

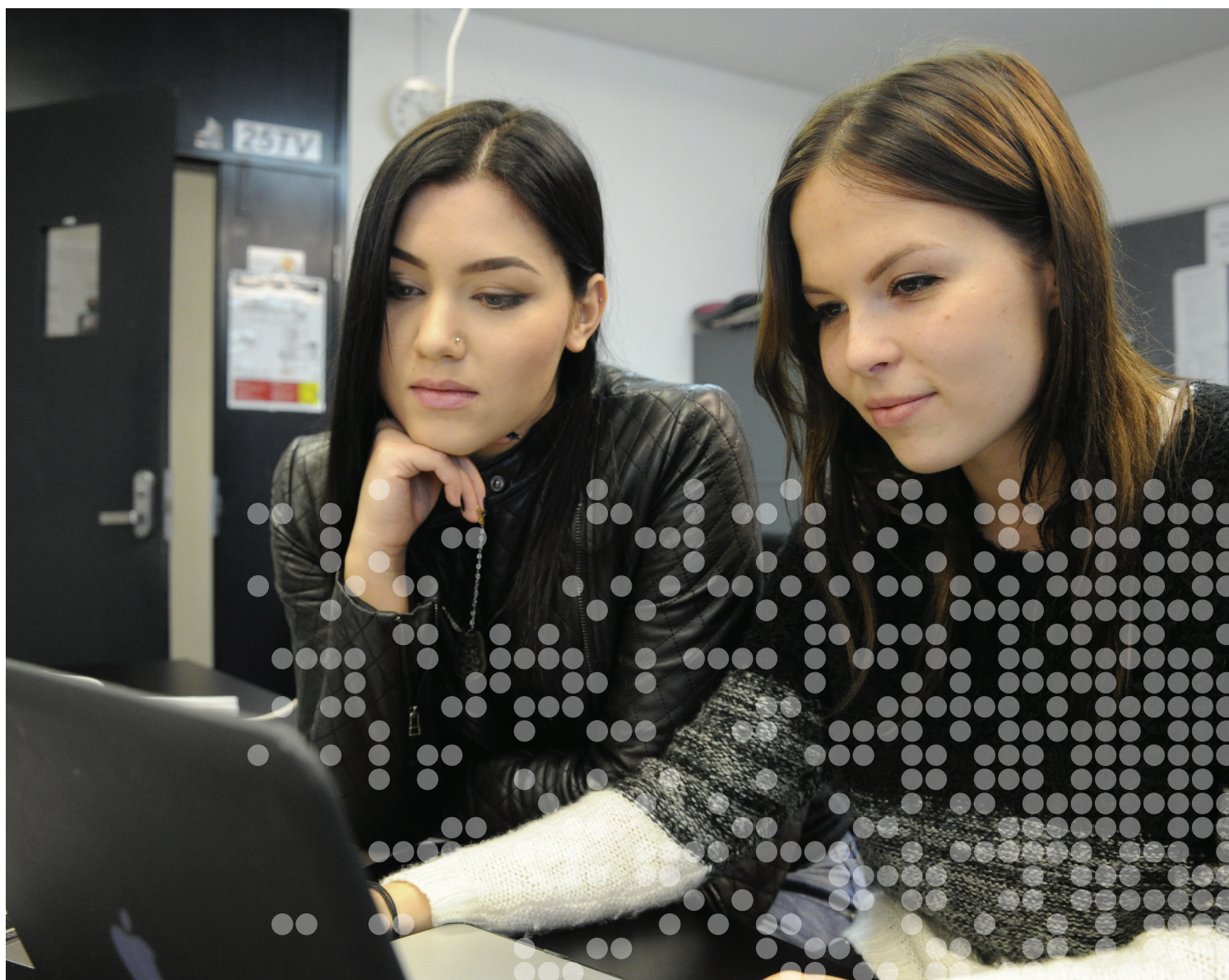


Australian Government

Australian Skills Quality Authority

Users' guide to the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*

Version 2.0
November 2017

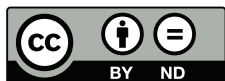


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Acknowledgement

ASQA is grateful for the advice and feedback provided by the ASQA Provider Reference Group, which has informed this new version of the guide.

Feedback

ASQA welcomes feedback about the guide. Feedback can be emailed to communications@asqa.gov.au

About this version

Version 2.0 of the Users' guide to the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*, published November 2017.

The guide will be updated as required. Updated versions and summaries of any version changes are published on ASQA's website at www.asqa.gov.au/standards.

If using a printed copy, please check online to ensure you are using the most recent version.

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Foreword from the Chief Commissioner

As the national vocational education and training (VET) regulator, the role of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) includes ensuring that the quality and reputation of Australia's VET system is maintained through effective national regulation. Students, employers, the community and governments need to have confidence in the integrity and credibility of national qualifications issued by registered training organisations (RTOs). Australia's VET system is vital to our economic prosperity, training Australians in the knowledge and skills needed for jobs now and in the future as workplaces are rapidly changed by global competition and new technologies.

ASQA applies a risk-based approach to regulation of the VET sector that allows resources to be directed towards the areas that pose the greatest threat to quality VET outcomes, while also minimising the regulatory burden on high-quality providers. ASQA's student-centred approach to audit supports this risk-based regulation.

ASQA audits are structured according to the five key phases of the student's journey with their RTO, starting with marketing and recruitment and finishing with the completion of the student's training and issuance of their qualification. At audit, ASQA seeks evidence of student outcomes and RTO practice (rather than just looking at inputs, outputs and processes).

This version of the Users' guide to the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* (the Standards) has been developed to reflect ASQA's student-centred approach to audit, which focuses on the student experience, and the practices of RTOs. The guide aims to help RTOs make sure their practices deliver a quality experience for every student at each stage of their 'journey' through the VET system.

The guide follows the five phases of the student's journey, grouping the relevant clauses against each stage, emphasising the importance of RTO practice to the quality of the student experience. The sixth chapter of the guide looks at the clauses relating to regulatory compliance and governance practice.

The guide does not provide definitive checklists, as each RTO is different—with significant variance in terms of their offerings, delivery modes, target markets, size and so on—meaning that 'one size fits all' compliance checklists are an overly restrictive and limiting tool for Australia's diverse VET providers. Instead, this guide describes how the Standards are relevant to RTOs at each phase of the student journey, outlines how RTOs might meet the Standards and provides examples and case studies illustrating the types of evidence that might demonstrate what is actually happening for the student at each phase of their journey.

I encourage RTOs and those seeking to become an RTO to use the guide to consider how their practices as well as their systems and processes can best support learning outcomes and high-quality student experiences at each stage of the student journey.

Mark Paterson AO

Chief Commissioner

Chief Executive Officer



Introduction

The benefits of a high-quality vocational education and training sector

For students

Students have the greatest stake in the quality of vocational education and training (VET). They often rely on VET outcomes to gain employment or career advancement. While students cannot always be expected to fully understand the complexities of the sector or what constitutes quality, they must be able to make informed choices about training that best meets their needs. Students must have confidence that, no matter which provider they choose, they will receive quality training and assessment that is responsive to industry needs and to their needs.

For industry and employers

Employers rely on registered training organisations (RTOs) to provide essential skills and knowledge to both new entrants and existing workers. The *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* (the Standards) require RTOs to maintain strong engagement with industry to ensure that their services remain relevant to the needs of employers and that graduates are job-ready.

For governments

Collectively, the governments of Australia and its states and territories are responsible for policy on how VET is administered. Governments are also significant purchasers of VET through public funding programs. The Standards represent the expectations that governments place on RTOs and provide government with confidence to invest in training that contributes to a skilled Australian workforce.

For the community

VET is a significant contributor to Australia's domestic economy, as the primary mechanism used to meet the skilling needs of the Australian community. VET also contributes greatly to the valuable export education market. An appropriate regulatory model ensures that the VET sector can remain viable in the long term. This gives the community confidence that RTOs are delivering quality training and assessment that is highly regarded both locally and overseas.

For providers

RTOs depend on the value that other stakeholders place on the Australian VET sector. To ensure the sector is able to provide high-quality training and assessment, a balanced approach to regulation is required. The Standards provide a rigorous and flexible outcomes-focused regulatory framework that encourages innovation while ensuring quality.

ASQA's student-centred audit approach

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) has adopted a contemporary risk-based approach to its regulation of the VET sector. This approach allows ASQA to direct its resources towards the areas that pose the greatest threat to quality vocational outcomes, while also minimising the regulatory burden on high-quality providers.

ASQA's student-centred audit approach supports this risk-based regulation by focusing on evidence of student outcomes and RTOs' practices—rather than inputs, outputs and processes—when assessing compliance against the Standards.

What does the student-centred audit approach look like?

- ASQA takes a **proactive, risk-based approach**.
- Audits are triggered by ASQA's risk intelligence.
- Audits are organised around the five key phases of the student experience:
 - how students commence their journey at marketing and recruitment
 - when students enrol
 - how students are supported as they learn
 - how training and assessment is conducted
 - how students complete and are issued with their qualification.
- **Current or former students are given a voice** in the audit process through invitations to participate in online surveys and interviews. This enables ASQA to understand students' experiences.
- ASQA looks for **evidence of the provider's practice** as well as their systems and processes. At audit, ASQA's focus is on evidence of what is actually happening for students, rather than what systems and processes say *should* be happening. Where providers apply to add new products to their scope of registration, ASQA may look at past practices in relation to delivery of other training products.
- ASQA uses input from trainers, assessors and third parties to inform audits and verify RTO practices.
- **Auditors consider information from a range of sources** including complaints, compliance history, media reports, social media, websites and intelligence from other agencies.
- **Audits are customised and risk-based**, with some having a narrow focus and others broadly scoped, depending on the risks to students. Customisation allows ASQA to direct its resources to the areas and providers of greatest concern. Some applications may be approved based on a desk audit rather than a site visit, based on a provider's risk profile.
- Audit reporting is streamlined, with each audit report structured according to the phases of student experience and referenced to the relevant standards and clauses.
- Providers are accountable for identifying and correcting non-compliant practices, particularly those which have negatively affected students. If poor practices are identified, RTOs are expected to assess the impact on current and past students and provide evidence that demonstrates they have taken (or will take) adequate remedial action to rectify the impact, in addition to correcting practices or systems to ensure compliance in the future.

About the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*

The Standards were endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Industry and Skills Council in 2014. The Standards are enabled by the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* (NVR Act), which aims to:

- provide national consistency in regulation of the VET sector, using a standards-based quality framework and a risk-based approach
- promote quality, flexibility and innovation in VET
- promote Australia's reputation for VET locally and overseas
- promote a VET system that meets Australia's social and economic needs
- protect students undertaking or proposing to undertake VET in Australia
- ensure access to accurate information regarding the quality of VET.



The VET Quality Framework

These Standards form part of the VET Quality Framework, a system which ensures the integrity of nationally recognised training in Australia. RTOs are required to comply with the VET Quality Framework at all times. As the national regulator for the VET sector, ASQA regulates training providers against the VET Quality Framework.

The VET Quality Framework comprises the:

- [*Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015*](#)
- [*Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)*](#)
- [*Fit and Proper Person Requirements*](#) (which, as of 2015, are part of the Standards)
- [*Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements 2011*](#), an instrument that sets out details of the financial viability risk assessment of registered and applicant training organisations
- [*Data Provision Requirements 2012*](#), an instrument that sets out the requirements for providers in relation to the submission of data to ASQA upon request and to submit quality indicator data annually.

Purpose of the Standards

The purpose of the Standards is to:

- describe the requirements that an organisation must meet in order to be an RTO in Australia
- ensure that training delivered by RTOs meets industry requirements (as set out in training packages and accredited courses) and has integrity for employment and further study
- ensure RTOs operate ethically and consider the needs of both students and industry.

The Standards describe outcomes RTOs must achieve, but do not prescribe methods by which RTOs should achieve these outcomes. This allows RTOs to be flexible and innovative in their VET delivery—an acknowledgement that each RTO is different and needs to operate in a way that suits their clients and students. RTOs take many forms, including very large Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes and other public providers; enterprise RTOs that are part of larger organisations and only train staff of those organisations; community-based providers; commercial colleges; and many more. These organisations are diverse in size, structure, and governance and in the scope and volume of services they provide. By describing outcomes rather than inputs, the Standards encourage flexibility and innovation while assuring the quality of training.

The structure of the Standards

Each Standard consists of:

- the **Standard** itself, which provides a broad statement about the required outcomes of that Standard
- a **context statement**, which provides background information to aid understanding, but is not part of the Standard itself and does not describe any compliance requirements
- one or more **clauses**, which describe the outcomes an RTO is required to achieve to comply with that Standard (for an RTO to comply with the Standard, it must fully comply with all of the clauses in the Standard).

Related legislation and standards

The Standards should be read together with the:

- [*Standards for Training Packages 2012*](#), which govern the design and development of training packages
- [*Standards for VET Accredited Courses*](#), which apply to the course design of VET accredited courses, and
- [*Standards for VET Regulators*](#), which outline the outcomes that VET regulators, including ASQA, must achieve in their regulation of the standards applying to RTOs and VET-accredited courses.

Australian Qualifications Framework

The AQF establishes the quality of Australian qualifications. Implementation of the [current AQF¹](#) commenced on 1 July 2011.

The AQF is the national policy for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system. It incorporates the quality-assured qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework. As well as applying to VET, the AQF applies across school and higher education.

While some parts of the AQF are primarily intended for course development rather than training delivery, delivery of training products must ensure students have the opportunity to properly develop the skills and knowledge that have been described in the training package or course document. By ensuring that delivery aligns to the AQF in the same way training product design does, the skill level and employability of VET graduates is assured.

RTOs are required to be fully compliant with all aspects of the AQF. RTOs have been required to fully comply with all aspects of the AQF since 1 January 2015. This is articulated largely through:

- Standard 1 (in regard to the amount of training provided)
- Standard 3 (in regard to issuance of qualifications and statements of attainment).

Additional resources

ASQA general directions

ASQA issues general directions where necessary to clarify how compliance must be demonstrated. **RTOs must comply with general directions as a condition of their registration.**

A general direction outlines the way in which RTOs must comply with the VET Quality Framework and other conditions defined in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

ASQA has issued general directions in relation to:

- [retention requirements for completed student assessment items](#)
- [learner transition](#)
- [quality indicators](#).

ASQA fact sheets

ASQA fact sheets provide information and advice to providers on meeting requirements under the VET Quality Framework and related legislation. ASQA regularly updates the suite of fact sheets available.

- [Go to ASQA fact sheets web page](#)

Self-assessment tool for RTOs

ASQA has developed a tool to assist RTOs to self-assess their performance against the Standards. The tool aligns with the five phases of the student journey and aims to support RTOs to identify and assess evidence of practice and outcomes. The tool supports this guide and the Annual Declaration on Compliance and should be referenced in conjunction with this guide.

- [Go to the self-assessment tool for RTOs](#)

1 The Australian Government is undertaking a review of the AQF to be completed by the end of 2018. For information refer to <https://www.education.gov.au/increased-transparency-and-accountability>



Additional requirements for providers

Requirements for providers delivering to overseas students in Australia

ASQA is also a regulatory body for delivery of training by providers that are registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS), including those delivering English Language Intensive Courses to Overseas Students (ELICOS).

For more information on CRICOS/ELICOS requirements:

- Additional requirements for delivery of training to overseas students studying in Australia are outlined in the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) (ESOS Act). These are specified in the [National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2017](#) (The National Code).
- Refer to the [ESOS legislative framework](#).
- Some training products are registered as ELICOS. These courses and their providers must also comply with the [ELICOS National Standards](#) for delivery to overseas students.

Requirements for VET Student Loans-approved providers

VET Student Loans commenced on 1 January 2017, replacing the VET FEE-HELP scheme. The new VET Student Loans program offers greater protection for students and greater focus on courses that address industry needs, creating better opportunities for employment. VET Student Loans offers income-contingent loan support to eligible students studying diploma-level and above VET qualifications.

- [VET Student Loans Act 2016](#)
- [VET Student Loans Rules 2016](#)
- [VET Student Loans webpage](#), including fact sheets and the *VET Student Loans Manual for Providers*.

Unique Student Identifier scheme

The Unique Student Identifier (USI) scheme allows students to access a single online repository of their VET achievements from the beginning of 2015.

- [Student Identifiers Act 2014](#)
- [USI scheme](#)
- [National VET Provider Collection Data Requirements Policy](#).

Using this guide

Who should use this guide?

This is Version 2.0 of the *Users' guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015*. It is intended for use by people who own or work for RTOs or organisations applying to become RTOs.

This version of the guide supports ASQA's student-centred audit approach and is structured to follow a student's experience through the five key phases of the student journey.

This guide aligns each of these five key phases with the relevant clauses from the Standards.

- Organisations applying to become RTOs can use this guide to:
 - understand the obligations of an RTO
 - develop systems and processes in preparation for submitting an application for initial registration
 - understand the importance of ensuring from the outset that their practices—as well as their systems and processes—are compliant with the Standards.

- RTOs can use this guide to:
 - understand their regulatory obligations
 - establish and maintain practices, systems and processes that both comply with the Standards and meet the needs of their clients and students
 - conduct self-assessment against the Standards
 - test their practices, systems and processes to provide evidence of quality student experiences and outcomes
 - continuously improve their practices and systems.

While the Standards apply to all RTOs, this guide contains some information that is specific to those RTOs regulated by ASQA. RTOs not regulated by ASQA should contact their regulator for specific information regarding VET legislation, regulatory requirements and regulatory processes that apply to them.

Auditors and other regulatory staff also use this guide (in conjunction with ASQA's *Code of conduct for auditors and course accreditation assessors*) to help them make consistent judgements about the intent of the Standards and how RTOs can implement the Standards in ways that meet the needs of their clients and students.

Purpose of this guide

This guide provides an explanation of the Standards and guidance on meeting the Standards. RTO staff and management should use the guide to obtain a clearer understanding of the Standards and the obligations of an RTO. They can use that knowledge to structure operations and gather and retain evidence of compliant practices, systems and processes. The Standards describe what outcomes an RTO must achieve, not how they must be achieved.

This guide is not part of the Standards and has no legal authority. The guide does not prescribe how an RTO should be managed or what evidence must be retained to demonstrate compliance. RTOs are best placed to decide the most suitable way for their organisation to be structured and managed. As long as an RTO can present evidence that it complies with the Standards, there is no 'right way' for an RTO to conduct its operations.

The guide should not be considered as any form of checklist or to contain any prescriptive information.

