up-skilling VET practitioners to provide effective training and facilitation in skills for sustainability is now the highest priority for action under the *Green Skills Agreement Implementation Plan*.

**Research into good practice in professional development underway**

DEEWR is funding research into good practice in skills for sustainability professional development programs for VET practitioners. The project, which commenced during 2010 and is due for completion by April 2011, will examine professional development models currently in use across Australia, to identify the elements and features that contribute to their effectiveness for different cohorts of VET practitioners.

**Demonstration project on re-skilling vulnerable workers close to completion**

DEEWR is funding research on future employment and training opportunities for the Indigenous population in the Murdi Paaki NSW region. This project will provide a demonstration model for further research on sustainable training and employment opportunities for vulnerable workers. This research is scheduled for completion in early 2011.

**Future opportunities**

The transition to a sustainable economy presents a challenge and an opportunity for VET. The challenge is to ensure that Australian businesses have access to a workforce with the skills and knowledge to implement and manage sustainable practices.

The opportunity is to up-skill the Australian workforce so that Australian businesses and industry is efficient, sustainable, and internationally competitive.

The *Green Skills Agreement* will assist VET practitioners to make the most of these opportunities, and provide the skills required for learners to promote and support sustainable practices, services and advice in Australian workplaces.

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**More information**

**Key contacts**
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG)
- Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE)
- Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)

**Glossary terms**
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG)
- Training packages
- Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE)
- Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)
- Unit of competency
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
**Assessment and moderation**

Assessment is 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. The standard is described in the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a training package or an accredited course.

The assessment process is used to determine whether people are either ‘competent’ or ‘not yet competent’ against the agreed industry standards. A person who is not yet competent against any standard can undertake further study or training and be assessed again.

**What are assessments used for?**

The most obvious use for assessment is to determine whether someone is competent and has the specific skills and knowledge to do the job; which would lead to the attainment of a qualification. However, because the competency standards described in training packages are industry-agreed benchmarks, assessment can be used for other purposes on the job. For example, classifications in industrial awards are sometimes linked to competency standards. Assessments may also be used to determine whether or not a person can be issued with a licence to work in a specific job role.

**Who can conduct assessments?**

Only qualified assessors working with a RTO can conduct assessments leading to a national (AQF) qualification or statement of attainment.

The AQTF Essential Standards for Registration states that a person conducting assessment must:

i. Hold the three units of competency from the Training and Education Training Package (TAE10):
   a. Plan assessment activities and processes (TAEASS401A)
   b. Assess competence (TAEASS402A)
   c. Participate in assessment validation (TAEASS403A); or

ii. Be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies to all three (of the above) units of competency.

iii. Have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed, and continue developing their vocational training and assessment competencies.

If a person does not have the assessment competencies as outlined in the NQC policy determination and the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed, one person with all the assessment competencies listed in the determination 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.

**How are assessments conducted?**

Assessment under the national VET system is quite different from the formal examinations and tests most people remember from their school days. Evidence is gathered to demonstrate competence in the skills and knowledge required by the units of competency contained in training packages or accredited courses.

Common types of assessment methods used by assessors to gather evidence include:

- **Direct**
  - direct observation
  - oral questioning
  - demonstration of specific skills.

- **Indirect**
  - assessment of qualities of a final product
  - review of previous work undertaken
  - written tests of underpinning knowledge.
Third party:

- Testimonials from Employers
- Reports from Supervisors
- Work diary or log book
- Work reports or documents.

The evidence used in assessment depends on the requirements of the particular units of competency from the training package or accredited course, and the preferences or needs of the person being assessed. Each case is unique.

The RTO responsible for assessing people’s competencies should devise an assessment plan for each student, apprentice or trainee. Students and, where appropriate, industry should be involved in the development of the assessment plan. The plan should incorporate recognition of prior learning (RPL) and any reasonable adjustment that may be required.

Because work activities draw on the skills described in a number of units of competency, teachers and trainers can use holistic assessment methods to assess a range of units simultaneously.

Assessment can take place on the job or off the job. However, as applying skills in the workplace is a key facet of VET, most evidence should ideally be gathered as the student performs work duties, whether in the workplace or in a simulated work environment.

**What is meant by assessing a learner in a simulated work environment?**

Simulation is a form of evidence gathering that involves the candidate completing or dealing with a task, activity or problem in an off-the-job situation that replicates the workplace context. Simulations vary from recreating realistic workplace situations such as in the use of flight simulators, through the creation of role plays based on workplace scenarios, to the reconstruction of a business situation on a spreadsheet.