Notes on this version

This is Version 2.0 of this guide. This version:

- is arranged according to the phases of the student journey
- emphasises the importance of RTO practices to creating high-quality experiences and learning outcomes for students
- includes additional case studies and guidance
- reflects changes relating to trainer and assessor requirements that came into effect from 1 January 2016, and
- includes information on additional requirements for RTOs seeking to deliver Training and Education (TAE) Training Package products.

Notes on terminology/glossary

The Standards (included at Appendix 2) include a glossary and where a word is defined in the glossary, it has that defined meaning with regard to the Standards.

Within the VET system, people being trained and/or assessed by the RTOs are referred to as both 'students' and 'learners'. Internally, ASQA uses the term 'students' while the Standards uses the term 'learners'. For the purpose of this guide, these terms should be considered to be interchangeable.



Structure of this guide

The guide follows the five phases of the student's journey, grouping the relevant Standards (and clauses) against each stage. In this guide, ASQA has emphasised the importance of RTO practice to the quality of the student experience. The final chapter of the guide references a number of Standards against a sixth area relating to regulatory compliance and governance practice.

Appendix 1 of this guide contains a complete index of the clauses that make up the Standards, and the page number where each clause appears in the guide, for users who want to refer to the Standards as they are listed in the legislation.

Key phases of the student journey	Examples of RTO practices/behaviours	Primary Standards/ clauses
Marketing and recruitment Chapter 1	The RTO's marketing practices provide accurate and factual information to allow prospective students to make informed decisions.	4.1, 2.3*, 2.4*
Enrolment Chapter 2	The RTO ensures students have the existing skills, knowledge and experience required to successfully undertake the course.	5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 7.3
Support and progression Chapter 3	Students' needs are assessed by the RTO and the RTO provides appropriate support services to enable student progression.	1.7
Training and assessment Chapter 4	Trainers assigned to deliver training are qualified. The amount of training and mode of delivery is consistent with requirements.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.8, 1.13 to 1.18, 1.20, 8.2
Completion Chapter 5	Only students assessed as meeting course or training package requirements are issued with AQF certificates.	3.1, 3.3
Other requirements Chapter 6—Regulatory compliance and governance 7.1, 7.2, 2.1, 8.4 to 8.6, 2.3 to 2.4, 8.3, 7.4, 7.5, 8.1, 8.2		

* These Standards are also considered when ASQA looks at an RTO's compliance and governance.

For each clause or group of related clauses the guide includes a range of information:

- *What this clause or clauses mean for your RTO*—a plain English description of what each clause means for your provider.
- *A guide to compliance*—an outline of how an RTO might meet these clauses.

For relevant groups of clauses, the guide includes:

- *How can my RTO demonstrate, and show evidence of, compliant practice?*—provides examples of types of evidence that might show what is actually happening for students
- *Tips for compliance*—drawn from ASQA's regulatory experience; tips for compliance are indicated by the  icon
- *Guidance for applicants for initial registration*—highlights what an organisation applying for registration might need to demonstrate in relation to the clauses for each phase of the student journey; information for applicants for initial registration is indicated by the  icon
- *Case studies*—which illustrate what compliant practices, systems and processes might look like; case studies are indicated by the  icon
- Information specific to enterprise RTOs, as indicated by the  icon
- Information specific to RTOs approved to offer VET Student Loans, as indicated by the  icon
- Direct quotes from the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*, as indicated by this icon  .

Chapter 1—Marketing and recruitment

Introduction

This chapter focuses on a student's experience of marketing and recruitment, the first phase of their journey.

Students and employers need clear, accurate and readily accessible information to make informed choices about the training that will best meet their needs.

ASQA's strategic review of the marketing and advertising practices of registered training organisations (RTOs) in 2013 found that almost 50 per cent of those reviewed were potentially misleading consumers.

ASQA's 2017 strategic review of 'unduly' short training (courses that are delivered in significantly shorter timeframes than reasonably required to ensure students gain the competencies specified in the training) investigated how RTOs advertise course duration on their websites. The review found that in many cases, information was either absent, widely variable in relation to the same qualifications, or inconsistent in terms of the way it was presented. The inconsistency in this information makes it difficult for consumers to identify the provider and course that will meet their specific needs.

Students told ASQA that it is important to them that the information they receive about their course before they enrol is factual and accurate. However, in a marketplace where information is confusing, and not readily accessible and transparent, many students will not be aware if information is not accurate.



Clause 4.1—Provide accurate and accessible information to prospective and current students

Clause 4.1

Information, whether disseminated directly by the RTO or on its behalf, is both accurate and factual, and:

- a) accurately represents the services it provides and the training products on its scope of registration
- b) includes its RTO code
- c) refers to another person or organisation in its marketing material only if the consent of that person or organisation has been obtained
- d) uses the NRT [Nationally Recognised Training] logo only in accordance with the conditions of use specified in Schedule 4
- e) makes clear where a third party is recruiting prospective learners for the RTO on its behalf
- f) distinguishes where it is delivering training and assessment on behalf of another RTO or where training and assessment is being delivered on its behalf by a third party
- g) distinguishes between nationally recognised training and assessment leading to the issuance of AQF [Australian Qualifications Framework] certification documentation from any other training or assessment delivered by the RTO
- h) includes the title and code of any training product, as published on the national register, referred to in that information
- i) only advertises or markets a non-current training product while it remains on the RTO's scope of registration
- j) only advertises or markets that a training product it delivers will enable learners to obtain a licensed or regulated outcome where this has been confirmed by the industry regulator in the jurisdiction in which it is being advertised
- k) includes details about any VET [Vocational Education and Training] FEE-HELP, government-funded subsidy or other financial support arrangements associated with the RTO's provision of training and assessment
- l) does not guarantee that:
 - i) a learner will successfully complete a training product on its scope of registration, or
 - ii) a training product can be completed in a manner which does not meet the requirements of clause 1.1 and 1.2, or
 - iii) a learner will obtain a particular employment outcome where this is outside the control of the RTO.

What clause 4.1 means for your RTO

The *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* (the Standards) require your RTO to provide clear and accurate information to students before enrolment to allow students to make informed choices.

The Standards make it clear the RTO is solely responsible for all advertising, marketing and recruitment done on its behalf, regardless of the channel or method used.

You must ensure students are provided with clear and accurate information. This is your RTO's responsibility regardless of:

- the medium used to advertise training (including your website and social media)
- how students are recruited
- who is actually providing the information (including education agents and brokers).

Your RTO is subject to all relevant consumer protection laws that apply in any jurisdiction where you operate.

Your RTO must honour all commitments it makes in all marketing materials. You must only promote training or assessment for training products that are currently on your scope of registration.

Including your RTO code

- You must include your RTO code in all marketing material where an inference is made that nationally recognised training is offered.
- The RTO responsible for the training and/or assessment and for issuing a qualification or statement of attainment must be absolutely clear to anyone viewing any marketing or advertising material.
- If another person or organisation is delivering training under a third-party agreement with your RTO, your RTO code must be included on all marketing or other material created by that person or organisation that relates to that training and/or assessment.
- If another person or organisation is recruiting students under a third-party agreement with your RTO, your RTO code must be included on all marketing or other material created by that person or organisation.
- If you are delivering under a third-party agreement with another RTO that RTO's code must also be included in all marketing or other material relating to those courses.

Using the Nationally Recognised Training logo

- All nationally recognised training is listed on the national register of training providers and courses, at training.gov.au. The NRT logo is a recognised trademark that confirms training is nationally recognised. To maintain the credibility of the logo, it must be used only in accordance with the conditions of use in Schedule 4 of the Standards.
- If your RTO delivers training that is not nationally recognised (including school and higher education programs), you must clearly separate marketing or other information about this training from marketing and information about training that is nationally recognised. It must be clear where training is not nationally recognised.
- RTOs can obtain a copy of the NRT logo by sending an email from an RTO contact listed on the national register at training.gov.au to enquiries@asqa.gov.au.

Including the code and full title of the training product

- Whether you offer qualifications, skill sets, accredited courses or individual units, all marketing material must include the code and the full title of the training product (as listed on the national register) to ensure there is no confusion about what is being offered and to allow potential students to verify the information. This also means that all RTOs are describing courses under the same title, reducing confusion in the marketplace.

When developing your marketing or advertising material, **remember the likely audience**, particularly for online marketing. Often, Australian states and territories have different regulatory arrangements and potential students must be able to clearly see where any licensing or accreditation outcomes may apply.

Your RTO's marketing material must also be **consistent with its training and assessment strategies**, including any variations or additions for courses delivered to overseas students. For example, you must not claim a course takes two weeks to complete if students complete the course over a period of several months, including doing so by also undertaking a period of independent study.

Details about the amount of training should be clear and where necessary should provide information for all student cohorts.

If you use **any reference to another person or organisation** (such as testimonials or photos) in marketing or advertising material, you must gain consent from the person or organisation before you make that reference public. This applies to, for example, displaying photos of other training or educational institutions on your website, which can lead people to believe your RTO operates those facilities.

Where students may be accessing **VET Student Loans (VSL) or any other government loan or subsidy**, your RTO must provide details of the arrangements. You must provide details of:

- any costs associated with the loan or subsidy (including interest or similar costs)
- any debt that will be incurred.

You should also note that these funding programs may have additional marketing requirements with which you must comply. You should check the details of requirements with the relevant funding authority.

You must provide **details of any loss of entitlement** that may occur if a student undertakes a course at your RTO. This includes providing information about limited entitlement schemes (where students are only able to access one course or there are restrictions on what courses may be subsidised after a student completes their study at your RTO).

RTOs are not required to have marketing or advertising policies and procedures, but you should:

- ensure all marketing material is checked and approved by an appropriate person before publication
- monitor all marketing to ensure it remains current and accurate.

ASQA and other agencies receive many complaints about RTOs that make inaccurate or misleading statements in their marketing. Being vigilant about monitoring the accuracy of marketing about your RTO across all forms of media will increase student satisfaction and reduce the chance of students submitting complaints to regulators. You should be equally vigilant in **monitoring any marketing carried out on your behalf by other parties**, such as training directories or brokers.

Complaints received by ASQA about an RTO can lead to regulatory action.

Remember, your RTO is responsible for ensuring all marketing complies with the Standards no matter who actually creates or publishes the material.

ASQA may review your RTO's marketing when:

- preparing for an audit
- considering applications
- investigating complaints
- as part of regular data-gathering processes to inform an RTO's risk profile.

ASQA's reviews include conducting internet searches to discover marketing about your RTO other than your RTO's website, reviewing social media, and reviewing data and intelligence received about your RTO's marketing processes.

A guide to compliance

Complaints about student information, enrolment and marketing are consistently among the top ten categories of complaints about RTOs that ASQA receives. This suggests that RTOs need to have rigorous processes in place to monitor and review their marketing and recruitment materials and practices.

Your RTO should retain copies of all actual advertising and marketing material, including any material created by third parties. Retaining copies and keeping a register of all approved material, while not mandatory, makes it easier for your RTO to monitor marketing and allows this evidence to be presented as part of an audit or in the investigation of a complaint.



Regardless of how your evidence is presented, it must demonstrate that all of the requirements of clause 4.1 have been complied with in full.

How can my RTO demonstrate and provide evidence of compliant practice?

You could show that your RTO has a systematic practice of reviewing all your marketing, advertising and recruitment materials and keep a register of the actions you have taken to ensure these materials remain accurate and up to date. For example, you could show that:

- you review these materials whenever your training and assessment strategies are changed
- you have an identified staff member responsible for checking the accuracy and currency of information before it is published
- you collect information from clients/students about whether they received the services they understood they would receive and keep records of any actions you take in response to student feedback.

If you reference another person or organisation in your advertising or marketing material you must retain evidence that permission was obtained prior to any material containing the reference being published. Evidence could include:

- an exchange of email
- a signed release form
- a letter giving permission to use the relevant material
- other relevant evidence.

If you regularly include information about students in social media (including photos where a student can be recognised), evidence might include a release clause in the enrolment form giving your RTO permission to use photos in public if you use this method (ensure you can demonstrate that these students actually agreed to the release and that students can 'opt out' if they wish).

Remember that ASQA will be seeking evidence that your marketing and recruitment practices align with all your RTO's marketing and recruitment materials—no matter who they are published by, or in what format. For example, ASQA may interview or survey your students about their experience of your marketing; ASQA may also discuss your marketing and recruitment with third parties.



Tips on advertising

- Ensure you never advertise superseded qualifications past the permitted transition period.
- Carefully check that you do not claim that a qualification can be achieved in unrealistically short time frames.
- Make sure that your marketing or advertising material only provides factual information about your training. You should never:
 - guarantee that a student will be issued with a qualification or statement of attainment
 - guarantee that any employment outcome will result from training and/or assessment at your RTO, unless you have arranged guaranteed employment for any student that successfully completes their training and/or assessment at your RTO
 - claim that a student will be eligible for any licence or accreditation as a result of your training and/or assessment, unless the issuer of that licence or accreditation has confirmed this to be the case
 - guarantee that a student will successfully complete a training product or that a training product can be completed in a manner that does not meet the requirements of clause 1.1 or 1.2 of the Standards.
- Ensure any third parties you use in marketing and recruitment comply with this Standard and that your advertising makes it clear if any third parties are involved in delivering services on your behalf.



Additional requirements for VET Student Loans-approved training providers

Training providers that have been approved to enrol students whose training is supported by loans under the Australian Government Department of Education and Training (DET) VET Student Loans (VSL) program must ensure that their marketing practices enable students to select a course based on the content, quality and price of training offered. The VET Student Loans Rules 2016 have specific requirements for any marketing that mentions the possible availability of a VET Student Loan.

The VET Student Loans program does not allow:

- for any social media marketing to mention the availability of a VET Student Loan
- for providers to engage in cold-calling to market courses and offer a VET Student Loan
- for third parties (agents or brokers) to provide any information about a VET Student Loan
- the offering of benefits such as laptops/tablets, prizes or vouchers of greater than a \$30 value to encourage students to sign up for a VET Student Loan, and
- the description of training that is paid for through the student's VET Student Loan as being 'free', 'government-funded', or any other term that implies it is 'not a loan'.

Any marketing or advertising material must clearly state that VET Student Loans must be repaid. For more information, please refer to the DET's [Information for VET Student Loans providers](#).



Advice for enterprise RTOs

Training programs delivered by enterprise RTOs for their employees or volunteers are generally determined by the requirements of their job (for example, after recruitment or promotion). In many cases employees are required to undertake these training programs as a condition of employment. It is rare for an enterprise RTO to advertise and market its training services to prospective clients or to charge any fees for the provision of those services.

Within the enterprise RTO training environment, the information given to students will reflect their primary status as employees of the enterprise, rather than prospective clients of a training provider.

While clause 4.1 may be of limited relevance to enterprise RTO students, it is important that the documentation provided by the enterprise is accurate, factual and current.

Your RTO should consider:

- providing employees with information about the enterprise RTO, including the RTO code, scope of registration, and key business objectives
- providing employees with information stating the RTO's responsibility for ensuring the quality of the training and assessment through compliance with the Standards
- explaining the meaning of nationally recognised training and assessment and the potential value of AQF certification documentation
- clearly distinguishing between the nationally recognised training and assessment being provided and any other training or assessment that may be delivered to employees by the enterprise
- clearly explaining the purpose and objectives of the training and assessment activities to be undertaken by the student.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You may not yet have all your marketing material fully developed. Provide any draft materials as evidence of what will be used and show that all requirements of clause 4.1 have been adhered to.



Case study—Monitoring the market

YZA Training delivers training in allied health from four locations in New South Wales and South Australia. In addition, it has a third-party agreement with Quality Health Education to deliver first aid units at workplaces in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

The RTO's marketing manager approves all new marketing and promotional materials, and any other public information about the RTO, before it can be used. A register is kept of all approvals, along with a complete copy of the material. This requirement is included in the third-party agreement with Quality Health Education.

Regular monitoring is carried out on all currently approved material, particularly online material, to ensure it remains consistent with the RTO's scope of registration and operations. When material is no longer in use, it is marked as 'non-current' in the register after being confirmed as no longer in circulation.

The marketing manager conducts regular searches of the internet for 'YZA Training', 'Quality Health Education' and other relevant terms that could reveal any information about the RTO. On one occasion, a search discovered that Quality Health Education had entered information about first aid courses into a 'careers directory' online and did not identify YZA Training as the RTO. As this information had not been approved by the RTO, Quality Health Education was required to have the material removed. Shortly after, Quality Health Education submitted a request for advertising on the same site to be approved. As the request now included all required information and was accurate, the marketing manager approved the request, the information was entered in the directory and the item was added to the register for future checking.

Chapter 2—Enrolment

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the student's enrolment experience with their registered training organisation (RTO), the second phase of the student's journey.

Under the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* (the Standards) relevant to the enrolment phase of the student journey, RTOs are responsible for:

- informing and protecting students (clauses 5.1 to 5.3)
- protecting pre-paid fees by students (clause 7.3)
- providing credit for prior studies (clause 3.5).

Students have told ASQA that it is important that they:

- receive accurate advice about a course to ensure it meets their needs before they enrol
- can understand details about the course—such as how long the course will take, the study requirements and assessment methods
- understand their own rights and responsibilities as well as their RTO's, and
- are aware of costs, payment terms and conditions (including refund policies).

ASQA continues to focus on learner protection because the results of successive ASQA strategic reviews have shown that many students are not receiving adequate or accurate information before enrolment. This means that students are often not fully informed before making decisions about their training. This lack of information can have a significant impact on students—increasing the potential for them to drop out of the course and/or suffer financial loss. For RTOs, this can lead to a loss of reputation and higher numbers of complaints.

ASQA receives a significant number of complaints about fees and refunds, as well as complaints about student information and enrolment. Students need to know that their exposure to financial loss is limited in the case of a provider closing or not being able to provide the training.



Clauses 5.1 to 5.3—Informing and protecting students

Clause 5.1

Prior to enrolment or the commencement of training and assessment, whichever comes first, the RTO provides advice to the prospective learner about the training product appropriate to meeting the learner's needs, taking into account the individual's existing skills and competencies.

Clause 5.2

Prior to enrolment or the commencement of training and assessment, whichever comes first, the RTO provides, in print or through referral to an electronic copy, current and accurate information that enables the learner to make informed decisions about undertaking training with the RTO and at a minimum includes the following content:

- a) the code, title and currency of the training product to which the learner is to be enrolled, as published on the national register
- b) the training and assessment, and related educational and support services the RTO will provide to the learner including the:
 - i) estimated duration
 - ii) expected locations at which it will be provided
 - iii) expected modes of delivery
 - iv) name and contact details of any third party that will provide training and/or assessment, and related educational and support services to the learner on the RTO's behalf
 - v) any work placement arrangements.
- c) the RTO's obligations to the learner, including that the RTO is responsible for the quality of the training and assessment in compliance with these Standards, and for the issuance of the AQF [Australian Qualifications Framework] certification documentation
- d) the learner's rights, including:
 - i) details of the RTO's complaints and appeals process required by Standard 6
 - ii) if the RTO, or a third party delivering training and assessment on its behalf, closes or ceases to deliver any part of the training product that the learner is enrolled in.
- e) the learner's obligations:
 - i) in relation to the repayment of any debt to be incurred under the VET [Vocational Education and Training] FEE-HELP scheme arising from the provision of services
 - ii) any requirements the RTO requires the learner to meet to enter and successfully complete their chosen training product
 - iii) any materials and equipment that the learner must provide
- f) information on the implications for the learner of government training entitlements and subsidy arrangements in relation to the delivery of the services.

Clause 5.3

Where the RTO collects fees from the individual learner, either directly or through a third party, the RTO provides or directs the learner to information prior to enrolment or the commencement of training and assessment, whichever comes first, specifying:

- a) all relevant fee information including:
 - i) fees that must be paid to the RTO
 - ii) payment terms and conditions including deposits and refunds.
- b) the learner's rights as a consumer, including but not limited to any statutory cooling-off period, if one applies
- c) the learner's right to obtain a refund for services not provided by the RTO in the event the:
 - i) arrangement is terminated early
 - ii) the RTO fails to provide the agreed services.

What clauses 5.1 to 5.3 mean for your RTO

You must provide clear information to prospective students to enable them to decide if **your** RTO and course is suitable for them, based on their existing skills and knowledge and any specific needs.

As required by clause 1.7, you need to identify any support an individual student needs through pre-enrolment or pre-training checks.

Before enrolment or commencement of training or assessment activities², you must provide clear information to students about the following matters.

Full course code and title

- To ensure prospective students can research the course you are offering, state the code and full title of the training product as listed on the national register, training.gov.au
- Include any relevant currency information, such as whether a qualification has been superseded or removed from a training package.

Venue, length and modes of delivery and/or assessment

- Provide prospective students with clear information about:
 - where the training and/or assessment will take place
 - the estimated duration
 - the delivery mode or modes.

Third-party arrangements (if applicable)

- If a third party is involved in the training and/or assessment, students have a right to know who the third party is.
- Students should be able to contact both your RTO and the third party at any time.
- You must confirm to prospective students that:
 - your RTO is responsible for the quality of training and assessment provided
 - your RTO is responsible for the issuing of all qualifications and statements of attainment
 - any changes to the arrangements will be communicated to them.
- You must also provide information on how students can lodge a complaint or appeal against either your RTO or the third party.

Entry requirements

- To ensure students fully understand their obligations, inform prospective students of any entry requirements and/or specific requirements they need to meet to successfully complete the program.
- You must also make it clear if students need to provide any materials and/or equipment, such as personal protective equipment.
- Make it clear whether the training includes mandatory work placements. If mandatory work placements are part of the training, you must provide students with clear information on who will arrange these.

Support services

- Provide information about support services available to students and any cost associated with them.

Fee information

- If your RTO requires individual students to pay fees (this requirement does not apply if you contract with a company to deliver training to their employees, paid for by that company), provide fee information prior to enrolment or commencement of training/assessment (whichever is earliest) about:
 - all fees payable to your RTO, clearly describing all costs involved with the course
 - how and when fees must be paid
 - how to request a refund

² Note that in this context, assessment includes the collection or analysis of evidence for recognition of prior learning (RPL) activities.



- the conditions under which a refund would be provided.
- If you enrol a student under any loan or delayed payment arrangement (including a VET Student Loans arrangement), you must clearly state the terms of the arrangement, including:
 - any debt that may be incurred
 - when repayment is required and under what conditions
 - any associated fees, indexation or interest.

Funding entitlements

- If students may be accessing any government funding entitlement that may reduce their ability to access such funding in the future (such as arrangements that limit funding to one qualification for a person), provide this information prior to enrolment.

Consumer rights

- Inform prospective students about their rights as a consumer, in accordance with state/territory laws.
- If state or territory laws where the course is being offered require a cooling-off period, you must provide information about this. Inform prospective students about the RTO's complaints and appeal policy and procedure.
- Your RTO must also notify learners when any change occurs that may affect the services you are providing them. This includes:
 - a change in ownership of the RTO, and/or
 - any changes to, or new third-party arrangements your RTO puts in place, for the delivery of services to those learners.

Information about the USI

Each student's unique student identifier (USI) is a mandatory requirement of full Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) enrolment and competency issuance data.

RTOs that deliver training for which they are exempt from having to provide full AVETMISS data to the [National VET Provider Collection Data Requirements Policy](#) must also advise prospective students that the results of their study will not be available on USI transcripts. (Note that this training activity must still be reported as aggregate competency commencement and completion data.)

ASQA strongly supports advice in the National VET Provider Collection Data Requirements Policy that RTOs should obtain a USI from all students as part of the enrolment process. Ensuring this information is collected at the start of the student's time with the RTO avoids data reporting problems later on, particularly in cases where the student discontinues their studies or has not yet completed at the time of data reporting. If a USI has not been obtained, AQF certification cannot be issued and the RTO's AVETMISS data for that calendar year is unable to be submitted to the national provider collection.

A guide to compliance

RTOs must retain evidence showing these requirements have been complied with in full.

Regardless of how the information is provided to prospective students, it must be accurate and conform to the planned training and assessment described in your RTO's training and assessment strategies.

How can my RTO demonstrate and provide evidence of compliant practice?

The type of evidence will vary depending on how you present information to prospective students. For example, if your RTO provides the relevant information on its website, you must be able to demonstrate that each prospective student is directed to this information before they enrol.

Your RTO may provide relevant evidence by:

- keeping a hard copy of the information provided to each student with the student file, including the date such information was provided and confirmation that each student has read and understood the information (for example, a student acknowledgement)
- providing the content of information sessions conducted for prospective students about qualifications and attendance records
- showing that students are provided with regularly reviewed and updated information about the licensing and regulatory requirements for particular qualifications, based on input sought from licensing bodies, ensuring that hard copy pre-enrolment information is consistent with electronically available information.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You must demonstrate that you have developed information that will meet the requirements of these clauses (for example, in relation to fees and charges, entry requirements and pathways from qualifications).



Additional requirements for VET Student Loans-approved providers

Providers approved to enrol students whose training is supported under the Department of Education and Training's (DET) VET Student Loans program must comply with additional enrolment requirements.

If your RTO is approved to offer VET Student Loans, you must ensure that students:

- are fully informed of the tuition fees and other fees that apply to the course
- understand their responsibilities, obligations and rights if they enrol in the course
- understand their responsibilities, obligations and rights if they apply for a VET Student Loan.

A VET Student Loans-approved provider must also retain all information provided to a student during the enrolment process for a period of five years.

Students must be academically suited to undertake the course they are enrolling in. The VET Student Loans program includes minimum academic suitability requirements that students must meet to be eligible for the loans program. However, it is important to note that depending on the type, mode and amount of training your RTO is offering, individual students may need to have underpinning skills and knowledge in addition to these minimum requirements.

As part of the enrolment process, providers must issue a VET Student Loan Fee Notice and a Commonwealth Assistance Notice within designated timeframes.

For more information, please refer to the DET's [VET Student Loans information](#).



Case study—Read before clicking

EFG Training accepts enrolments into a range of qualifications through its website.

Once a prospective student has selected the qualification they wish to enrol in, they are presented with a link to information relevant to that particular qualification. To proceed, the person must complete a declaration that they have read and understood the information. Only then can they complete the enrolment process. The RTO's student management system records that the person completed the declaration and a copy of the declaration available on that date is retained in the RTO's document management system.



Case study—Read before signing

HJ Training offers a short course that runs each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Most people don't enrol in advance, but turn up on the day expecting to be able to enrol and commence the program that day.

On arrival, students are handed a fact sheet containing all relevant information on the program. This includes a declaration to the student that—as HJ Training holds an exemption from reporting data for this program to specified students—their assessment results will not appear on their authenticated VET transcript or be available to them via the USI system. The declaration includes space for a signature acknowledging that the learner has been fully informed about the course. The learner must sign this declaration before commencing the program.



Clause 7.3—Protecting pre-paid fees by students

Clause 7.3

Where the RTO requires, either directly or through a third party, a prospective or current learner to prepay fees in excess of a total of \$1500 (being the threshold prepaid fee amount), the RTO must meet the requirements set out in the Requirements for Fee Protection in Schedule 6.

What clause 7.3 means for your RTO

'Prepaid fees' (sometimes referred to as 'fees collected in advance') means fees that are collected before the relevant services have been provided. These include payments made at any time before, during or after the student enrolls. Any payment received before a service is delivered is unearned revenue and is a liability that must be paid back, either through service delivery or as a refund. Unless a university or government-administered, if an RTO or an agent operating on its behalf collects more than \$1500 in prepaid fees from a prospective or current student any prepaid fees over \$1500 must be covered by at least one of the measures available in Schedule 6.

The requirement to protect prepaid fees by students includes all students whether resident in Australia or overseas. RTOs registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) must satisfy both the requirements of this clause and of the Tuition Protection Service (TPS) under the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act). The TPS requires that not more than 50 per cent of the fees for an overseas student be prepaid, unless the student chooses to pay more. This applies even if 50 per cent of the course fees would be less than the threshold prepaid fee amount of \$1500.

The requirements that apply to prepaid fees include all fees that a student is required to pay, including enrolment fees, tuition fees, materials fees and any other fee component that is a mandatory payment for the course.

RTOs are only required to protect prepaid fees from individual students and prospective students where the student or their representative pays the fees through direct enrolment. These requirements do not apply, for example, where an employer engages an RTO to provide training and/or assessment to members of its staff through a negotiated commercial transaction.

RTOs other than government entities and Australian universities

Where your RTO collects more than \$1500 per learner in prepaid fees, you must take action to protect the prepaid fees that exceed \$1500 for each student.

An RTO may apply different protection measure options to cover prepaid fees of different students, depending on circumstances. For instance, there may be reasons why an RTO opts to cover the prepaid fees of one student with an unconditional financial guarantee and the prepaid fees of another student through membership of an approved tuition assurance scheme.

If your RTO never receives more than \$1500 in prepaid fees from any student, you do not have to take further action to protect the fees of students.

Government entities and Australian universities

If your RTO collects more than the threshold \$1500 per student in prepaid fees, you must have and implement a policy that details how, if your RTO is unable to provide the services that have been paid for, students will be:

- placed into an equivalent course without having to pay any additional fees for the portion of the course they have paid in advance, or
- refunded for all fees paid in advance over \$1500.

Structuring your fee payment schedule

Consider how best to structure your fee payment schedule. For example, if you offer a 10-week course that costs \$2000, the course costs \$200 per week. Therefore:

- You could collect \$1500 at the time of enrolment and the remaining \$500 after week seven without needing to have any protection measures in place.
- If you wanted to collect the total course cost at the time of enrolment, you would have to have one or more of the measures in Schedule 6 in place.

- There are many other options you could choose, such as collecting weekly fees, or collecting a deposit of up to \$1500 at the time of enrolment and then a weekly amount equal to the calculated weekly cost of the course.

Options for fee protection measures

If your RTO is required to have fee protection measures in place, your RTO has the following options.

1. The RTO can hold an unconditional financial guarantee from a bank operating in Australia to cover at least the amount of prepaid fees in excess of \$1500 for any student.
 - If choosing this option, your RTO needs to ensure the guarantee is structured so that you can refund students' prepaid fees (in excess of \$1500) in circumstances where your RTO is no longer able to deliver the training and assessment. For example, you may have an arrangement where an independent party has authority to access the guarantee.
 - You may be required to demonstrate how the amount of the guarantee was determined and how you monitor and ensure that this level is always greater than the amount of fees required to be protected.
 - This option does not need to be approved by ASQA, but you must be able to demonstrate how the guarantee meets the Standard, if requested by ASQA.
 - Note that ASQA is not available to administer any such guarantee or act as beneficiary. Any costs associated with the guarantee must be met by the RTO.
2. The RTO can hold membership of a tuition assurance scheme approved by ASQA that applies to all relevant students.
3. The RTO can apply to ASQA for approval of an alternative measure and implement any approved measure (use the [Application for alternative fee protection measures](#) form to apply). If you are seeking ASQA's approval of an alternative fee protection measure, be aware that such a measure must demonstrate an equivalent level of fee protection as that provided by an unconditional financial guarantee from a bank operating in Australia.

The requirements for protection of prepaid fees apply no matter how the fees are collected. Any fees collected by a third party to your RTO (including by an education agent or broker or another company operated by the RTO's owners) are subject to the same conditions. **Your RTO is responsible for ensuring that protection measures are in place and implemented as required.** These requirements apply to fees prepaid by students, regardless of when your RTO actually receives the payment.

As required by Standard 5, you must:

- notify students of the fees they must pay and when they are due
- provide students with information about their entitlements in the event that your RTO closes or otherwise ceases to provide services as agreed.

A guide to compliance

Government entities and Australian universities

If your RTO is in this category, you could demonstrate compliance by providing the fee protection policy and demonstrating how this is accessible to students. If your RTO has needed to enact the policy, you could show evidence of the process that was followed.

Enterprise RTOs

If your enterprise RTO delivers training and assessment services to employees at no cost, you could demonstrate that clause 8.4 does not apply through showing that pre-enrolment material provided to staff states that no fee is payable.

All other RTOs

If your RTO is not collecting more than \$1500 in prepaid fees from any student, retain marketing and enrolment material that includes fee schedules showing the RTO does not require more than \$1500 to be prepaid for any course. In this case, no further evidence would be required. In addition, your RTO's website must not have facility to accept online fee payments beyond \$1500.

If your RTO is collecting more than \$1500 in prepaid fees from any student, retain evidence to show how any fees above the threshold prepaid fee amount are covered under at least one protection option. Evidence might be in the form of:

- confirmation of current membership in one or more approved tuition assurance schemes that includes all of the relevant courses and delivery locations

- evidence that the RTO holds a current unconditional bank guarantee for a suitable amount (calculated based on the total amount of prepaid fees in excess of \$1500 per student the RTO would hold at any time).

Your RTO may use a combination of measures for different courses or different students. In this case, retain evidence of how all students' fees are protected.

If ASQA has approved an alternative fee protection measure, retain evidence of current approval of that measure and your compliance with the measure.

How can my RTO demonstrate and provide evidence of compliant practice?

Regardless of the method your RTO uses to ensure students' prepaid fees are covered by at least one protection option, under Standard 5 you must retain evidence of how students have been advised of:

- all payment terms
- the circumstances under which refunds may be issued.

Any information you provide to potential students, students or clients must be consistent with your RTO's arrangements.

Many RTOs now facilitate student enrolments and payments through their websites. As part of its strategic review of RTOs' marketing and advertising practices, ASQA has tested RTOs use of payment gateways such as shopping carts or payment portals. ASQA has found that in many cases information about fees payable is not available until the point of payment. Often the full value of the payment was only shown at the checkout, and the RTO provided no information or limited information on refunds (or other course information). Your RTO needs to ensure any tools your business uses to manage payments comply with the transparency and fee protection requirements of clauses 5.3 and 7.3.

If you are using a commercial 'shopping cart' system to collect online payments:

- ensure that the system does not allow students to prepay more than the threshold amount allowed by the arrangements you have in place
- ensure that clients are provided with the fee information upfront prior to finalisation of the payment (this may be as simple as specifying all course fees in the shopping cart and allowing only single purchases).

ASQA may review and test your website and payment gateways and may talk with past and current students and third parties to confirm that your practices have met the requirements of these clauses.

To demonstrate that your practice aligns with your policy, you could retain invoices or receipts for students that clearly state the components of the fees.

If you have arrangements with a third party to collect fees on your behalf, such as a broker or education agent, you could provide evidence of how you implement and regularly review the agreement you have in place with them to ensure they are meeting the requirements of clause 7.3.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You must confirm whether you plan to collect more than \$1500 in prepaid fees from students at any time. If you intend to do this, you must demonstrate how one or more fee protection measures will be implemented for all relevant students.

Note that ASQA will not accept an application for alternative fee protection measures from organisations seeking registration as an RTO.



Case study—Fee protection made simple

KLM Training offers qualifications in the security industry from its head office in Perth and a range of individual units and skill sets from its Perth office and several sites across Western Australia.

Payment of fees is required prior to commencement of the training. For example:

- The Certificate II in Security Operations offered by the RTO is priced at \$975, so the RTO is not required to implement fee protection measure for students in this course.
- The Certificate III in Security Operations is priced at \$1675 and is run over five weeks. Students are required to pay a deposit of \$75 on enrolment. They are then invoiced for \$800, which is due to be paid on the first day of training and for a further \$800, which is due at the start of the third week of training.

KLM Training does not collect more than \$1500 in advance for any student, so does not have to implement any fee protection measures.



Case study—Consistency brings simplicity

NOP Training operates from a head office in Melbourne, and has branches in Sydney, Canberra and Albury. The RTO has third-party arrangements with organisations in Launceston, Hobart and Bendigo. More than 100 different qualifications are offered, mostly in the business, information technology, health and community service areas.

Regardless of the cost of the course, NOP Training has implemented a consistent fee model across all courses. All courses require payment of a non-refundable fee on enrolment (\$100). The balance of the fees is divided into two equal payments, one due on the first day of training and the other due either at the start of week six or at the start of the last week of training for courses shorter than six weeks. These same arrangements apply across all four of the RTO's branches, and to all courses offered by third parties.

While NOP Training could collect the entire fees up front from some individual students, implementing a consistent payment framework avoids confusion, provides a consistent cash flow and ensures compliance with the Standards.

Where NOP Training is contracted to provide training to staff groups from various companies, full fees are payable prior to training, as they are paid for by the employer rather than the student.

NOP Training does not collect more than \$1500 in advance for any student, so does not have to implement any fee protection measures.



Case study—Guarantee brings flexibility

QRS Training offers three qualifications from the SIS Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package. The duration of the courses ranges from six weeks to 18 months, and fees range from \$4900 to \$12,000. All fees must be paid prior to the commencement of training for all courses. The courses all operate on a 'rolling intake' model, with new students starting each Monday.