In developing simulations, the emphasis is not so much on reproducing the external circumstance but on creating situations in which candidates are able to demonstrate:

1. Technical skills
2. Underpinning knowledge
3. Generic skills such as decision making and problem solving
4. Workplace practices such as effective communication.

Content within the evidence guide and the range statement of each unit of competency in the relevant training package will help the assessor determine the conditions of a valid simulated work environment.

**NOTE:** In some instances a training package may state that certain competency standards can only be assessed in an actual workplace setting.

**What is moderation?**

Moderation is a process which involves assessors discussing and reaching agreement about assessment processes and assessment outcomes in a particular industry or industry sector.

This process enables assessors to develop a shared understanding of the requirements of specific training packages, including the relevant units of competency and assessment guidelines, the nature of evidence, how evidence is collected and the basis upon which assessment decisions are made to ensure that assessments are valid, fair, reliable, and flexible.

How does moderation work?

There is no single model for moderation. Moderation involves assessors working in collaboration to review, compare and evaluate their assessment process and their assessment outcomes, in relation to the same unit/s of competency. This includes validating assessment methods/tools, the evidence that was collected using these assessment methods/tools and the interpretation of that evidence to make a judgement of competence.

There may be variation in assessors’ judgments, but moderation works to ensure that the margins of variation are minimal.

Why is moderation so important?

The VET system is a national system, based on nationally developed qualifications and units of competency. Moderation is important to ensure that the outcomes of these qualifications and units of competency are consistent across all RTOs. This will assist to ensure that industry has confidence in the training and assessment outcomes from the VET system.

Moderation also provides the opportunity for professional development of assessors and the improvement of assessment products and services.

More information

Key Resources
- AQTF User Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration
- AQTF User Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration

Key Contacts
- National Quality Council (NQC)
- State and territory training authorities (STAs)

Related articles
- Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)

Glossary terms
- Competency standards
- Training package
- Accredited course
- Registered training organisation (RTO)
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Statement of attainment
- Unit of competency
- National Quality Council (NQC)
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- Reasonable adjustment
- Holistic assessment
- Evidence guide
- Range statement
Flexible learning gives learners the freedom to study what, when, where and how they want. It provides greater choice, convenience and personalisation of study programs. Flexible learning covers a range of delivery modes, including e-learning, distance education, mixed-mode, online learning, self-paced and self-directed learning.

**Why is flexible learning so important?**

Flexible and technology-rich training solutions are enabling rapid responses to skill shortages and new training needs in emerging and traditional industries - without the need to purchase and build physical training centres and equipment. At the same time, a new generation of learners are demanding to be taught in radically different ways. Today’s employers and learners want greater choice and control over the time, place and content of training.

**What are the benefits of flexible learning?**

Flexible learning offers benefits to RTOs, learners and employers:

- **RTOs** can gain a competitive advantage by providing flexible learning options to clients. This may include opening up new markets in delivery of training in international, national, regional and remote areas.
- **Learners** can study at their own pace, at any time of the day, from any location including work, home or local community centres.
- **Employers** can use flexible learning to integrate training into their workplace in a way that suits their operations, rather than losing staff to time-intensive off-site training.

**What is e-learning?**

Teaching and learning expectations have changed. New technologies are appearing at an astounding rate and opening up opportunities to create and share knowledge more effectively.

E-learning uses a range of electronic media to deliver education and training. It enables learners to connect and collaborate with teachers, experts and other learners with whom they would normally not have contact.

**Flexible learning in the national training system**

The Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework) is the national e-learning strategy for VET. The Framework works with practitioners and training providers in the VET sector to provide products, resources and support networks to help deliver effective e-learning programs.

The Framework’s website - www.flexiblelearning.net.au - allows collaboration with colleagues around Australia and internationally. The site is interactive and user driven, featuring web 2.0 technologies which encourage the sharing of knowledge, experience and learning resources.
Skills recognition

Skills recognition is a generic term that can be used to cover the ways in which an individual's skills, experience, knowledge and qualifications can be formally acknowledged.

These include:

- RPL
- recognition of current competency
- credit transfer (including national recognition)
- trade recognition
- overseas qualification assessment.

Whilst this article focuses on RPL, some information about the other forms of skills recognition is also provided so that RTOs are able to offer consistent advice to applicants seeking to have their skills recognised.