QRS Training calculates that, as it had 200 students undergoing training at any time, all at different stages, it was holding approximately \$400,000 in advance at any time. To safeguard prepaid fees by learners, QRS Training arranges a bank guarantee for \$400,000 to cover all fees paid in advance.

Should the provider not be able to meet its financial obligations, conditions allow the guarantee to be called upon by the RTO's solicitor. Having a bank guarantee in place means that QRS Training do not need to restrict the amount of fees students are required to pay at any time.



Clause 3.5—Accept and provide credit to learners

Clause 3.5

The RTO accepts and provides credit to learners for units of competency and/or modules (unless licensing or regulatory requirements prevent this) where these are evidenced by:

- a) AQF certification documentation issued by any other RTO or AQF authorised issuing organisation, or
- b) authenticated VET transcripts issued by the Registrar.

What clause 3.5 means for your RTO

A key pillar of the national VET system is that nationally endorsed qualifications, skill sets and units of competency are recognised and portable across the country—regardless of where they were issued. Students must not be required to repeat any unit or module in which they have already been assessed as competent, unless a regulatory requirement or licence condition (including an industry licensing scheme) requires this. If a student provides suitable evidence they have successfully completed a unit or module at any RTO, your RTO must provide credit for the unit or module.

Credit must be granted for studies completed at an RTO or at any other authorised issuing organisation, such as a university. In the case of any non-equivalent units of competency, complete an analysis to determine the equivalence of the study completed with the relevant units or modules before granting any credit.

Before providing credit on the basis of a qualification, statement of attainment or record of results, you should either authenticate the information by directly accessing the USI transcript online (see tips for compliance later in this section) or by contacting the organisation that issued the document to confirm the content is valid.

Your RTO is not obliged to issue a qualification or statement of attainment that is achieved wholly through recognition of units and/or modules completed at another RTO or RTOs.

In some cases, licensing or regulatory requirements may prevent a unit or module being awarded through a credit process.

Note that providing credit for previous studies is not recognition of prior learning. RPL is an assessment-only pathway of determining the competence of a person, while providing credit is recognising the equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications previously undertaken and completed successfully.

A guide to compliance

Evidence that students are offered credit for study they have completed previously would demonstrate that your RTO has processes in place to meet these requirements. Examples of cases where students have been exempted from undertaking previously completed units would provide evidence that you have implemented the process.

ASQA may talk with students or with staff who are responsible for authenticating documents or making decisions on credit to verify your practice.



Tips for compliance—Use of USI transcripts

A student's USI transcript contains training outcome data submitted to the national collection by the student's RTO as a true record of the training undertaken by the student since 2015, including completions and non-completions. As such, a student's USI transcript is a valid way to authenticate the training undertaken by a student, comparable to calling the issuing RTO.

RTOs can directly view a USI transcript online via the USI transcript Service (www.usi.gov.au) for any student who has activated permission for them to do so in the USI Registry System. Students are able to activate this permission online at any time using a smartphone or any internet connected device (theirs or their RTOs). This represents an acceptable alternative to calling the issuing organisation.

RTOs should still exercise caution when using a student's USI transcript to validate training achievements for purposes of granting credit:

- Exercise the same caution with printed or emailed PDF versions of a USI transcript provided by a student as you would with hard-copy certificates issued by RTOs.
- The version accessible online directly by RTOs provides a stronger level of assurance, suitable for credit transfer purposes.
- Always contact the organisation that delivered the training if you have any reason to be concerned about the authenticity of credentials presented.
- Advise the USI Office if you become aware of any fraudulent activity in relation to a USI transcript.
- As the availability of the USI transcript is dependent on the AVETMISS reporting cycle, you may have to rely on the hard copy of certificates issued by RTOs to validate training undertaken recently.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

Organisations applying to become RTOs should ensure they have policies and protocols in place to meet the requirements of this Standard and arrangements in place to train staff in the requirements.

Chapter 3—Support and progression

Introduction

This chapter focuses on how registered training organisations (RTOs) support students' progression in their learning. This is the third phase of the student journey.

Under the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* (the Standards) relevant to the support and progression phase of the student journey, RTOs are responsible for:

- supporting students (clause 1.7)
- keeping students informed (clause 5.4)
- managing complaints and appeals (clauses 6.1 to 6.6).

Clause 1.7 requires RTOs to ensure that students receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs. There is no defined approach as to how this support will be evaluated and provided; however, there is an assumption that the purpose of the support is to maximise the outcomes for the learner. clause 5.4 requires that students remain fully informed about any changes to agreed services.

ASQA's strategic reviews have found overall a sound rate of compliance with clause 1.7. However, it is important to note that the Standards include a broad definition of 'educational and support services' that includes training and assessment services. Complaints about training and assessment are the most common complaints received by ASQA, and ASQA has found the highest rate of non-compliance with standards relating to training and assessment.

If support and other services are tailored to students' needs, your RTO is likely to have stronger completion rates and client satisfaction, enhancing your RTO's reputation.

Standard 6 requires RTOs to have a publicly available complaints and appeals policy. Allowing learners to easily engage with your staff about their concerns can stop minor issues becoming larger and provide valuable feedback that can be used to improve your services.

Educational and support services may include, but are not limited to:

- a) pre-enrolment materials
- b) study support and study skills programs
- c) language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) programs or referrals to these programs
- d) equipment, resources and/or programs to increase access for learners with disabilities and other learners in accordance with access and equity
- e) learning resource centres
- f) mediation services or referrals to these services
- g) flexible scheduling and delivery of training and assessment
- h) counselling services or referrals to these services
- i) information and communications technology (ICT) support
- j) learning materials in alternative formats, for example, in large print
- k) learning and assessment programs contextualised to the workplace
- l) any other services that the RTO considers necessary to support learners to achieve competency.

Source: Appendix 2 Glossary to the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*



Clauses 1.7, 5.4 and 6.1 to 6.6—Supporting and informing learners; managing complaints and appeals

Clause 1.7

The RTO determines the support needs of individual learners and provides access to the educational and support services necessary for the individual learner to meet the requirements of the training product as specified in training packages or VET [vocational education and training] accredited courses.

Clause 5.4

Where there are any changes to agreed services, the RTO advises the learner as soon as practicable, including in relation to any new third party arrangements or a change in ownership or changes to existing third party arrangements.

Standard 6

Complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively.

Clause 6.1

The RTO has a complaints policy to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of:

- a) the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff
- b) a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff
- c) a learner of the RTO.

Clause 6.2

The RTO has an appeals policy to manage requests for a review of decisions, including assessment decisions, made by the RTO or a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf.

Clause 6.3

The RTO's complaints policy and appeals policy:

- a) ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process
- b) are publicly available
- c) set out the procedure for making a complaint or requesting an appeal
- d) ensure complaints and requests for an appeal are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable
- e) provide for review by an appropriate party independent of the RTO and the complainant or appellant, at the request of the individual making the complaint or appeal, if the processes fail to resolve the complaint or appeal.

Clause 6.4

Where the RTO considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the RTO:

- a) informs the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required
- b) regularly updates the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.

Clause 6.5

The RTO:

- a) securely maintains records of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes
- b) identifies potential causes of complaints and appeals and takes appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

Clause 6.6

Where the RTO is an employer or a volunteer organisation whose learners solely consist of its employees or members, does not charge fees for the training or assessment, and does not have in place a specific complaints and appeals policy in accordance with clauses 6.1 and 6.2, the organisation has a complaints and appeals policy which is sufficiently broad to cover the services provided by the RTO.

What clauses 1.7, 5.4 and 6.1 to 6.6 mean for your RTO

Supporting students

To maximise the chance of a student successfully completing their training, your RTO needs to:

- identify any support individual learners need prior to their enrolment or commencement (whichever is the earliest) (see also clause 5.1)
- provide access to the required support throughout their training.

This may include providing support through:

- LLN support
- assistive technology
- additional tutorials including online tutorial support
- other mechanisms, such as assistance in using technology for online delivery components.

If this support attracts an additional cost to the student, you must make this clear in your pre-enrolment information.

If there are limitations to the support your RTO is able to provide, you must clearly state these limitations in information provided to potential students before they enrol or commence the course (whichever is earliest).

Keeping students informed

You must also notify students when any change occurs that may affect the services you are providing them.

This includes any changes to the educational and support services identified in accordance with clause 1.7 as well as:

- any change in ownership of the RTO
- any changes to or new third-party arrangements your RTO puts in place for the delivery of services to those students.

Managing complaints and appeals

Your RTO must have a policy for dealing with complaints about your organisation, third parties, staff or other students. You must also have an appeals policy, in case your RTO is requested to review or reconsider a decision it has made (e.g. an assessment decision).

You must make these policies publicly available, for example, by including them on your RTO's website and/or displaying them in common areas for staff and students.

Make the process for lodging a complaint or appeal clear and explain what will happen as a result. Ensure people are not disadvantaged. Specifically, do not:

- require them to complete overly complex forms, which can be a barrier to students expressing their concerns
- require students to provide extensive written information as part of the complaints process.

Your RTO's complaints and appeal processes must follow the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness by allowing anyone subject to a decision by your RTO, or anyone who has allegations made against them, to tell their side of the story before a decision is made.

Ensure that the decision-maker is independent of the decision being reviewed (e.g. an assessor should not consider or decide an appeal against an assessment decision they made).

If the person making the complaint or appeal is not happy with the outcome, make arrangements for an independent third party to review the complaint or appeal. Disclose any costs associated with a third-party review in your policy, so all parties are aware of any costs they may need to pay. (Note that ASQA is not able to act as the independent third party for reviewing complaints.)

Deal with complaints and appeals promptly. Identify the timeframes that will apply to resolution of complaints and appeals, so that complainants know how long it should take to get a response from your RTO at all stages of the process. If a complaint or appeal (including any review process) will take more than 60 days to finalise, write to the people involved explaining the delay.

Record all complaints and appeals received, and document outcomes. Use this information to review your RTO's processes and practices to ensure the issue doesn't happen again.

A guide to compliance

RTOs must be able to demonstrate that for each student:

- they identify any additional support required
- that this support is made available (either directly or through arrangements with a third party).

At minimum, support should include:

- identifying particular requirements that students would need to meet to complete each course (for example, literacy, numeracy, English language or physical capability requirements)
- developing strategies to make support available where gaps are identified.

While a formal assessment process is not required, you must be able to demonstrate how your RTO identifies support needs—for example, by requiring students to complete an Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) test or a self-assessment as part of the enrolment process.

Where additional support requirements have been established, you must be able to demonstrate that this support has been made available.

RTOs must retain evidence that they have a publicly available policy or policies to deal with complaints and appeals. Your complaints policy should specify that anyone lodging a complaint must follow your RTO's complaints process before making a complaint about the RTO to ASQA. If your RTO uses third parties to deliver services, the policy or policies must be made available to prospective students of the third parties.

Where a complaint or appeal has been received, your RTO must keep evidence of how the matter was dealt with and the outcome (including the timeframes). You will need to show that you have identified the cause of the complaint or appeal and what steps have been taken to prevent the situation happening again.

How can my RTO demonstrate and provide evidence of compliant practice?

Remember that ASQA will be seeking evidence to verify that:

- you have systems and processes in place to identify students' needs
- your practice aligns with your systems
- there is alignment between your training and assessment strategies and the educational and support services provided.

In online surveys and at interviews ASQA might ask students to give their views about:

- whether their RTO asked them if they have any special learning needs
- whether they have been given information about support services
- if they have been told how they can get help if they have a problem or find the course difficult
- whether they receive support to use technology and access the learning resources they need
- if they understand how to make a complaint about their training or support services if they are not satisfied
- whether they were told if the agreed services are changed.

Your RTO could:

- show what questions prospective students are asked about their particular learning needs (for example, anything related to physical ability, cultural background or educational background)



- provide evidence of the arrangements in place with third-party expert service providers, including by
 - showing examples of how individual students' progress is monitored once their needs have been identified and support has been made available
 - demonstrating what training is in place for staff so they are equipped to identify students at risk and in need of support services.

If you use a LLN test, consider:

- whether the test will be used with all students
- how effectively it identifies LLN issues, particularly those that might be specific to the proposed qualification—you may need to develop tailored rather than generic tests
- how to ensure the right staff are involved in administering the tests and making decisions about the support services
- the need for guidance to staff on:
 - the expected level of performance that would qualify a student for entry into the course
 - how to interpret the score achieved
 - how to identify appropriate support.

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

- information about how prospective and current students, staff and third parties are advised of the policy and process
- information about staff professional development in relation to the complaints and appeals policy and effective responses/management
- data about complaints and appeals that shows how complaints and appeals are monitored and reviewed to ensure timeliness, identify systemic issues and improve your RTO's operations and services
- a complaints register that shows:
 - records of actions taken to address the root cause of complaints
 - minutes of staff meetings at which actions arising from complaints were agreed
 - changes made to your RTO's systems as a result of reviewing complaints and appeals.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You must be able to demonstrate you have strategies and resources in place to identify any support needs and have the arrangements and capacity to make this support available to learners.

You must provide a documented policy or policies for dealing with complaints and appeals and demonstrate how these will be published. The policies must address all the requirements of Standard 6.



Case study—Getting the calculations right

GHI Training identifies that a qualification that they deliver requires the ability to carry out complex calculations quickly and accurately. GHI training provides this information on their website so prospective students are aware of this requirement. The website also includes information about optional tutorials that are available at extra cost for students who need additional support in this area.

As part of the enrolment process, prospective students undertake a short assessment based on the type of calculations they will need to be able to complete. Students' assessment results determine whether they will need additional support or whether they should undertake further study in this area before enrolling in the course.

If a student is identified as needing additional support, GHI Training arranges tutorials to allow the student to increase their skills before these components are scheduled in the course.



Case study—Delivering broadcast technology training to Aboriginal community members

An RTO, Media Technology Australia, has been asked to deliver training to Aboriginal community members in a rural western Queensland town. Access to production and broadcasting equipment allows the town to replace mainstream broadcasts with their own local content.

Aboriginal community members want to transmit their own local news, music, and general interest stories over the radio station.

Staff of the local radio station, teachers from the local high school and Aboriginal community members formed a committee to meet with the RTO's training manager to outline their plans and seek advice on delivery of a suitable qualification.

The shows will be written, edited and delivered by local Aboriginal community members, with a group of people working on each program area and taking it in turns to speak on the radio.

These groups will consist of Aboriginal students from the local high school, Aboriginal people looking for work and interested Aboriginal community members.

The training manager of Media Technology Australia has developed a training and assessment strategy to guide the delivery of the qualification Certificate III in Broadcast Technology. To complete the strategy, the training manager needs to:

- determine the support needs of individual students
- document the necessary support services students need to meet the requirements of the course as required for compliance with clause 1.7 of the Standards.

To identify the support services that may be required, Media Technology Australia decides that the language, literacy and numeracy assessment process:

- will be contextualised to incorporate reference to the local community environment
- will include testing in numeracy, writing, language, reading and grammar (numeracy skills are necessary for people writing for and presenting on radio so they are able to plan the program—they need to be able to calculate the time for each segment, including the advertisements and the length of each song or segment).

The assessment is carried out prior to commencement of the course and identifies five people from across the three groups who require additional numeracy support to complete the course.

In consultation with the full group enrolled in the course and community members, it is decided that:

- each person will be buddied with a mentor from the high school
- the student support officer from Media Technology Australia will provide additional learning through one-on-one tutorials for the identified students (as well as for any other participants who wish to take part in the tutorials).

Teachers from the local high school agree to continue to provide additional support when the trainer and student support officer are unavailable.

The tutorials will be related to the performance criteria, but will make use of local examples and use as much practical learning as possible.

The trainer for this program will be made aware of the needs of the five participants. The trainer will ensure that when she is using numeracy throughout the training, she will utilise a range of resources to assist the participants to gain competency.

Resources and techniques the trainer may use include:

- breaking down the required calculations into simple distinct steps and working with the student to complete activities until they have the confidence to work alone and seek assistance when required
- allowing the student additional time and opportunities to practice so they can build confidence in their own abilities
- starting with simple arithmetical calculations such as addition, subtraction and using whole numbers and fractions (asking the students to keep timesheets and adding up the timesheets each week would be suitable for this purpose)

- completing simple order forms relevant to the radio station, which would include addition and multiplication of whole numbers and decimals
- using interactive applications that students can utilise on mobile phones and computers that may also assist students to learn
- drawing on real-life situations that require numeracy skills.



Case study—Using complaint outcomes for business improvement

HJ Training publishes a combined complaints and appeals policy on its website. On enrolment, all students are directed to the policy and must confirm that they understand their rights in this area. While complaints can be submitted online, the policy sets out that people are able to speak with a staff member about their concerns and the staff member will complete the form on their behalf if required.

Any complaints are acknowledged in writing and directed immediately to the RTO's training manager, who either investigates them or refers them to the general manager if there is any conflict of interest (e.g. if the complaint is about the conduct of the training manager). The RTO conducts separate interviews with both the person making the complaint and the person the complaint is about.

In the case of appeals against assessment decisions, the training manager initially reviews the decision and the evidence used to make the decision. The assessor and the student are interviewed separately to find out whether there is any relevant information not contained in the student's file.

Regardless of the outcome, all parties are to be notified of the outcome within 30 days.

A mediator can be provided by the Australian Mediation Association. HJ Training agrees to pay the cost of one mediation session of up to two hours and advises that, should the matter require further mediation, it will be at the cost of the complainant or appellant.

Once complaints and appeals are finalised, they are presented to the management team at their monthly meeting, where they are reviewed to see if there is a need to change any procedures or practices.

All complaints and appeals are recorded on a register that includes relevant details to allow analysis of matters over time and identify any common factors that may need action.

Chapter 4—Training and assessment

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the training and assessment phase of the student's experience. High-quality training and assessment means students are well equipped for employment or further study; their qualification is seen as credible when they enter the job market; and they are judged by employers as holding the skills and competencies specified in their qualification.

In turn, high-quality training and assessment means that employers can have confidence that vocational education and training (VET) graduates in the workplace will safely and productively apply the skills described by their qualification.

Students have told ASQA that it's important to them that:

- their teachers, trainers and assessors are professional and knowledgeable about their subjects and industry areas
- the amount of training is enough to allow them to practise new skills before they are assessed
- they can access good-quality learning resources and facilities
- assessment activities are fair and well explained and students are given helpful feedback.