What is RPL?

RPL is an assessment process that assesses the individual's formal, 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.

What are the benefits of RPL?

The benefits of RPL include:

- Engaging or re-engaging existing workers to enable people with relevant skills to meet new workplace demands, use new technologies and change jobs.
- Recognising a student’s prior learning so they can gain credit for units of competency in a course they are studying—this differs from credit transfer, which involves assessing a previously completed course or subject.
- Identifying skills gaps to see what training is needed to complete a qualification.
- Avoiding duplication of training and maximising employers' training budgets.

RPL can result in a full qualification, or a statement of attainment for partial completion of a qualification.

What is involved in RPL?

The AQTF identifies that skills may have been gained through:

- formal or informal training and education
- work experience
- general life experience
- any combination of the above.

The recognition of skills and knowledge should be acknowledged regardless of where, when or how they were achieved. The skills of an individual are assessed against the relevant standards established by industry.

Although the principles of assessment are the same as those used in training, the assessment processes can be quite different. The evidence of competence is still assessed in relation to specific units of competency, but it can be done in a number of ways, including:

- work samples
- practical demonstrations in the workplace
- references and/or interviews with supervisors
- certificates or performance reviews
- other documented evidence (such as photos of work samples and testimonials).

As in all assessment events, it is the evidence that is presented by the applicant that is assessed, not the applicant themselves.

What are the other forms of skills recognition?

It is important to be aware of the distinctions between the different processes and purposes, and be able to advise people about the best contact points for their particular skills recognition needs.
Recognition of current competency (RCC)
RCC applies if a client has previously successfully completed the requirements for a unit of competency or module and is now required (for example, by a licensing authority) to be reassessed to ensure that the competence is being maintained. In this case no extra skill or competencies are nationally recognised. An unsuccessful RCC assessment does not invalidate the previous competent assessment outcome.

Credit transfer
Credit transfer involves assessing a previously completed course or subject to see if it provides equivalent learning or competency outcomes to those required within the student’s current course of study. It is used when seeking credit for a course or subject already completed.

Trade recognition
Trade recognition is generally applied to apprenticeship occupations, where the applicant has skills and significant work experience in the area. It is usually sought by people who:
- have years of experience (the requirements vary from state to state but the minimum is four years)
- were trained overseas
- need certification to supervise an apprentice
- want to gain a licence or a promotion
- are undertaking further study.

The eligibility prerequisites, costs, and in some cases the trades recognised, vary from state to state.

Overseas qualification assessments
There are several steps involved in having qualifications gained overseas recognised in Australia. The process is slightly different for people in regulated professions (which require licensing or registration to practise). Australian Education International, through the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR), and the Overseas Qualifications Units of each STA provide official information and advice on the comparability of overseas qualifications to Australian qualifications, and the processes for getting qualifications assessed and recognised.

More information
Key resources
Australian Skills Recognition Information
Training Package Assessment Materials Kit
Recognition of Prior Learning—Your First Step
National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR)
Overseas Qualifications Units

Key contacts
Australian Education International (AEI)
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
State and territory training authorities (STAs)

Related articles
Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)

Glossary terms
Unit of competency
Statement of attainment
Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)
Australian Education International (AEI)
State and territory training authorities (STAs)
Reasonable adjustment

Reasonable adjustment refers to measures or actions taken to provide a student with a disability the same educational opportunities as everyone else. To be reasonable, adjustments must be appropriate for that person, must not create undue hardship for a RTO and must be allowable within rules defined by the training package.

Engaging in reasonable adjustment activities, such as assisting students to identify their learning needs or offering a wide variety of course options and delivery modes, exemplifies good teaching practice.

Why is reasonable adjustment so important?

A person with a disability has the same right to study at any educational institution as any other student. The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 makes it unlawful for an education service provider to discriminate against someone because the person has a disability. The Disability Standards for Education 2005 provide greater clarity on areas where reasonable adjustment can be applied.

If a person with a disability meets the necessary course entry requirements of a RTO, they should have just as much chance to study there as anyone else.

Under the AQTF Essential Standards for Registration, a RTO is required to identify and comply with relevant Australian Government, state or territory laws on issues such as discrimination.

People with a disability who believe an education service provider has not made reasonable adjustment to respond to their needs can complain formally to the Australian Human Rights Commission or their state or territory anti-discrimination bodies.