Under the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* (the Standards) relevant to the training and assessment phase of the student journey, registered training organisations (RTOs) are responsible for:

- implementing, monitoring and evaluating training and assessment strategies and practices (clauses 1.1 to 1.4 and 2.2)
- engaging with industry (clauses 1.5 and 1.6)
- conducting effective assessment (clauses 1.8 to 1.12)
- employing skilled trainers and assessors (clauses 1.13 to 1.16)
- providing supervision of trainers where needed (clauses 1.17 to 1.20)
- employing experts to teach trainers and assessors (clauses 1.22 to 1.24)³
- engaging independent validators to conduct the quality reviews of training and assessment qualifications (clause 1.25)
- managing transitions from superseded training products (clauses 1.26 and 1.27).

³ Note: Clause 1.21 is no longer applicable. RTOs should refer to clause 1.23 for current requirements in relation to trainers and assessors delivering training and assessment qualifications.





Clauses 1.1 to 1.4 and 2.2—Implementing, monitoring and evaluating training and assessment strategies and practices

Clause 1.1

The RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices, including the amount of training they provide, are consistent with the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses and enable each learner to meet the requirements for each unit of competency or module in which they are enrolled.

Clause 1.2

For the purposes of clause 1.1, the RTO determines the amount of training they provide to each learner with regard to:

- a) the existing skills, knowledge and the experience of the learner
- b) the mode of delivery
- c) where a full qualification is not being delivered, the number of units and/or modules being delivered as a proportion of the full qualification.

Clause 1.3

The RTO has, for all of its scope of registration, and consistent with its training and assessment strategies, sufficient:

- a) trainers and assessors to deliver the training and assessment
- b) educational and support services to meet the needs of the learner cohort/s undertaking the training and assessment
- c) learning resources to enable learners to meet the requirements for each unit of competency, and which are accessible to the learner regardless of location or mode of delivery
- d) facilities, whether physical or virtual, and equipment to accommodate and support the number of learners undertaking the training and assessment.

Clause 1.4

The RTO meets all requirements specified in the relevant training package or VET accredited course.

Clause 2.2

The RTO:

- a) systematically monitors the RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices to ensure ongoing compliance with Standard 1
- b) systematically evaluates and uses the outcomes of the evaluations to continually improve the RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices. Evaluation information includes but is not limited to quality/performance indicator data collected under clause 7.5, validation outcomes, client trainer and assessor feedback and complaints and appeals.

What clauses 1.1 to 1.4 and 2.2 mean for your RTO

Your RTO is required to develop and implement approaches—including by providing access to suitable resources, facilities and trainers—that ensure students gain all relevant skills and knowledge.

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)⁴ provides a guide to the volume of learning (see Table 1), which describes how long a student who does not hold any of the competencies identified in the relevant units of competency or modules would take to develop all the required skills and knowledge. 'Volume of learning' includes all teaching, learning and assessment activities that a typical student must undertake to achieve the learning outcomes.

Your RTO is required to comply with the AQF in applying the volume of learning to your programs. You must therefore develop and implement strategies for training and assessment that are consistent with the AQF.

Table 1—Australian Qualifications Framework volume of learning⁵

Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III*	Certificate IV^	Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma
0.5 – 1 year	0.5 – 1 year	1 – 2 years	0.5 – 2 years	1 – 2 years	1.5 – 2 years	0.5 – 1 year	1 – 2 years
600 – 1200 hours	600 – 1200 hours	1200 – 2400 hours	600 – 2400 hours	1200 – 2400 hours	1800 – 2400 hours	600 – 1200 hours	1200 – 2400 hours

* Certificate III qualifications are often the basis for trade outcomes and undertaken as part of a traineeship or apprenticeship. In these cases, up to four years may be required to achieve the learning outcomes.

^ Certificate IV qualifications are often either:

- shorter-duration specialist qualifications that build on existing skills and knowledge
- longer-duration qualifications that are designed as entry-level requirements for specific work roles.

Understanding the amount of training required

The AQF 'volume of learning' range is considered to be a **starting point** for RTOs determining the 'amount of training' required to deliver a particular qualification.

In a competency-based training environment, which is centred on demonstrated competence against industry-defined standards of performance rather than strict course durations, students aren't required to study for a specified number of weeks or months. Competency-based training is the concept that individuals learn at different rates as well as through different modes and different environments and that the skills and knowledge that a student has acquired previously are able to be formally recognised.

However, your RTO must still be able to identify and explain any significant variations from the time periods described in the AQF. Your decisions in relation to course duration must ensure that the integrity of the qualification outcomes is maintained.

If a course is structured so as to be completed in a shorter time period than that described in the AQF, you will need to clearly describe, using a rationale based on the needs of students and their previous skills and knowledge, how a specific student cohort:

- has the characteristics to achieve the required rigour and depth of training
- can meet all of the competency requirements in a shorter timeframe.

Your description must take into account the need to allow students to reflect on and absorb the knowledge, to practise the skills in different contexts and to learn to apply the skills and knowledge in the varied environments that the 'real world' offers before being assessed.

⁴ The AQF is the national policy for qualifications in the Australian education and training system. The *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* requires that RTOs comply with the AQF as a condition of their registration. The AQF recognises RTOs as 'authorised issuing organisations', able to issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment to learners who have satisfied the relevant competency requirements. All authorised issuing organisations are required to comply with the requirements of the AQF, including the volume of learning.

⁵ Hours sourced from: Australian Qualifications Framework, second edition January 2013, accessed at <https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/aqf-2nd-edition-january-2013.pdf> pp14, 15

When might shorter courses be appropriate?

A shorter course may be appropriate if, for example, the student cohort comprises experienced workers who already have most of the required skills and knowledge. Because these students have previous relevant experience, it may be appropriate to deliver and assess the program over a shorter period.

Assessment requirements must still be met in such programs, although some assessment may be undertaken by recognising existing skills and knowledge. Be aware that in some cases where students have been employed long-term in an industry, their range of skills and knowledge may be narrow. They may not have the capacity to fully demonstrate these in a broader context or in different environments.

Where the student cohort consists of new entrants or inexperienced workers, before assessment you must give them the opportunity to fully absorb the required knowledge, and to develop skills over time in the different contexts they would experience in the workplace. This may require a longer timeframe than for those students with significant industry experience.

For further guidance on how to determine the amount of training, please refer to [ASQA's fact sheet on amount of training](#).

Educational and support services, resources and facilities

RTOs must provide equitable access to all required educational and support services, so that no student is disadvantaged regardless of their mode of study or location. Make any limitations regarding access to these resources clear in your pre-enrolment information so clients and students can make an informed choice about which RTO and course of study best meets their needs.

Your RTO must provide students with access to necessary resources, either by owning, leasing, or renting these resources, or by arranging for resources to be accessible to the students in another way.

In the case of workplace delivery, many of the required resources may be readily available; however, some workplaces will not have access to all required resources and you will need to address any such gaps.

Meeting training product requirements

Training packages and VET accredited courses describe the requirements for assessment of students, including any specific environments or equipment that must be used. Assessment methods must ensure that only properly skilled students are determined as competent. When conducting assessment, adhere to all requirements such as the context of assessment and essential resources as described in the unit or module.

When using 'simulated' workplace environments, ensure they fully replicate the resources, environment and any time and productivity pressures that exist in the actual workplace. It is important to ensure the development and use of simulated environments is informed by consultation with industry stakeholders. This helps to ensure relevance to real workplaces.

You must, at all times, have all resources available to deliver every training product on your RTO's scope of registration—whether you are currently delivering it or not. These resources must comply with any specific requirements in the training package or accredited course. The quantity of these resources required will depend on how many students you are delivering to (or intend to deliver to). Your training and assessment strategies should include guidance on the level of resources needed per student or per group.

Monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement of training and assessment strategies and practices

Your RTO is responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating quality training and assessment strategies and practices that meet training package and VET accredited course requirements.

Systematic monitoring of internal systems, strategies and practices allows your RTO to respond quickly to changes in the marketplace or to stakeholder expectations.

Use the outcomes of your reviews to decide whether changes to your strategies or practice are needed.

Reviews should include any arrangements where services are provided by a third party, as your RTO is ultimately responsible for the quality and compliance of all services provided under its RTO registration, regardless of where or by whom they are delivered.

A guide to compliance

ASQA's regulatory experience and strategic industry reviews indicate that RTOs are most frequently non-compliant with Standard 1.

Most commonly, ASQA finds that:

- RTOs' training and assessment strategies do not provide an accurate or sufficiently detailed framework for delivery and assessment
- training and assessment strategies are not adapted to meet the needs of the various target groups
- RTOs delivery and assessment practices do not align with their training and assessment strategies.

ASQA's strategic reviews have found significant evidence of 'unduly short training'—courses that are delivered in significantly shorter timeframes than those required to ensure students gain the competencies specified in the training. Specifically, the reviews have found course durations falling significantly below the relevant AQF volume of learning range without a rationale related to the student characteristics, calling into question whether students have sufficient time to learn, practice and consolidate the skills and knowledge before summative assessment.

This poses substantial risks to the entire VET system and potentially has major financial, safety and productivity costs for individual students, employers and industry and governments.

Your RTO must develop a strategy for training and assessment for each training product you are registered to deliver. The format for these strategies can be determined by the RTO. You may need to develop different strategies for different delivery modes or target groups/student cohorts.

A training and assessment strategy may comprise multiple documents; however, there must be consistency between these documents so that the overall strategy is clearly described.

Your strategies for training and assessment should not be 'static'. Each strategy needs to be regularly updated to take into account:

- changes in industry technology and techniques, legislation, and the training package itself
- the availability of resources within your RTO.

The strategies must also be consistent with any advertising and other material you provide to prospective students.

You may set specific requirements, such as requiring students to have a minimum period of industry experience before they can commence the program. If you set these requirements, you must make this clear to prospective students prior to enrolment.

In relation to monitoring and evaluating your training and assessment strategies and practices, while each RTO can decide on its own process, you need to keep evidence to show that:

- you have monitored and reviewed your training and assessment in a systematic way
- results are used to revise systems and practices where needed.

Components of training and assessment strategies

RTOs should address, at minimum, the following areas in each strategy.

Training product

- Ensure that you clearly identify the training product to which the strategy relates.
- Include the code and full title to ensure this is clear.

Core and elective components (full qualifications)

- If delivering a full qualification, identify core and elective components in accordance with the structure defined in the training package or course.
- Define which elective units or modules are being offered so you can properly plan for all delivery variables.
- Identify any entry requirements, as well as pre-requisite and co-requisite units, and the sequencing of delivery and assessment.



Target group

- Ensure that you clearly identify the target group and student characteristics in each strategy. Each strategy needs to be tailored to each target group. For example, a recognition of prior learning strategy may be utilised for students with previous knowledge, skills and work experience.

Mode of delivery

- Identify how the training and assessment is to be delivered—face-to-face, online, through workplace training or a mixture of different modes.

Entry requirements

- Identify any mandatory requirements for students commencing the program, such as qualifications that must be held or a period of industry experience. You should also clearly identify where any entry requirements are set by your RTO and are not an entry requirement of the training product.
- At this stage, it can also be useful to identify:
 - any areas where students may need additional support (e.g. if they have limited English-language skills)
 - whether students' physical attributes may influence their ability to complete the training and assessment (e.g. if heavy lifting is required).

Duration and scheduling

- Analyse the nature of your student cohort. Use the analysis and any specific requirements of the training package to determine the amount of training for each cohort, the duration of the program and how your RTO will schedule training and assessment activities to ensure students are able to fully develop the required skills and knowledge prior to being assessed.
- It may be necessary to indicate variations for some cohorts due to their specific learning needs.

Assessment resources, methods and timing

- Training packages and VET accredited courses often specify resources that must be used in assessment at a unit of competency level. Include details of how you will ensure students have access to the resources that will give them the best chance of completing their study.
- Identify:
 - assessment resources
 - assessment methods
 - timing of assessment
 - any training package requirements in relation to the training and assessment practices (such as mandatory work placement hours and how this is structured into the course delivery)
 - any adjustments that may be needed to cater for different student characteristics.

Learning resources

- To ensure students are able to obtain and absorb the required knowledge and skills prior to assessment, carefully choose and plan the learning resources you will use to guide them.
- Identify these resources in your strategy to ensure you obtain full coverage of all required areas.

Human resources

- Either in a strategy or separately, document the human resources available to deliver the training product. This ensures suitable trainers and assessors are available for all training products on your RTO's scope of registration. Record this at a unit of competency level to ensure any specific requirements are met, and to allow your RTO to deploy staff efficiently.

Physical resources

- Compare the physical resources required to deliver a training product with the resources available to your RTO. Many units of competency include detailed specifications of the resources required, so conducting this analysis at a unit of competency level ensures these requirements are addressed.

Strategies for 'stand-alone' single units or skill sets

- Develop and implement training and assessment strategies in the same way as you would for a qualification, noting that some information may not be relevant, such as information on core and elective units.
- Often, this type of delivery is aimed at an industry licence or accreditation. Identify all of the requirements of that licence or accreditation in the strategy (including any possible entry requirements such as minimum age) and explain how students can readily attain the desired outcome. Identify any pre-requisite and co-requisite units, and the sequence of delivery and assessment.

Strategies for assessment-only pathways

Where your RTO offers an assessment-only pathway, develop and implement strategies that cover:

- assessment methods, timing and resources
- how issues will be addressed (for example, if a student does not achieve the competency requirements).

How can my RTO demonstrate and provide evidence of compliant practice?

Your training and assessment practices must demonstrate that students gain all the knowledge and skills relevant to their qualification. At audit, when looking at evidence relating to the training and assessment phase of the student journey,

ASQA will focus on past and current practices. Your systems and procedures are relevant, but are not sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance.

Once you are confident that your training and assessment strategies are compliant with the Standards, you need to ensure that your training and assessment practice aligns with your strategies.

In order to gather evidence of compliant practice you might ask yourself a number of key questions, for example:

- Do our strategies include the macro-level requirements of the learning and assessment process? (For example, for an RTO delivering face-to-face training, in some cases this might be a session plan that defines the time and resources allocated to training and assessing the skills and knowledge requirements.)
- Do student files demonstrate that we have followed the duration, scheduling and assessment resources, methods, and timing set out in the training and assessment strategy?
- Where a qualification requires assessment in a workplace, has our practice complied with the timing and quantity of work placement set out in the training and assessment strategy?
- Does our assessment strategy manage the risk of unduly short training by allowing students sufficient time to absorb knowledge; to practise their skills in different contexts; and to apply the skills and knowledge in varied environments under the specified contexts, before they are assessed?
- Do all our staff demonstrate a consistent understanding of what is required by the training and assessment strategies?
- Does our practice show we have the right quality-control mechanisms in place to administer online learning resources and assessments?
- Does our practice show we are implementing strategies to identify and address student needs, including language, literacy and numeracy?

You must retain evidence that your RTO's practices match the outcomes of your reviews. If a review confirms the RTO is doing well, you may not need to change your RTO's systems or processes. However, if a review indicates a need for change, your RTO should retain evidence that the change has been implemented, or note the rationale for why a change was not made.

You could retain evidence that the review process has considered, for example:

- delivery and performance data
- quality indicator data
- feedback from industry consultation
- student and employer feedback (and how the feedback was obtained, for example, through surveys, focus groups or interviews)
- trainer and assessor feedback
- validation outcomes
- information from complaints and appeals and their resolution.



Examples of how you could demonstrate that improvements have been made to training and assessment as a result of monitoring and evaluation include providing evidence of:

- changes to learning resources as a result of user testing of resources for different learning styles
- revision of strategies for training and assessment based on feedback from industry or employers about new technology in the workplace
- new approaches to staff professional development based on teacher and trainer feedback.



Tips on compliance—Training and assessment strategies and work placements

Many training and assessment strategies lack clear or sufficient information about work placements, or do not include work placements when the unit of competency or training package requires them.

To help your RTO meet the requirements on work placements:

- Make sure your training and assessment strategies do not indicate assessment is occurring in a classroom or online environment when the units specify that assessment must occur in the workplace.
- Check that the hours for mandatory work placement match the hours required by the training package.
- Ensure the strategy provides sufficient information about work placement, including number of hours, when it will occur and how it will be organised to ensure that assessment methods can be met.
- Describe how the simulated environment will match the resources, environment and time and productivity pressures of an actual workplace.
- Retain evidence on how the development and use of simulated environments was informed by consultation with industry/employers to ensure relevance to real workplaces.
- If your strategy relies on resources provided in the workplace for employment-based traineeships, ensure you are able to demonstrate that workplace facilities, equipment and resources meet training package requirements to enable trainees to develop and demonstrate competence.
- Show how strategies in relation to work placements provide a clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of the RTO and the employer in relation to training and assessment.



If you are seeking registration as an RTO

You are expected to have access to all of the required resources, facilities and equipment, as stated in the training package or accredited course, in place at the time of submitting your application. This applies for all training products included in your application. ASQA will conduct an audit against all training products you have applied for to establish that you have:

- access to all resources
- sound training and assessment strategies ready to implement.

You must be able to demonstrate that you have:

- developed and have in place a clear 'blueprint' for training delivery and assessment
- planned monitoring and review of training and assessment for all training products included in the application
- determined what data you will use to inform evaluation and improvements.

If ASQA grants your registration, future compliance audits will assess your compliance in relation to the training and assessment phase of the student journey. These audits will consider:

- whether the strategies have been implemented
- what monitoring and evaluation has occurred.

Auditors will ask for evidence that your practice demonstrates compliance with the Standards.



Case study—Delivering a shorter course

Hospitable Training is an RTO that delivers the Certificate III in Retail Operations. Hospitable Training's main client cohort is employees currently working in retail stores. Hospitable Training has developed its training and assessment strategy for the Certificate III in Retail Operations specifically for this client cohort, who have existing retail skills and knowledge acquired from their current employment.

The strategy sets out that training and assessment will be provided through:

- a series of workshops for theory assessment
- practical delivery, which will be conducted at the students' workplaces (supervisor/third-party reports will be utilised in the practical assessment).

When developing strategies for training and assessment for the Certificate III in Retail Operations, Hospitable Training's training manager considers the AQF volume of learning range for a Certificate III qualification, which indicates that it should take one to two years (or 1200 to 2400 hours) for a student to develop all the required skills and knowledge for a Certificate III (if the student does not hold any of the competencies identified in the relevant units).

As Hospitable Training's client cohort have existing retail skills and knowledge, the RTO determines that it is appropriate to provide the training and assessment in a shorter timeframe than the AQF volume of learning range. The training manager develops a rationale for the shorter timeframe, which explains that it is expected that:

- students will be able to obtain recognition of prior learning for some of the units within the qualification
- gap training will be provided for the remainder of the units.

This rationale is included in Hospitable Training's strategies for training and assessment for the Certificate III in Retail Operations.