Determining reasonable adjustment

Participants in VET could have a range of disabilities such as:

- learning disabilities
- sensory impairments (including vision, hearing or speech impairment)
- physical or mobility impairments
- psychological or psychiatric impairments (or mental illness)
- cerebral palsy or head injury, which may result in multiple impairments
- medical conditions including HIV or AIDS, cancer, or chronic fatigue syndrome (which may result in multiple disabilities)
- intellectual disabilities.

In most situations the person with the disability will be able to tell educators what adjustments they need to be able to study. If necessary, educators should also seek advice from government agencies or support organisations to determine what needs to be done to accommodate an individual’s needs.

Reasonable adjustment activities could involve:

- modifying or providing equipment
- changing assessment procedures
- changing course delivery
- modifying premises.
The determination of 'reasonableness' requires judgement that must take into account the impact on the organisation and the need to maintain the integrity of the unit of competency.

Where the qualification outcome is specifically related to an 'occupational' outcome, any reasonable adjustment may only be accommodated in the assessment process if the workplace can be similarly "adjusted" to accommodate the needs of the applicant/employee.

**What if changes are too difficult for educators?**

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* does not require changes to be made if they will cause major difficulties or unreasonable costs to a person or organisation. This is called 'unjustifiable hardship'. Before claiming that adjustments are unjustified, educators need to consider thoroughly how an adjustment might be made, discuss this directly with the person involved and consult relevant sources for advice.

**Planning to provide for all**

RTOs need to plan how they can cater for students with a disability and support and develop the training skills of staff to cater for a broader range of students.

RTOs have the option of lodging an action plan outlining how they will ensure that their services do not unfairly discriminate with the Australian Human Rights Commission. Preparing and lodging an action plan not only helps businesses to identify any discriminatory practices but also demonstrates forethought and consideration.

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**More information**

**Key resources**
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration

**Key contacts**
- State and territory training authorities (STAs)

**Glossary terms**
- Registered training organisation (RTO)
- Training package
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration
- Unit of competency
Training and assessment resources and support materials are developed to support the delivery and assessment of training from training packages. They can be printed materials, CDs, videos, web-based resources or libraries of resources.

What are resources and support materials?
Resources and support materials may include:
- learner resources (learner guides, workbooks, booklets)
- assessment tools (sample assessment materials)
- trainer resources (Flexible Learning Toolboxes, multimedia resources)
- mapping/transition guides that provide correlations between old qualifications and/or new training package qualifications
- training package guides or implementation guides.

Training packages do not stipulate how training should be delivered and support materials are not included in training packages. Support materials are the tools used to implement teaching plans developed by RTOs to meet the training package requirements.

RTOs have the choice of developing their own support materials or using resources that have already been developed by STAs, other RTOs or other organisations.

How to assess the quality of the support materials?
It is important to consider the quality and relevance of training support materials. Not all resources are of equal quality, nor appropriate for different training contexts.

Support materials that meet the quality assurance requirements of the NQC are ‘noted’ and can be distinguished by a special tick logo. A trial of a new interim quality assurance process for training package support material began in January 2010. The interim process assesses support materials against a set of training package quality principles determined by the NQC.

Resources that are ‘quality assured’ are listed on the TVET Australia Product Services website and the developer is permitted to apply an interim tick logo to the product.

More information

Key resources
Flexible Learning Toolboxes
A Style Guide: Training Package Support Materials
edna
National Training Information Service (NTIS)
Resource Generator
Training Package Development Handbook
TVET Australia Product Services

Key contacts
State and territory training authorities (STAs)
National Quality Council (NQC)
TVET Australia

Glossary terms
Training packages
Flexible Learning Toolboxes (Toolboxes)
Implementation guides
Registered training organisation (RTO)
State and territory training authorities (STAs)
National Quality Council (NQC)
TVET Australia Product Services
Key resources

**A Style Guide: Training Package Support Materials**
This resource provides guidelines on the writing of support materials in a range of formats, and advice on editing and technical requirements for publication. It contains a series of checklists for use by designers, desktop publishers, writers and project managers.

**Australian Apprenticeships Job Pathways**
This service provides detailed information on Australian Apprenticeships, including job pathway charts which give an industry-wide picture of the potential job progression people can achieve, starting with an Australian Apprenticeship.

**Australian Apprenticeship Training Information Service**
This website provides information on Australian Apprenticeships and traineeships, as well as links to other government websites that specialise in training and apprenticeships.

**Australian Skills Recognition Information**
This website helps people find out how to get an assessment of occupational qualifications, skills or experience that have been gained overseas. It also has information on state-specific licensing and registration requirements to practice different occupations in Australia.

**Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)**
The AQF is a quality assured national framework of qualifications in the school, VET, and higher education sectors in Australia.
Visit: [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au)

**Australian Qualifications Framework Implementation Handbook**
This handbook provides a detailed guide for the implementation of the Australian Qualifications Framework and should be read in conjunction with documents issued by accrediting bodies.

**AQTF publications**
The [training.com.au](http://training.com.au) website provides publications related to the AQTF, including:
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration
- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration
- AQTF Users Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration
- AQTF Users Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration
- AQTF National Guidelines for a Registering Body
- AQTF Audit Handbook
- AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies
- AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses
- AQTF 2007 User’s Guide to Standards for Accredited Courses
- AQTF 2007 Template for course documentation for accreditation
- AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies.
Visit: [www.training.com.au](http://www.training.com.au) (scroll to the bottom of the page and select ‘AQTF publications’.)

**Disability Standards for Education (2005)**
Formulated under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and tabled in the Parliament on 17 March 2005. The Standards clarify the obligations of education and training providers to ensure that students with disabilities are able to access and participate in education and training on the same basis as those without disability.
**edna**
edna is an online information service supporting all education and training sectors in Australia. It provides free news, resources, networks and online tools for educators.

**Employability Skills: An Introductory Guide for Trainers and Assessors**
This resource has been designed to assist trainers and assessors to unpack the employability skills requirements contained in units of competency into learning and assessment strategies that lead to the attainment of training package qualifications.

**Employability Skills for the Future**
This report provides a consolidation of research with small, medium and large-sized enterprises during 2001. The outcome of the research has been the development of an Employability Skills Framework that has strong industry support from a representative sample of stakeholders.

**Employability Skills Summaries**
This website provides information on employability skills and training packages. It allows users to search for the employability skills summaries of all training package qualifications.

**Flexible Learning Toolboxes**
Flexible Learning Toolboxes are high quality, cost effective interactive e-learning and assessment resources featuring scenarios, images and activities. They are designed for use by training providers, industry and business and support online delivery of recognised training packages for the VET sector.
Visit: [www.flexiblelearning.net.au/toolboxes](http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/toolboxes)

**Licensing Line News**
An online resource for information on occupational licensing and regulation. It is free to subscribe for monthly news on national and local licensing and VET developments.
Visit: [www.licensinglinenews.com](http://www.licensinglinenews.com)

**LORN**
LORN is an online portal that provides the VET system with a range of searchable and downloadable free and for-cost online training resources from a range of collections across Australia.
Visit: [www.flexiblelearning.net.au/lorn](http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/lorn)

**National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)**
NCVER is Australia’s principal provider of VET research and statistics.
Visit: [www.ncver.edu.au](http://www.ncver.edu.au)

**National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition**
Australian Education International, through the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) provides official information and advice on the comparability of overseas qualifications to Australian qualifications, and the processes for getting qualifications assessed and recognised.

**National Training Information Service (NTIS)**
This website is an online database about VET in Australia. It contains detailed information about courses, qualifications, training packages, competency standards and training organisations.
**Overseas Qualifications Units**
Overseas Qualifications Units or their equivalents have been established in most Australian states and territories to assist migrants to obtain recognition of their overseas gained skills and qualifications.

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)—Your First Step**
This multimedia resource provides information on RPL, including case studies, examples and activities in RPL practice. It also provides links to additional reading and resources and an individualised learning journal and action planner.

**Resource Generator**
This is an online library of resources to assist trainers and assessors with the implementation of training packages. Resources are available free of charge and can be personalised by each individual user.
Visit: www.resourcegenerator.gov.au

**Trades Recognition Australia**
Trades Recognition Australia manages skills assessment services for people with trade skills who are Australian citizens, residents (both temporary and permanent) and potential migrants to Australia.
Visit: www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Programs/SkillsAssess/TRA/Pages/default.aspx

**training.com.au**
This is a one-stop web entry point for information on VET, designed for use by RTOs and Australian businesses.
Visit: www.training.com.au

**Training Packages @ Work**
This nationally focused monthly e-newsletter is Australia’s premier source of information about training packages. Subscribe to keep up to date with the development, implementation and review of training packages. The Training Packages @ Work website is also a valuable source of information on VET resources and events.
Visit: www.tpatwork.com

**Training Package Assessment Materials Kit**
This guide helps assessors develop materials to carry out assessments for candidates undertaking Certificate I–III qualifications across a range of industries.