Hospitable Training holds interviews with students prior to the commencement of study to:

- confirm the students' previous retail experience
- obtain copies of the student's resume and any qualifications or evidence of previous study associated with retail operations.

The outcomes of these interviews influence the RTO's training and assessment strategy for this qualification. If required, Hospitable Training can provide additional teaching and learning activities to ensure that students:

- gain all relevant skills and knowledge
- are able to successfully complete Certificate III in Retail Operations.

All documented evidence acquired from the students' interviews is securely retained. This evidence is readily available to be produced in the event of an ASQA audit, for internal quality reviews or self-assessment against the Standards.



Case study—Providing workplace assessment at a mine site

ABC Mining delivers the Certificate III in Mine Emergency Response and Rescue to its staff working in a large open-cut mine. Many students have two years' experience and already hold some of the units for the qualification (for example, HLTAID003 Provide First Aid).

Training and assessment are carried out in both on-site training facilities and the workplace. The course is delivered over 12 months, with formal training and assessment one day a week as well as on-the-job observation by assessors. Each student is allocated between one and two hours a week for observation and assistance, depending on the stage of the course and any additional support needs identified.

After selecting appropriate elective units, ABC Mining's training manager discusses suitable opportunities for workplace assessment with the mine site supervisor. ABC Mining decides to simulate some tasks, such as conducting rescue activities, where this is permitted by the training package. To ensure the simulations accurately represent workplace conditions, the training manager arranges access to an unused area of the site and establishes simulated environments that replicate workplace conditions.

As these activities are carried out in a team, ABC Mining ensures every student is assessed for all components by repeating the simulations regularly, with each student carrying out every role in the team over time. These activities are separated by formal training sessions. The activities commence with simple, routine tasks then gradually introduce further complexity and different conditions. This ensures students are assessed on the actual skills and ability to apply knowledge to a variety of contexts in the same conditions they will experience in the workplace. It also ensures they can build on their skills over time.

Where it is suitable to observe students undertaking regular workplace tasks, a schedule is developed with the mine site supervisor that allows assessors to observe each student on multiple occasions. These observations include the assessor asking the student a range of questions to test their knowledge and ability to apply knowledge to different contexts.

The learning resources refer to the actual workplace procedures used on the site. This ensures the resources are up to date and relevant. Using actual workplace procedures also allows ABC Mining to conduct the course at other sites with minimal changes.

To ensure all unit requirements are addressed, and to identify opportunities to conduct holistic assessment of multiple requirements, the performance evidence and knowledge evidence requirements are documented, then 'mapped' to the assessment tasks prior to assessment being conducted.



Case study—Effective internal compliance monitoring makes good business sense

STU Education delivers business management qualifications at two Sydney locations. Every six months, staff from each campus conduct a formal review on activities at the other campus.

The reviewers analyse:

- client feedback
- feedback from the industry engagement process
- any complaints and appeals
- assessment validation processes completed in the past six months.

As well as collecting information from these sources, these biannual reviews collect information through staff interviews.

The reviewers provide the CEO with a written report, including recommendations for any changes. The CEO decides which recommendations will be implemented and assigns a staff member to oversee the implementation of each change. Each change must be completed within 30 days of the CEO's decision. To ensure accountability, action steps and milestone targets are published on the RTO's intranet along with deadlines for when changes need to be implemented.



Clauses 1.5 and 1.6—Engage with industry

Clause 1.5

The RTO's training and assessment practices are relevant to the needs of industry and informed by industry engagement.

Clause 1.6

The RTO implements a range of strategies for industry engagement and systematically uses the outcome of that industry engagement to ensure the industry relevance of:

- a) its training and assessment strategies, practices and resources
- b) the current industry skills of its trainers and assessors.

What clauses 1.5 and 1.6 mean for your RTO

Industry expectations for the skills and knowledge of VET graduates are expressed in training packages and VET accredited courses. Engaging with industry stakeholders (such as employers and industry associations) is critical to ensuring training and assessment is aligned to current methods, technology, products and performance expectations for the workplace tasks specified in the training package or VET accredited course.

To provide training relevant to employers and to maximise students' opportunities for employment, advancement or further education, your RTO must develop a range of strategies to engage with relevant industry stakeholders. You must engage with industry stakeholders to establish appropriate contexts, methods, resources and trainers and assessors to deliver training and to conduct assessment.

Ultimately this will ensure that employers, industry and students have confidence in the integrity, currency and value of the qualifications issued by your RTO.

Monitor the implementation of your strategies and your practices to ensure your RTO's training continues to meet industry needs, particularly in areas where technology and/or techniques change rapidly:

- Continue the engagement and seek feedback about how you have provided training and assessment, including feedback on the resources used for both training and assessment.
- Confirm industry's ongoing expectations for current industry skills and knowledge of trainers and assessors.

There is no specific method or approach you must use to conduct your industry engagement. However, you should document your RTO's engagement strategies and activities to demonstrate the alignment between industry needs and your strategies, resources and practices.

A guide to compliance

RTOs must be able to demonstrate that all strategies for training and assessment have been developed in response to information obtained through engaging with industry stakeholders. This engagement may involve seeking advice about:

- the qualification, course or skill set that best meets the skill and knowledge needs of industry
- the most relevant electives for the training (in accordance with any packaging rules for the training product)
- the mode of study and the training and assessment methods to be used.

You must be able to demonstrate that industry representatives have had input into:

- the skills and knowledge you require trainers and assessors to hold
- the resources your RTO uses for training and assessment.

RTOs must consider specific industry needs when developing and implementing training and assessment strategies. For example, some industries or occupations may require a particular level of English proficiency—these occupations could include security officer, allied health professional, childcare educator or other job roles where it is important that graduates are able to communicate effectively in Australian workplaces. In such cases, it may not be appropriate to deliver a qualification entirely in a language other than English and may be appropriate to specify a minimum written and/or oral English level as an entry requirement.

How can my RTO demonstrate and provide evidence of compliant practice?

ASQA's regulatory experience and successive strategic industry reviews show that RTOs frequently struggle to comply with clauses 1.5 and 1.6. Many are unable to demonstrate evidence of engaging with industry and employers to test that their training and assessment strategies and practices are relevant.

You must retain evidence that you have:

- consulted relevant industry stakeholders
- incorporated stakeholder feedback into the development and ongoing review of strategies.

Taking shortcuts—like developing a generic strategy from a template and asking an employer to 'sign off'—will not be effective, and does not demonstrate that the strategy was informed by industry.

As industry engagement is an ongoing activity, retaining evidence of recent engagement as well as historic activity will demonstrate that your RTO has consistently carried out industry engagement activities.

Examples of evidence of your practice might include:

- how you identified employers and industry for consultations, how you consulted with them (such as through surveys, interviews, advisory committees or workplace visits), and how often
- what sort of information was sought from employers and industry—for example, information about:
 - regulations or laws governing the industry and/or standard operating procedures, equipment and machinery used at the enterprise level
 - aspects of the work environment (for example, shifts or seasonal changes to schedules) that will affect delivery and assessment
 - employer preferences about the way in which a program is delivered
 - facilities, equipment and supervision that will be available for work placements
 - how simulated work environments should be set up to reflect workplaces
 - advice on contextualising or adapting purchased assessment materials to suit workplace contexts.
- revisions made to your practices as a result of the engagement with industry and employers. For example, this might be:
 - changes to training and assessment practices and resources based on advice from industry regulators about new regulatory requirements
 - implementation of workplace visits for trainers and assessors to ensure currency of understanding about workplace practices, based on advice from employers.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You must provide evidence that you have used a range of strategies to seek input from relevant industry stakeholders and incorporated this input into:

- the development of your training and assessment strategies
- determining the required industry skills of your trainers and assessors.

You must also provide evidence that you have developed strategies for ongoing engagement with relevant industry stakeholders.



Case study—Training tomorrow's mariners

DEF Education delivers three qualifications from the Maritime Training Package. The RTO operates from a former workshop adjacent to a slipway and a number of marine repair businesses. The RTO has been approved by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) for the delivery of maritime licensing qualifications.

Prior to commencing operations and applying for registration as an RTO, the organisation met with local AMSA officers to discuss industry needs. DEF Education identified that:

- due to increases in marine tourism there is a shortage of workers with certain licence classes in the area
- qualifications leading to licensing for Coxwain Grade 1 NC, Master (Inland Waters) and Marine Engine Driver Grade 3 NC would be suitable to deliver to new entrants to the industry.

While these qualifications have no formal entry requirements, many tasks in certain qualifications require the ability to operate in confined spaces, and in hot and noisy conditions. To ensure suitability of students, the strategy identifies that students must confirm that they have a reasonable level of physical agility and the ability to operate comfortably in confined spaces, and that they have passed the required eyesight test prior to their enrolment being accepted. As the expected outcomes for the identified client cohort (maritime licensees) require a 'self-declaration of medical fitness' prior to issue of a licence, potential students are required to complete this prior to enrolment to ensure they are able to achieve their desired outcomes.

DEF Education considered possibilities for training new entrants to the industry using vessels operating in the local marine tourism industry, but concluded that it was not practical for safety reasons.

After consultation with local employers, the RTO purchased two vessels that are representative of the type of vessel commonly used in the local area and more broadly in the marine tourism industry:

- an eight-metre open boat powered by a 250 hp outboard engine, previously used for dive trips
- a 15-metre boat powered by twin 220 kW diesel inboard engines and a small diesel-powered generator set, previously used for extended dive and cruising trips.

To provide access to a range of equipment and machinery for basic skill development, the RTO purchased a variety of engines and other mechanical and safety equipment. This equipment included electronic and other navigational equipment. The engines and equipment were set up in various simulations of on-board environments to allow students to familiarise themselves with relevant equipment and tasks safely.

The two vessels purchased are used by all students, who undertake various voyages during their training and assessment. These voyages enable students to undertake all required tasks and to complete the requirements of the *AMSA Task Book* (which documents the amount of sea service, tasks undertaken and the type of vessel the in which the voyage was undertaken).

In response to industry concerns that graduates of some RTOs didn't have the full range of skills and experience required, DEF Education discusses the sequencing of training and assessment, as well as assessment methods, with local employers. The discussions aim to develop sequencing/assessment methods that will ensure students gain exposure to a wide range of contexts and scenarios.

The RTO also monitors emerging technology and regulatory requirements so that it is aware of any changes that would require strategies or practices to be amended in response to changes in industry requirements.

DEF Education retains records of formal meetings (through minutes) and of less formal engagement activities (through diary notes) to demonstrate how they have engaged with industry stakeholders. Version control of training and assessment strategies documents any changes that are made and the reason for the changes.



Case study—Delivering health care training to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

An RTO, Brisbane Health Training, has added HLT40113 Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care to their scope of registration.

This qualification relates to the provision of non-clinical primary health care services to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients and communities, including specific health care programs. The RTO's target group is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people seeking employment in a primary health care service.

In order to engage with relevant industry representatives, Brisbane Health Training's training manager establishes an Industry Advisory Committee. The committee's membership includes staff from the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) and representatives from Queensland Health.

The QAIHC is the local peak body representing the Community Controlled Health sector and has affiliation with and membership on the board of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO). The Community Controlled Health Services and Queensland Health are the major employers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander primary health care workers.

Brisbane Health Training asks the Industry Advisory Committee to provide advice on the RTO's intended delivery of HLT40113 Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care, specifically:

- the choice of electives
- the sequence of training
- learning resources
- trainers and assessors.

The Industry Advisory Committee advises that training will be best delivered:

- at Brisbane Health Training's training rooms in Brisbane
- through six two-week intensive face-to-face blocks of training, over a twelve-month period.

After each block students return to their home to carry out individual study and assessment activities with continued support from the trainer and student support officer.

The Industry Advisory Committee advises that where possible training staff should be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; the learning should reflect the current issues affecting the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people; and training needs to be flexible and as practical as possible. For example, it may be possible to include assessment methods such as activities, observations, and a portfolio of work or an oral demonstration of knowledge.

The training manager accessed the companion volume for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and other relevant information published on the website of SkillsIQ, the Skills Service Organisation responsible for qualifications in the community services and health sectors.

The companion volume advises:

- 500 hours of work placement
- additional requirements for assessors of HLTAHW units of competency
- that skills should be demonstrated in the workplace.

The Industry Advisory Committee will meet every six months to review Brisbane Health Training's training and assessment strategy; resources; practices; and the industry skills of their trainers and assessors to ensure that students are receiving training utilising the most current methods, resources, technology and workplace contexts.

Brisbane Health Training will retain evidence in the form of meeting minutes that shows consultation with relevant stakeholders and how their input has been incorporated into the development and ongoing review of strategies.



Clauses 1.8 to 1.12—Conduct effective assessment

Clause 1.8

The RTO implements an assessment system that ensures that assessment (including recognition of prior learning):

- a) complies with the assessment requirements of the relevant training package or VET accredited course
- b) is conducted in accordance with the Principles of Assessment contained in Table 1.8-1 and the Rules of Evidence contained in Table 1.8-2.

Table 1.8-1: Principles of assessment

Fairness	<p>The individual learner's needs are considered in the assessment process.</p> <p>Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied by the RTO to take into account the individual learner's needs.</p> <p>The RTO informs the learner about the assessment process, and provides the learner with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be reassessed if necessary.</p>
Flexibility	<p>Assessment is flexible to the individual learner by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reflecting the learner's needs• assessing competencies held by the learner no matter how or where they have been acquired• drawing from a range of assessment methods and using those that are appropriate to the context, the unit of competency and associated assessment requirements, and the individual.
Validity	<p>Any assessment decision of the RTO is justified, based on the evidence of performance of the individual learner.</p> <p>Validity requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• assessment against the unit/s of competency and the associated assessment requirements covers the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance• assessment of knowledge and skills is integrated with their practical application• assessment to be based on evidence that demonstrates that a learner could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations• judgement of competence is based on evidence of learner performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency and associated assessment requirements.
Reliability	<p>Evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.</p>

Table 1.8-2: Rules of evidence

Validity	<p>The assessor is assured that the learner has the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements.</p>
Sufficiency	<p>The assessor is assured that the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence enables a judgement to be made of a learner's competency.</p>
Authenticity	<p>The assessor is assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work.</p>
Currency	<p>The assessor is assured that the assessment evidence demonstrates current competency. This requires the assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past.</p>

Clause 1.9

The RTO implements a plan for ongoing systematic validation of assessment practices and judgements that includes for each training product on the RTO's scope of registration:

- a) when assessment validation will occur
- b) which training products will be the focus of the validation
- c) who will lead and participate in validation activities
- d) how the outcomes of these activities will be documented and acted upon.

Clause 1.10

For the purposes of clause 1.9, each training product is validated at least once every five years, with at least 50 per cent of products validated within the first three years of each five year cycle, taking into account the relative risks of all of the training products on the RTO's scope of registration, including those risks identified by the VET regulator.

Clause 1.11

For the purposes of clause 1.9, systematic validation of an RTO's assessment practices and judgements is undertaken by one or more persons who are not directly involved in the particular instance of delivery and assessment of the training product being validated, and who collectively have:

- a) on or prior to 31 March 2019:
 - i) vocational competencies and current industry skills relevant to the assessment being validated
 - ii) current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning
 - iii) the training and assessment credential specified in Item 1, or Item 2, or Item 4, or Item 5 of Schedule 1.
- b) on or after 1 April 2019:
 - i) vocational competencies and current industry skills relevant to the assessment being validated
 - ii) current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning
 - iii) the training and assessment credential specified in Item 2 or Item 5 of Schedule 1.

Industry experts may be involved in validation to ensure there is the combination of expertise set out in a) or b) above.

Clause 1.12

The RTO offers recognition of prior learning to individual learners.

What clauses 1.8 to 1.12 mean for your RTO

The Standards ensure graduates meet industry expectations as expressed in training packages and VET accredited courses. The Standards require providers to deliver training and assessment that allows students both the opportunity and the time to develop their skills and knowledge—and to practice and demonstrate their skills in a holistic and meaningful way.

Your RTO must develop and implement a system to ensure:

- assessment judgements are consistently made on a sound basis
- validation of assessment judgements is carried out.

An assessment system includes not only the actual materials used directly in conducting assessment, but also policies, procedures and other supporting documents and tools that inform the way assessment is conducted within your RTO.

For a student to be assessed as competent, your RTO must ensure the student has:

- absorbed the knowledge
- developed the skills
- can combine the knowledge and skills to demonstrate.

- ability to perform relevant tasks in a variety of workplace situations, or accurately simulated workplace situations
- consistency in performance and a consistent ability to demonstrate skills when performing tasks
- understanding of what they are doing, and why, when performing tasks
- ability to integrate performance with understanding, to show they are able to adapt to different contexts and environments.

A student must:

- be assessed against all of the tasks identified in the elements of the unit or module
- demonstrate they are capable of performing these tasks to an acceptable level.

Through the above process, the student must demonstrate they hold all of the required skills and knowledge specified in the unit or module assessment requirements.

When developing assessment materials, use the information from the unit or module elements, performance criteria and assessment requirements to determine what competence looks like. Ensure that assessment tools are contextualised (or can be contextualised) to the student cohort to produce valid skills that are relevant to the student's industry or work context.

Use this information to set benchmarks for measuring the student's performance using 'observable behaviours'. This will ensure the student has:

- actually undertaken all the required tasks
- demonstrated their ability to do so in different contexts and environments.

Assessment must always be based on the performance of the individual student. If assessment tasks are undertaken as a group, each student must be assessed on each component of the task. Do not assume that because a group of students completed a task, each of them is competent.

Recognition of prior learning is simply a form of assessment of a student's competence. Recognition of prior learning uses evidence from formal, non-formal and informal learning rather than from specific assessment activities directed by the RTO. This evidence is often combined with assessment activities sometimes known as 'challenge testing'. As such, recognition of prior learning must be conducted with the same rigour as any other form of assessment.

Assessment requirements

Each unit of competency contains assessment requirements grouped into three areas:

- performance evidence
- knowledge evidence
- assessment conditions.

Performance evidence and **knowledge evidence** describe what a student must demonstrate in order to be considered competent.

Assessment conditions describe the conditions under which a student must demonstrate this, including any specific requirements for resources, trainers and assessors and the context for assessment.

Some training packages and courses may not have been updated to this format. In these cases, 'required skills and knowledge' and 'evidence guide' or similar terms are used.

When planning assessment, ensure you address all of the requirements of the unit or module. This includes the performance criteria of each unit or module. This does not mean you have to develop separate assessment activities for each item, rather that as a whole your assessment activities must cover every area required.