**Training Package Development Handbook**
This handbook provides NQC policy and guidance for the developers of national training packages. This policy applies to all training packages developed and endorsed through the NQC development and endorsement process.

**Training Package Development and Endorsement Process**
This website and associated documents provide policy requirements on the process by which training packages are developed and endorsed. It provides an explanation of key steps and includes the quality principles that underpin training package development.

**TVET Australia Product Services (Training Products Australia)**
The custodian of all nationally endorsed training packages and quality teaching and learning resources to support delivery of vocational education and training.

**Working with Diversity**
These booklets focus on how training providers can meet the needs of Indigenous learners and learners with a disability. They outline some of the key issues and concepts in working with diverse client groups, including cultural appropriateness and reasonable adjustment.
Visit: www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/publications_resources (search by publication title)
**Key contacts**

**Australian Apprenticeships**
Australian Apprenticeships is the umbrella term commonly used for the national apprenticeships and traineeship arrangements.

Phone: 13 38 73  
Web: [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au)

**Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET)**
ACPET is the national industry association for independent providers of post-compulsory education and training, for Australian and international students.

Phone: 1800 657 644  
Email: acpet@acpet.edu.au  
Web: [www.acpet.edu.au](http://www.acpet.edu.au)

**Australian Education International (AEI)**
AEI is the international arm of DEEWR. It leads strategic policy, regulation and government-to-government engagement in the international education sector.

Phone: 1300 363 079  
Email: aei@deewr.gov.au  
Web: [www.aei.gov.au](http://www.aei.gov.au)

**Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework)**
The Framework is the national e-learning strategy for the VET sector. It provides the VET system with the essential e-learning infrastructure and expertise needed to respond to the challenges of a modern economy and the training needs of Australian businesses and workers.

Phone: 07 3307 4700  
Email: enquiries@flexiblelearning.net.au  
Web: [www.flexiblelearning.net.au](http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au)

**Australian Qualifications Framework Council**
The AQF Council provides education and training ministers with strategic and authoritative advice on the AQF to ensure it is nationally and internationally robust and supports flexible cross-sector linkages and pathways.

Phone: 08 8226 2775  
Email: aqfc@sa.gov.au  
Web: [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au)

**Council of Australian Governments (COAG)**
COAG is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. COAG comprises the Prime Minister, state premiers, territory chief ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association.

Phone: 02 6271 5343  
Web: [www.coag.gov.au](http://www.coag.gov.au)

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)**
This Australia Government department takes a national leadership role in education, employment and workplace relations. It is responsible for the national VET system.

Phone: 1300 363 079  
Email: training@deewr.gov.au  
Web: [www.deewr.gov.au](http://www.deewr.gov.au)

**Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)**
ISCs are national bodies that provide advice on the current and future skills needs of their industries and develop and maintain training packages.


**Ministerial Council of Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE)**
MCTEE is a COAG-appointed ministerial council concerned with VET and employment matters.

Phone: 07 3227 8656  
Email: mcteesecretariat@deta.qld.gov.au  
**National Quality Council (NQC)**
The NQC oversees quality assurances and ensures national consistency in the application of AQTF standards for the registration and audit of training providers. It also oversees the endorsement of training packages.

**Phone:** 03 9832 8100  
**Email:** enquiries-nqc@tvetaustralia.com.au  
**Web:** www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au

**National Senior Officials Committee (NSOC)**
NSOC is a committee which consists of the chief executive officers of the Australian and state and territory training departments. It is the administrative arm of MCTEE. It implements the decisions of MCTEE, drives national collaboration on training matters, and monitors the effectiveness of the national training system.

**Phone:** 03 9832 8100

**National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC)**
NVEAC was established to provide high level advice to MCTEE to guide equity reform in the national training system.

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**TAFE Directors Australia (TDA)**
TDA is the peak national body incorporated to represent Australia’s 58 public TAFE Institutes and university TAFE divisions, and the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

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**Web:** www.tda.edu.au

**TVET Australia (Technical and Vocational Education and Training Australia Limited)**
TVET is a ministerial company owned by the Commonwealth, state and territory ministers responsible for training. It was established to provide responsive and high quality services to support the national training system.

**Phone:** 03 9832 8100  
**Email:** enquiries@tvetaustralia.com.au  
**Web:** www.tvetaustralia.com.au
## National and state and territory training contacts

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<tr>
<th>State or Territory Training Authority</th>
<th>National</th>
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<td>Skills Tasmania</td>
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Glossary

**Accredited Course**—is a structured sequence of VET that has been accredited and leads to an AQF qualification or statement of attainment.

**Apprenticeships and traineeships**—combines practical work with structured training to gain a nationally recognised qualification.

**Australian Apprenticeship Centres (AACs)**—are contracted by the Australian Government to provide one-stop shops for those seeking to hire Australian Apprentices or to take up an Australian Apprenticeship as a career path.

**Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework)**—is the national e-learning strategy for VET. The Framework works with practitioners and training providers in the VET sector to provide products, resources and support networks to help deliver effective e-learning programs.

**Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)**—is a quality assured national framework of qualifications in the school, VET, and higher education sectors in Australia.

**AQF Council**—provides education and training ministers with strategic and authoritative advice on the AQF to ensure it is nationally and internationally robust and supports flexible cross-sector linkages and pathways.

**AQF Implementation Handbook**—provides a detailed guide for the implementation of the AQF and should be read in conjunction with documents issued by accrediting bodies.

**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 VET system.

**AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration**—the AQTF requirements for continuing registration for RTOs.

**AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration**—the AQTF requirements for initial registration for organisations seeking to become a RTO.

**AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses**—this is a set of nationally agreed standards which apply to the course design for VET accredited courses.

**AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies**—this is a set of nationally agreed standards to ensure the quality of VET services delivered by registering bodies throughout Australia.

**Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET)**—is the national industry association for independent providers of post-compulsory education and training, for Australian and international students.

**Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program (AAIP)**—incentives paid to eligible employers when Australian Apprentices commence, recommence and complete their training.

**Australian Education International (AEI)**—is the international arm of DEEWR. AEI leads strategic policy, regulation and government-to-government engagement in the international education sector.

**Australian Training Awards**—are the peak, national awards for the VET sector, recognising and rewarding RTOs, employers and individuals for their outstanding contribution to skilling Australia.

**Australian Vocational Student Prize (AVSP)**—promotes vocational education at school and recognises students who choose to pursue a practical training pathway while completing their senior secondary studies.

**Competency standards**—defines the skills and knowledge to operate effectively in employment and how they need to be applied.

**Contextualisation of training packages**—tailoring units of competency, or packaging elective units into a qualification, to suit specific needs.

**Council of Australian Governments (COAG)**—is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. COAG comprises the Prime Minister, state premiers, territory chief ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association.
Credit transfer—Involves assessing a previously completed course or subject to see if it provides equivalent learning or competency outcomes to those required within the student’s current course of study. It is used when seeking credit for a course or subject already completed.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)—The Australian Government department that takes a national leadership role for education, employment and workplace relations. It is responsible for the national VET system.

Employability Skills—are non-technical skills and competencies which play a significant part in contributing to an individual’s effective and successful participation in the workplace.

Endorsed—is the official term used when a training package has successfully completed the quality assurance process and is endorsed by the NQC and placed on NTIS.

Evidence Guide—Contained within a unit of competency. Describes the underpinning knowledge and skills that must be demonstrated to prove competence.

Flexible Learning Toolboxes (Toolboxes)—Collections of learning objects, resources and other materials (including teaching guides and technical guides) developed to support the need for online training in an industry area.

Green skills (also known as skills for sustainability)—Are the technical skills, knowledge, values and attitudes needed in the workforce to develop and support sustainable social, economic and environmental outcomes in business, industry and the community.

Group Training Organisations—Employ Australian Apprentices, and then hire them out to ‘host employers’. Some specialise in servicing a particular industry, whilst others will work with just about every industry located in their region.

Holistic assessment—Focusses on the assessment of whole work activities rather than specific tasks or components of a work activity.

Implementation Guides—Support resources to help RTOs, teachers, trainers and assessors use training packages.

Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)—National bodies that provide advice on the current and future skills needs of their industries and develop and maintain training packages.

Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA)—Is a COAG-appointed ministerial council concerned with early childhood development and youth affairs.

Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE)—Is a COAG-appointed ministerial council concerned with VET and employment matters.

National Focus Awards—Nominated by the Australian Government Minister responsible for skills. Recognise outstanding contributions towards the attainment of Australia’s national priorities in the VET sector.