If your RTO applies any form of grading to students, ensure that this is applied only after the student has been assessed as fully competent and is in addition to a determination of competent or otherwise.

As similar requirements are often expressed in multiple units of competency, you can often 'cluster' a number of units together for assessment to avoid repeating assessment of the same tasks. If you do this, take care to address all relevant environments and contexts in the assessment process and to meet any prerequisite requirements for every unit or module in the cluster. Analysis of each individual requirement across the cluster of units will reveal where such assessment methods are appropriate and where discrete assessment activities may be required.



Implementing the principles of assessment

No matter which assessment pathway or methods you use, the principles of fairness, flexibility, validity and reliability must be met.

Fairness

- At enrolment or prior to commencement of training, make recognition of prior learning available to all students. Ensure any required adjustments are made to the training and assessment program for each student.
- Consider the student's needs in the assessment process and make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the student (such as providing oral rather than written assessment). However, don't compromise the rigour of the assessment process (e.g. if there is a requirement to complete documentation in a unit of competency, oral assessment would not be appropriate).
- Ensure the student is fully informed of the assessment process and performance expectations before undertaking assessment.
- If a student is unable to complete the required task to the level described in the assessment requirements, consider whether they need further training before being reassessed. Sound enrolment processes will help to identify the needs of students and avoid students being enrolled in a course that they will not be able to complete.
- Have an appeals process to provide an avenue for students to challenge an assessment decision and to have it reviewed objectively.

Flexibility

- At enrolment or prior to commencement of training, make recognition of prior learning available to all students. Ensure any required adjustments are made to the training and assessment program for that student.
- Take the student into account in the assessment process, and recognise that they may already have demonstrated some aspects of the unit through other means. If individual students have demonstrated current skills and knowledge, they should not be required to be reassessed in those areas, unless the previous demonstration of skills or knowledge was in a significantly different context or environment.
- Use a range of assessment methods to help produce valid decisions and recognise that students demonstrate competence in a variety of ways.

Validity

- As part of your assessment, require students to demonstrate skills and knowledge across a range of environments and contexts relevant to the unit or module. Assessing in a variety of contexts shows that the student is able to apply the skills and knowledge in other situations, and can apply their knowledge in a practical way.
- Ensure that assessment tasks and methods match assessment requirements. For example, if assessing a practical skill such as keyboarding, questions about how a keyboard operates may not be valid as this knowledge is not required in order to carry out the task. Instead, use questions that demonstrate knowledge of why the student is doing the task in a particular way.
- Ensure skills are assessed by observing the student actually carrying out the relevant task in an appropriate environment. It is not appropriate to assess a student's ability to carry out a task by simply requiring them to describe how they would do the task.

Reliability

- Make assessment decisions consistently across different students and different assessors in the same unit or module.
- Provide an assessment system that details the context and conditions of assessment for assessors (in order to ensure consistency in the application of assessment across different assessors and different student cohorts).
- Have a well-designed assessment system that includes measures to minimise variation between assessors. The same evidence presented by different students or to different assessors should result in the same decision.
- Develop evidence criteria (i.e. decision-making rules) to judge the quality of performance. This will help assessors make consistent judgements about competence. Evidence criteria could include:
 - model answers (where appropriate)
 - descriptions of observations needed to assess skills and application of knowledge in a practical activity.
- Benchmarks for practical activities must necessarily be broad enough to allow for variations in the precise task being undertaken and any variations in the context, but must include 'observable behaviours'—the behaviours which must be exhibited by the student when carrying out the task.

Implementing the rules of evidence

The evidence used to make a decision about competence must be valid, sufficient, authentic and current.

Validity

- Ensure that evidence is directly related to the competency being assessed.
- Ensure there is a direct relationship between the assessment task or activity the student undertakes (including assessment of practical application of skills); the evidence presented to the student; and the assessment requirements.

Sufficiency

- Gather enough evidence to make a valid judgement of competence or otherwise.
- The quantity of evidence may vary between students. Some may take longer or need to complete a greater number of tasks to demonstrate competence. Others may not be able to achieve competence despite repeated opportunities.

Authenticity

- Ensure that evidence gathered 'belongs' to the student being assessed and provides evidence of that person's skills and knowledge. For example, group assessments may not provide authentic evidence for each student involved in the group assessment.
- Verify that the person you are enrolling, training and assessing is the same person that will be issued with a qualification or statement of attainment. This can be particularly challenging if you deliver distance training, including through online methods, where there are more opportunities for students to submit the work of others than there are in a 'traditional' classroom setting. This does not remove your responsibility to verify the identity of a student enrolled in a face-to-face course, but it is clearly easier to do this through direct interaction with the student. Regardless of the delivery method, you must be able to demonstrate how you have verified the identity of the student.
- Where portions of the evidence submitted are gathered through independent study (e.g. assignments or projects) rather than through direct observation, consider using online systems to check work submissions for plagiarism and identical content in other submissions.

Currency

- Decide how valid the evidence is, given the time that has passed since the evidence was generated. Currency is important in determining if a student is competent. Currency is a particular risk with recognition of prior learning, as you may be presented with a range of evidence gathered over a number of years. This does not mean evidence that is not recent is not valid; however, you must ensure there is sufficient evidence of the person's competence at the time you make the assessment decision.
- You must determine whether the evidence is recent enough to show the student is competent at the time you make an assessment decision. For example, a computer programmer who has 10 years' experience but has not been directly involved in hands-on programming work for the past three years may not have current skills in or knowledge of contemporary programming methods. However, the programmer may be able to update their skills and knowledge through a 'gap training' program. This varies to some extent between industries and, as a person with current industry skills and knowledge, an assessor is well-placed to make this judgement.

Validation of assessment

Validation is a review of assessment judgements made by your RTO. Validation is generally conducted after assessment is complete. The process must be undertaken in a systematic way.

Validation may include engagement with industry. This engagement aims to confirm your RTO's assessment system:

- produces valid assessment judgements
- ensures graduates have the skills and knowledge required by industry, as expressed in the training package or accredited course.

Validation in the Standards for RTOs 2015

The Standards define validation as the quality review of the assessment process. Validation involves checking that the assessment tools produce valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of the training package or VET accredited courses are met. It includes reviewing a statistically valid sample of the assessments and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes and acting upon such recommendations.

The requirement in the Standards to undertake validation of assessment judgements does not prohibit your RTO from undertaking similar activities, such as **moderation**, or any other process aimed at increasing the quality of assessment. However, information in this guide refers only to the **validation** activity required by the Standards.

This activity is a quality review and is not intended to be used to make adjustments or changes to assessment outcomes. When developing your plan for validation, remember that:

- Each training product on your RTO's scope of registration must undergo validation at least once every five years.
- A 'training product' can be defined as an item on your RTO's 'explicit scope of registration' as published on the national register, training.gov.au. If you have single units as explicit scope items, they are considered to be a 'training product' in their own right.
- You must ensure your plan allows for validation of at least 50 per cent of the training products in the first three years of that cycle.
- Where specific risks have been identified, you may need to validate certain training products more often (for example, if your RTO's industry consultation identifies areas of particular risk).
- ASQA may determine specific training products require particular attention; if this occurs, advice will be published to www.asqa.gov.au.

Validation and TAE products

If you are validating any Training and Education (TAE) Training Package products, the validation must be conducted by an independent validator and be conducted in accordance with clause 1.25.

If you are applying to add TAE Training Package products to your RTO's scope of registration, you are required to submit evidence showing the outcomes of the independent external validation of your RTO's assessment system with your application. For more information, please refer to clause 1.25 and [ASQA's advice on applying for TAE Training Package products](#).

Independent validation of the TAE training products must be conducted by one or more persons who collectively:

- have current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning
- hold the training and assessment qualification or assessor skill set at least to the level being validated.

Where independent external validation is required, validators must not:

- be employed or contracted by your RTO to provide training and assessment
- have any involvement or interest in the operations of your RTO.

Sampling approach to validation

Your RTO must conduct validation activities systematically to confirm assessment judgements are being made correctly. While you are not required to validate every assessment judgement, a valid sampling approach provides a quality review process and allows you to infer that, overall, your RTO's assessment judgements have been valid.

Make sure that the sample of assessment judgements selected for validation is random and that it is representative of all assessment judgements. This will allow you to reliably predict the likelihood of any assessment judgement being valid. There are a number of tools available online that can assist you in determining the required sample size—this is likely to be smaller than you would think, particularly where large numbers of assessment judgements have been made. (One such tool is located at www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html. You can find others by searching the internet for 'statistically valid sample size')

Choosing validators

Choose validators who are independent of delivery and assessment of the training product being validated and, particularly, the assessment judgements being considered to maintain professional distance and integrity.

People involved in validation must have:

- appropriate vocational competencies
- current industry skills and knowledge
- an appropriate training and assessment qualification or assessor skill set
- current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning.

Your RTO may choose to take a 'team' approach to validation, in which the validation team members collectively hold the required qualifications, skills and knowledge. Trainers and assessors can be involved in validation activities, as long as they were not directly involved in the particular instance of delivery and assessment of the training product being validated.⁶

A guide to compliance

The type of evidence you should retain to demonstrate your assessment system's effectiveness depends to some extent on the context in which it is to be used.

- If your organisation is seeking to add a new qualification to your scope of registration, you must provide documentation on the assessment system, accompanied by assessment materials fully addressing the relevant unit of competency, module or cluster. If you are applying to change your scope of registration, ASQA will still be seeking evidence of practice and may look at your practices in relation to delivery of other training products.
- Where students have completed the unit being examined, you may be required to provide completed assessment items (including the evidence considered when the assessment was conducted, who the assessor was, and the outcome).

How can my RTO demonstrate and provide evidence of compliant practice?

ASQA's regulatory experience shows that many RTOs continue to struggle to demonstrate compliance with Standard 1, in particular with clause 1.8. This calls into question the integrity of the qualifications issued and in the long term can have a detrimental effect on student and employer confidence in the outcomes of the training system.

You need to show that your RTO's practice aligns with your assessment system and validation plan. Consider what information sources will confirm that your RTO practices and assessment methods—including your validation activities—support this alignment. An example of this might be ensuring actual completed student assessments are retained in the appropriate student files, aligned with the appropriate assessment tool. You will need to retain sufficient assessment evidence to be able to validate assessment judgements.

ASQA's [General direction—retention requirements for completed student assessment items](#) requires that RTOs retain all completed assessment items relating to each unit or module for six months from the date on which the decision on competence for the individual unit or module was made. If you can't retain the actual item (e.g. construction projects or perishable items), retain evidence, such as photographs, showing that the standard of the item or work completed justifies the assessment outcome. Completed assessment items such as assignments should not be handed back to students until the six-month period has expired. At audit ASQA will only ask you to produce those assessment records your RTO is required to retain.

⁶ Except for validation of TAE Training Products—refer to the previous page for guidance on choosing TAE validators.



You can compare assessment evidence to the requirements of the unit of competency or cluster of units to determine whether:

- the decision was based on sound assessment practices
- the decision was made after considering the evidence against all of the relevant requirements, including the principles of assessment and rules of evidence.

If the assessment is completed via recognition of prior learning, the requirements of the Standards do not change. However, you may need to collect and consider a greater variety of evidence when making the assessment decision than when assessment is completed through 'traditional' assessment activities. Similarly, the same requirements of the Standards apply to distance and online delivery methods, but you may need to change the type of evidence considered. **Regardless of the mode of delivery or engagement, all assessment must meet the same Standards.**

Part of the evidence that determines whether assessment has been conducted adequately is the evidence criteria that your assessors use to judge the quality of performance and make their decisions. Evidence criteria could be in the form of:

- model answers or responses
- samples of work items that meet specifications
- more general guidance for assessors about the characteristics of satisfactory responses or behaviours.

How prescriptive such material is depends on the nature of the unit—units from lower AQF level qualifications will tend to be more prescriptive with 'correct' responses, while those at higher levels may have broader guidelines.

You need to maintain evidence showing:

- that your validation plan has been actioned
- the outcomes
- how lessons learnt from validation have been acted upon (for example, what improvements have been made to assessment tools, processes and practices and how staff have been involved in understanding and implementing the outcomes).



Tips on compliant practice—Effective assessment

- Use comprehensive checklists to ensure all training package requirements are addressed and assessment is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.
- Provide clear guidance on 'what the assessment task is' to both the assessor and the student—so that both assessors and students know what is to be assessed; the context and conditions of assessment; how and when assessment is to occur; and the environment for the assessment.
- Ensure tasks for observation of a student's practical skills are well described and include observable behaviours. Do not, for example, simply cut and paste information from the unit of competency such as the performance criteria.
- Have processes in place for assessing the practical application of knowledge and skills.
 - Conduct observations of the student to allow them to demonstrate the practical application of their knowledge and skills.
 - Avoid overuse of document-driven knowledge assessment.
 - Ensure observation instruments include an assessment of a student's knowledge—for example, by asking the student why they are doing something and ensuring they are not just copying what has been shown to them.
- Clearly define benchmark criteria for each task to be performed, to allow assessors to be able to make a judgement about a candidate's competency. Again, these should not be cut and pasted from the unit's performance criteria.
- Make sure assessments enable a student to consistently demonstrate competence. Assessment should:
 - be practised in multiple situations
 - be practised over time
 - incorporate the provision of feedback.

- Completed assessment records demonstrate what the candidate did, what criteria were covered and on what basis the assessor determined the candidate as competent.
- Check that assessment criteria in assessment tools address foundation skills—for example, oral communication and ‘interaction with others’ skills.

Where third-party reports are used

- Clearly define in the assessment tools what type of third-party report it is—an actual assessment or supplementary evidence.
- Provide clear advice to trainers/assessors on who can be a third party and what the relationship is between the student and the assessor—for example, whether the third party is required to be a supervisor or a manager.
- Ensure any third parties who are conducting actual assessments hold the relevant qualifications or competencies as required by the training package.
- Provide sufficient third-party instructions. Third-party reports should be more than a direct cut and paste of the unit of competency requirements and you should provide guidance on what the third party needs to observe to make a judgement of competence (keeping in mind that third parties may not be experienced in conducting these tasks).
- Ensure the workplace supervisor is not the main or only observer of workplace performance.

In relation to validation of assessment

- Make sure that sampling is valid and reflects the risk to quality.
- Retain sufficient assessment evidence to validate assessment judgements.
- Retain any assessment tools used.
- Retain evidence that any recommended changes were implemented.

In relation to work placements and workplace assessment

- Provide sufficient information to employers and/or supervisors to enable them to adequately engage in training and assessment (for example, provide a record book which includes the performance criteria and an outline of tasks and observable behaviours for employers to complete).
- Have processes in place to evaluate the suitability of work sites and to inform employers about requirements (such as requirements relating to access to facilities and equipment, and access to the various contexts and job tasks required by particular units of competency).
- Provide information employers about the skills that students have already attained, and the skills the employer is to assist the students to acquire and practice, before work placements.
- Ensure you provide host employers with enough information about the purpose of the placement, expectations of the placement, and their roles and responsibilities for both training and assessment.
- Create a clear document which outlines the arrangement between your RTO and the employer, describing the responsibilities of each of the parties in the training and assessment process.





Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You must demonstrate that you have developed all required assessment systems and materials for each training product you have applied for. If your organisation will be using purchased assessment materials, you must demonstrate that:

- the assessment tools have been reviewed and, if required, customised for your own target groups (student cohorts) and modes of delivery
- the assessment tools meet the:
 - assessment requirements of the relevant training packages
 - the principles of assessment
 - the rules of evidence.

As no assessment decisions will have been made and validation activities required by the Standards will not have been undertaken, new RTOs need to demonstrate **how** they will systematically undertake validation.



Case study—Top marks for JKL Training's assessment

JKL Training delivers a range of qualifications including TAE training products, mostly through face-to-face delivery at its central business district location. However, assessment via recognition of prior learning is also carried out for some corporate clients who need their staff to hold certain skill sets to meet regulatory requirements.

JKL Training has developed an assessment system containing a range of procedures. The procedures outline how to:

- develop assessment materials
- test and approve assessment materials before use
- undertake assessment
- record and retain assessment evidence.

This system means that:

- JKL Training requires assessors to verify that all assessment tasks have been completed satisfactorily for each student before the assessor submits the assessment results to the training manager for finalising
- all completed assessment work is scanned and saved to a network drive, accompanied by all completed assessment tools and checklists, including the assessor's final verification. In cases where assessment work cannot be saved in this way (e.g. physical items), photographs that demonstrate the characteristics of the piece of work are taken and saved with the rest of the assessment material.

Because the assessment process is planned and systematic and because sound records of assessment are retained, JKL Training is able to easily demonstrate that all assessment decisions have been made correctly and validation activities are able to be conducted efficiently and quickly. Because all records are stored digitally, JKL Training avoids expensive storage fees and backup copies of all records are made automatically.

Every six months, JKL Training holds a validation workshop. At the validation workshops:

- a random sample of assessments completed over the past six months is reviewed
- the assessments are reviewed by one or more assessors who were not involved in the training or assessment for those courses
- validators use a validation checklist and note their decision as either 'confirmed' or 'not confirmed'
- the validators engaged to review the TAE training product assessment records are independent of the organisation
- where judgements are not confirmed by the validator, reasons are recorded in the checklist

- any assessment judgements 'not confirmed' are reviewed within 30 days to ensure any required improvements are made to assessment processes or materials
- sessions are held to examine the assessment system itself in order to ensure it has produced graduates with the required skills and knowledge. These sessions involve industry stakeholders who provide their views on whether the assessment system has produced suitable graduates.



Case study—Ensuring authenticity in online assessment

Your Mac Training is an RTO that provides training and assessment in graphic design through the qualification CUA50715 Diploma of Graphic Design. As its target student group is located in a remote location, Your Mac Training provides an online delivery mode option.

Your Mac Training uses the following technologies to conduct online training and assessment:

- Moodle, an open-source platform, for the storage of assessment materials, portfolios and assessment results
- a virtual classroom, using a headphone and microphone
- webcams and personal mobile phones
- Skype and Yahoo Messenger.

The virtual classroom is used to provide training in relation to assessment of the required knowledge. Students communicate with the trainer and assessor through their headphones/microphones during the virtual classroom sessions. In order to ensure authenticity, the student is required to hold their driver's licence up to the webcam at the beginning of each virtual class. After the virtual class, the webcam takes photos of the student at random intervals while they are completing the online assessment questions.

For the demonstration of practical skills, photos and videos of the student performing the practical task are taken by a third-party. A third-party report is completed to record the tasks performed by the student. The student holds up their driver's licence to the camera at the beginning of each practical demonstration video to confirm that the student performing the task is the student enrolled.