National Quality Council (NQC)—Oversees quality assurances and ensures national consistency in the application of AQTF standards for the registration and audit of training providers. It also oversees the endorsement of training packages.

National Senior Officials Committee (NSOC)—This committee consists of the chief executive officers of the Australian and state and territory training departments. It is the administrative arm of MCTEE. It implements the decisions of MCTEE, drives national collaboration on training matters, and monitors the effectiveness of the national training system.

National Skills Framework—The three key elements of the national training system which promote quality and national consistency in terms of qualifications and the delivery of training. The three key elements are training packages, the AQTF and the AQF.

National Training Contract—a legal contract for vocational training between an employer and the employee who will be the Australian Apprentice.

National Training Information Service (NTIS)—An online database about VET in Australia. It contains detailed information about courses, qualifications, training packages, competency standards and RTOs.

National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC)—Established to provide high level advice to MCTEE to guide equity reform in the national training system.
Packaging—means selecting units of competency within the qualification packaging rules to suit local clients and/or conditions.

Prime Minister’s Award for Excellence in School—provides further recognition of the highest achieving recipients of the Australian Vocational Student Prize.

Quality Assurance Process (for support materials)—an interim process that assesses support materials against a set of training package quality principles determined by the NQC.

Range statement—relates to the unit of competency as a whole, providing the range of contexts and conditions to which the performance criteria apply. It allows for different work environments and situations that will affect performance.

Recognition of current competency (RCC)—applies if a client has previously successfully completed the requirements for a unit of competency or module and is now required (e.g. by a licensing authority) to be reassessed to ensure that the competence is being maintained.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)—is an assessment process that assesses the individual’s formal, 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.

Reasonable adjustment—refers to measures or actions taken to provide a student with a disability the same educational opportunities as everyone else.

Registered training organisation (RTO)—these organisations meet the AQTF Essential Standards for Registrations which allow them to deliver nationally recognised VET; they include TAFE institutes, private training providers, enterprises and schools.

Scope of registration—specifies the AQF qualifications and/or units of competency for which the training organisation is registered to deliver, assess and issue qualifications.

Skills for sustainability (also known as green skills)—are the technical skills, knowledge, values and attitudes needed in the workforce to develop and support sustainable social, economic and environmental outcomes in business, industry and the community.

Skill Sets—provide a way of identifying logical groupings of units of competency which meet an identified need or industry outcome. Skill Sets are not qualifications.

State and territory training authorities (STAs)—each Australian state and territory government has a training authority that administers VET – allocating funds, registering training organisations and accrediting courses.

Statement of attainment—is issued by a RTO when an individual has completed one or more units of competency from nationally recognised qualification(s) and/or course(s).

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA)—is the peak national body incorporated to represent Australia’s 58 public TAFE institutes and university TAFE divisions, and the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

Trade recognition—the recognition of a person’s previous trade skills and work experience when they begin an apprenticeship occupation.

Trade Training Centres—is an element of the Australian Government’s Education Revolution. It will provide $2.5 billion over 10 years to enable all secondary students to access vocational education through Trade Training Centres.

Training package—is a set of national endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people’s skills in a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Training Package Development Handbook—this handbook provides NQC policy and guidance for the developers of national training packages. This policy applies to all training packages developed and endorsed through the NQC development and endorsement process.
TVET Australia (Technical and Vocational Education and Training Australia Limited)—is a ministerial company owned by the Australian, state and territory ministers responsible for training. It was established to provide responsive and high quality services to support the national training system.

Unit of competency—is the specification of knowledge and skill, and the application of that knowledge and skill, to the standard of performance expected in the workplace. A unit of competency is the smallest unit that can be assessed and recognised.

User Choice—is a national policy whereby state and territory governments fund RTOs to provide structured training to Australian Apprentices. These funds reduce the cost of the training that an Australian Apprentice or the employer will have to pay under an Australian Apprenticeship.

VET in Schools (VETis)—is nationally recognised training that is made available to secondary school students as part of their normal school curriculum.

VETis Program Excellence Award—aims to recognise eligible organisations including schools, RTOs, industry bodies, and employers that have collaboratively delivered an excellent VET training program to secondary school students.

WorldSkills Australia (WSA)—is a national, not-for-profit organisation that provides young Australians (apprentices, trainees and VET students, aged 23 and under), the opportunity to gain new skills, compete against their peers in their chosen trade and fast track their skills and career development.

WorldSkills International (WSA)—is the global network of nearly 50 countries who participate in trade and skills competitions.