Finally, the trainer and assessor calls the student after the submission of completed assessments and asks questions relevant to the assessment.



Clauses 1.13 to 1.16—Employ skilled trainers and assessors

Clause 1.13

In addition to the requirements specified in clause 1.14 and clause 1.15, the RTO's training and assessment is delivered only by persons who have:

- a) vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed
- b) current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided
- c) current knowledge and skills in vocational training and learning that informs their training and assessment.

Industry experts may also be involved in the assessment judgement, working alongside the trainer and/or assessor to conduct the assessment.

Clause 1.14

The RTO's training and assessment:

- a) if delivered on or prior to 31 March 2019, is delivered only by persons who have the training and assessment credential specified in Item 1 **or** Item 2 **or** Item 3 of Schedule 1.
- b) if delivered on or after 1 April 2019, is delivered only by persons who have the training and assessment credential specified in Item 2 **or** Item 3 of Schedule 1.

Clause 1.15

Where a person conducts assessments only, the RTO ensures that:

- a) on or prior to 31 March 2019, the person has the training and assessment credential specified in Item 1, or Item 2, or Item 3, or Item 4, or Item 5 of Schedule 1; or
- b) on or after 1 April 2019, the person has the training and assessment credential specified in Item 2, or Item 3, or Item 5 of Schedule 1.

Clause 1.16

The RTO ensures that all trainers and assessors undertake professional development in the fields of the knowledge and practice of vocational training, learning and assessment including competency-based training and assessment.

What clauses 1.13 to 1.16 mean for your RTO

Quality training and assessment depends on the skills and knowledge of trainers and assessors.

The Standards specify that trainers and assessors are skilled VET practitioners with current industry skills and knowledge. This ensures students receive the training they need and graduates are properly assessed before being issued with a qualification or statement of attainment.

ASQA's strategic industry reviews have consistently found high levels of non-compliance with these clauses. This non-compliance undermines the quality of the student experience and directly affects the quality and credibility of qualifications. Students have told ASQA that it is important to them that their teachers are professional and knowledgeable about their subjects.

To provide training that reflects current industry practice and valid assessment, your RTO's trainers and assessors must maintain the currency of their skills and knowledge in both:

- their industry area
- vocational education and training.

It is also acceptable for an appropriately qualified trainer and assessor to work with an industry expert to conduct assessment together.

Current and future trainer and assessor requirements

Requirements 1 January 2016 - 31 March 2019	Requirements from 1 April 2019
Trainers and assessors	
As of 1 January 2016, your trainers and assessors must hold:	As of 31 March 2019, your trainers and assessors must hold:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (or its successor), or a diploma or higher level qualification in adult education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or its successor <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment plus the following units: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – TAE40116 (or its successor) or TAE40110A, and – TAE40116 (or its successor) or TAE40110A or TAE40110B <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a diploma or higher level qualification in adult education.
Assessors	
Anyone who provides assessment only (i.e. does not deliver training) must hold the:	Anyone who provides assessment only (i.e. does not deliver training) must hold the:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAESS00001 Assessor Skill Set (or its successor), or TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (or its successor), or a diploma or higher level qualification in adult education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAESS00011 Assessor Skill Set or its successor <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAESS00001 Assessor Skill Set, plus one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – TAE40116 Design and Develop Assessment Tools, or – TAE40116A Design and Develop Assessment Tools, or – TAE40116B Design and Develop Assessment Tools. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or its successor <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment plus the following units: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – TAE40116 (or its successor) or TAE40110A – TAE40116 (or its successor) or TAE40110A or TAE40110B <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a diploma or higher level qualification in adult education.

What is a qualification in adult education?

An adult education qualification has a focus on training and assessing adults. The qualification does not need to include the words 'adult education' in the title; however, units or subjects completed within the qualification need to demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to train adults. The academic transcript or record of results for the qualification will provide the evidence to demonstrate this.

Examples of adult education qualifications include:

- CASR Part 61 Flight or Simulator Instructor
- Army Recruit Instructor
- Graduate Diploma in Adult and Vocational Education and Training
- Graduate Diploma of Adult Language, Literacy and Numeracy
- Master of Education or Doctoral degree with an adult education focus.

While the Standards do not prescribe **how** trainers and assessors must maintain their currency in industry skills, it is the responsibility of your RTO to retain evidence that shows:

- your trainers' and assessors' current industry skills and knowledge
- that trainer and assessor knowledge directly relates to the training and/or assessment they are providing.

The industry skills and knowledge held by trainers and assessors must be consistent with:

- information gathered through your industry engagement activities
- any specific requirements expressed in relevant training packages and accredited courses.

Your RTO must ensure that **all** trainers and assessors undertake professional development in VET—including in competency-based training and assessment. This includes trainers and assessors employed or contracted by your RTO and those engaged by a third-party delivering training and assessment on behalf of your RTO.

The Standards do not prescribe how often professional development must occur, but it must be sufficiently frequent to ensure your trainers and assessors have current knowledge and skills in vocational training, learning and assessment. Simply delivering training and assessment does not constitute professional development.

A guide to compliance

Evidence relating to trainers' and assessors' industry skills can take many forms.

If a trainer and assessor holds the qualification they are delivering and has recent extensive industry experience, this may be sufficient to demonstrate they hold both **current industry skills** and **vocational competencies**.

In some cases, people may have significant industry experience but not hold any formal qualifications—in such cases, you would need to analyse the skills and knowledge they deliver and compare this to their industry skills and knowledge. Consider all units of competency (including electives) in this analysis to ensure that you are meeting the requirements for trainers and assessors specified in the training package or accredited course.

Current industry skills

Training and assessment should only be provided by those who have **current industry skills and knowledge**. Training and assessment is best provided by those who can undertake—to an industry-standard level—all of the tasks defined in the elements of units of competency and modules.

To confirm trainers and assessors have current industry skills, and all training and assessment is delivered by people who are themselves competent practitioners, your RTO should ideally ensure that trainers and assessors are regularly exposed to industry workplaces and participate in workplace tasks.

Trainers and assessors need to show how they have maintained, upgraded or developed new skills relevant to current industry needs. Evidence showing trainers' and assessors' industry skills can take many forms.

Currency in skills will depend on the industry area. Some examples of how trainers and assessors can demonstrate current industry skills include:

- volunteering or working part-time in the industry area
- undertaking accredited training relevant to the industry area
- belonging to industry associations
- engaging with industry (for example, through discussions with employers or attending industry networking events)
- reading industry journals and subscriptions
- staying informed about changes to technology
- keeping up to date with changes to legislation.

Delivering training and assessment in a workplace does not constitute the development of current industry skills. However, attending a workplace to experience the latest techniques, processes and resources could contribute to the demonstration of current industry skills.

Vocational competency for trainers and assessors

RTOs must retain evidence that all trainers and assessors have undertaken **relevant professional development in VET**. The Standards do not prescribe what form this evidence takes, but you may choose to include registers of the development activities your trainers and assessors have completed.

How can my RTO demonstrate and provide evidence of compliant practice?

Your RTO should take appropriate steps to verify information about trainer and assessor's qualifications, vocational competencies and current industry skills.

These steps may include:

- viewing qualifications and contacting the provider named on the person's qualification to confirm that the document is genuine
- reviewing academic transcripts
- confirming the VET study completed through the online Unique Student Identifier (USI) Registry (do not rely on printed transcripts)
- conducting referee checks at the time of employment to confirm relevant industry experience.

You should retain evidence of how you have verified this information—for example, by maintaining records on each person's human resources file.

Your RTO should also retain evidence of your approach to professional development and of how you engage with industry to confirm, review and update the required skills and knowledge for trainers and assessors. Examples of possible approaches include:

- implementing a requirement for a certain number of professional development hours per year, with your RTO to approve development activity in advance in order for the hours to be counted as part of the annual requirement
- collecting evidence of trainer and assessor participation in communities of practice
- requiring trainers and assessors to participate in industry exchanges and/or placements
- conducting an annual review of the skills and knowledge required for trainers and assessors with local industry representatives, in order to ensure currency and relevance
- maintaining information on professional development activities on a register.

If you are seeking registration as an RTO

You must provide evidence that:

- sufficient trainers and assessors are available to your organisation, to allow you to deliver all training products that you have applied for
- the available trainers and assessors meet all of the requirements of the Standards
- your organisation has processes in place to ensure all trainers and assessors will undertake relevant professional development in VET and will maintain their industry skills.





Case study—Employing trainers with appropriate adult education qualifications

AJF Training College provides training in information technology and digital media. The RTO employs three trainers and assessors to deliver these qualifications. In order to cover the increasing number of student enrolments, the RTO manager decides to employ two additional trainers and assessors to deliver these qualifications.

At the job interviews, the RTO manager requests evidence of each applicant's training and assessment qualifications. One of the applicants does not hold the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment; however, he does hold a Diploma of Training, Design and Development and a Bachelor of Education. The RTO manager views the academic transcript for the Bachelor of Education and notes that the subjects studied had a focus on teaching primary school children. As the Bachelor of Education did not have a focus on training adults, this evidence does not demonstrate compliance with clause 1.14 of the Standards.

However, as the Diploma of Training Design and Development included units that assessed the skills and knowledge in training and assessing adults, this evidence demonstrated that employment of the trainer and assessor was likely to meet the requirements of clause 1.14.



Case study—Making sure the trainer is trained

MNO Community College employs seven part-time trainers and assessors as staff members and engages another three contractors as needed. To ensure their trainers and assessors have all the required skills and knowledge, the provider requires anyone employed or contracted as a trainer and assessor to hold the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment prior to being engaged. As part of the induction process (for both employees and contractors), all qualifications are verified with the issuing RTO where possible, and comprehensive referee checks are carried out. MNO Community College keeps records of these activities in each individual's human resources file.

MNO Community College requires that all trainers and assessors undergo a minimum of 20 hours of formal professional development in training and assessment each calendar year. (MNO Community College pays this cost for employees, but not for contractors.) Both staff members and contractors must seek prior approval to have professional development counted towards their 20 required hours, allowing MNO Community College to ensure the development activity is suitable. Both staff members and contractors must undergo a skills and knowledge evaluation in their industry area at least annually (which most people demonstrate by providing evidence of work conducted in the industry). Any trainers not currently working in the relevant industry are required to provide alternative evidence of current skills and knowledge. Again, any additional activities required are paid for by MNO Community College for employees but not contractors.

As part of its industry engagement strategy, MNO Community College meets annually with industry representatives to review the required industry skills and knowledge for all trainers and assessors to ensure they continue to meet industry expectations.



Case study—Documenting a trainer’s vocational competency

Fiona is a trainer and assessor working for an RTO, Brighter Training Services, delivering the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care.

Fiona does not hold the qualification Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care. However, she does hold the Diploma of Children’s Services (Early Childhood Education and Care), which she completed in 2010, and a Bachelor of Early Childhood and Teaching (Birth to Five Years).

The Diploma of Early Childhood and Care and the Diploma of Children’s Services (Early Childhood Education and Care) are not equivalent qualifications. The general manager for Brighter Training Services asks Fiona to demonstrate how the combination of the Diploma of Children’s Services (Early Childhood Education and Care) and Bachelor of Early Childhood and Teaching demonstrates equivalence to the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care.

Fiona provides evidence of equivalence by conducting a mapping analysis of the unit requirements for the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care to the units she completed for the Diploma of Children’s Services (Early Childhood Education and Care) and Bachelor of Early Childhood and Teaching (Birth to Five Years). Fiona also includes the industry skills and knowledge she obtained from her employment at Toys Day Care Facility in 2013 as part of the mapping analysis.

The RTO general manager reviews the mapping analysis and determines that it indicates vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed. The RTO general manager adds a copy of the mapping analysis to Fiona’s human resources file.



Case study—Documenting a trainer’s industry skills

John works as a trainer and assessor for the RTO Pale Ale Pty Ltd in 2016, delivering the unit of competency SITHFAB002 Provide Responsible Service of Alcohol.

The compliance manager for Pale Ale Pty Ltd is conducting an internal audit, and is checking the evidence provided to demonstrate John’s industry currency.

John’s CV included the following information as evidence of industry currency:

- worked as a contract trainer/assessor for several RTOs from 2012 to 2015, delivering the unit Provide Responsible Service of Alcohol to hotel and restaurant staff
- 25 years of experience in all areas of hospitality prior to becoming a trainer and assessor in 2012 (this includes work as a bartender in several restaurants from 2010 to 2012)
- currently works as a casual waiter and bartender at his father’s Italian restaurant once a month
- is a member of the Queensland Hotels Association (QHA).

References have been provided to validate John’s experience as a contract RTO trainer and assessor, as a bartender from 2010 to 2012, and monthly casual work as a waiter/bartender at his father’s Italian restaurant.

A copy of John’s current membership with the QHA is also on file with copies of newsletters received from QHA regarding legislative updates.

The compliance manager is satisfied that the evidence provided will meet the requirements of clause 1.13(b).



Clauses 1.17 to 1.20—Provide supervision of trainers where needed

Clause 1.17

Where the RTO, in delivering training and assessment, engages an individual who is not a trainer or assessor, the individual works under the supervision of a trainer and does not determine assessment outcomes.

Clause 1.18

The RTO ensures that any individual working under the supervision of a trainer under clause 1.17:

- a) holds the training and assessment credential specified in Item 6 of Schedule 1
- b) has vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed
- c) has current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided.

Clause 1.19

Where the RTO engages an individual under clause 1.17, it ensures that the training and assessment complies with Standard 1.

Clause 1.20

Without limiting clauses 1.17 to 1.19, the RTO:

- a) determines and puts in place:
 - i) the level of the supervision required
 - ii) any requirements, conditions or restrictions considered necessary on the individual's involvement in the provision of training and collection of assessment evidence
- b) ensures that trainers providing supervision monitor and are accountable for all training provision and collection of assessment evidence by the individual under their supervision.

What clauses 1.17 to 1.20 mean for your RTO

If your RTO uses a person who does not hold the required competencies as a trainer and assessor, that person needs to be supervised by a qualified trainer to maintain the quality of your training and assessment.

You need to consider the level of training/assessment skills and knowledge this person has and put in place arrangements for appropriate supervision and guidance. For example, a person who has recently completed the Enterprise Trainer—Presenting Skill Set but who has little or no experience as a trainer will require a program of close supervision and mentoring, until they have demonstrated a reasonable level of skill, after which the supervision requirements could be reduced.

Regardless of their skills and knowledge, a person that does not hold the required competencies:

- must be formally supervised
- must not determine assessment outcomes.

In addition, regardless of the training and assessment competencies a person holds, they can only provide training if they have current industry skills and knowledge. Training is best provided by those who can undertake—to an industry-standard level—all of the tasks defined in the elements of units of competency and modules.

Assessment decisions may only be made by a qualified assessor. A qualified assessor may make assessment decisions in conjunction with the person being supervised, who may gather some or all of the relevant evidence. The supervising trainer and assessor:

- is responsible for the quality of training delivered
- makes all final decisions about assessment outcomes.

Since 1 January 2016, people working under such supervision arrangements have been required to hold the:

- Enterprise Trainer Skill Set (in either mentoring or presenting), and/or
- Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skill Set.

As of 1 January 2016, a person without one of these skill sets is not permitted to deliver training in VET.

From 1 April 2019, people working under such supervision arrangements will be required to hold one of the following:

- TAESS00007 Enterprise Trainer—Presenting Skill Set
- TAESS00014 Enterprise Trainer—Presenting Skill Set (or its successor)
- TAESS00008 Enterprise Trainer—Mentoring Skill Set
- TAESS00013 Enterprise Trainer—Mentoring Skill Set (or its successor)
- TAESS00003 Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skill Set
- TAESS00015 Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skill Set (or its successor).

A guide to compliance

An RTO that does not have any people delivering training or assessment under supervision does not need to retain evidence in this area.

The level of formality needed in supervision arrangements will depend on many factors, including the number of people working under these arrangements. Regardless, RTOs must retain evidence showing:

- what the arrangements are
- that they have been fully implemented.

If you have a large number of people working under supervision, you may need a formal framework of supervision, review and monitoring. If the arrangements are for a very small number of people or for a short time only (e.g. while a new trainer completes a qualification), more informal arrangements (such as a weekly review/feedback session) may be appropriate.

How can my RTO demonstrate and provide evidence of compliant practice?

Evidence that supervision arrangements have been implemented could include:

- completed review documentation showing that a trainer and assessor has monitored training by observing training sessions and providing feedback to the person being supervised
- completed assessment materials showing that the supervising trainer and assessor has made final assessment decisions
- interviews with both people to confirm that the arrangements had actually been implemented as planned.

At audit, ASQA may review student files and interview trainers and assessors to confirm that your practice and your documentation are aligned.

Requirements for individuals working under supervision

The requirements below apply to the delivery of all training products, except those from the TAE Training Package. Requirements for delivery of TAE Training Products by trainers under supervision are discussed in the following section of this guide.

Individuals working under supervision must have both:

- vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered
- current relevant industry skills.

These individuals must hold at least one of the following:

- TAESS00003 Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skill Set (or its successor)
- TAESS00007 Enterprise Trainer—Presenting Skill Set (or its successor)
- TAESS00008 Enterprise Trainer—Mentoring Skill Set (or its successor).

From 1 April 2019, people working under such supervision arrangements will be required to hold one of the following:

- TAESS00007 Enterprise Trainer—Presenting Skill Set
- TAESS00014 Enterprise Trainer—Presenting Skill Set (or its successor)
- TAESS00008 Enterprise Trainer—Mentoring Skill Set
- TAESS00013 Enterprise Trainer—Mentoring Skill Set (or its successor)
- TAESS00003 Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skill Set
- TAESS00015 Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skill Set (or its successor).



If you are seeking registration as an RTO

- If your organisation does not intend to have any people delivering training or assessment under supervision, you do not need to provide evidence in this area.
- If you intend to have people delivering training or assessment under supervision, you must provide evidence that suitable supervision arrangements have been developed.



Case study—Supervising and mentoring new trainers

PQR Education delivers a range of ‘trade’ qualifications to apprentices. The RTO recruits trainers and assessors directly from industry, preferably those who wish to continue working in their trade part-time. This means that they often have new trainers and assessors who do not have the required qualification to provide **unsupervised** training and assessment.

Because new trainers are hired regularly, PQR Education has established a formal framework of supervision and mentoring for new staff. Before new staff can conduct training they must complete either the:

- Enterprise Trainer—Presenting Skill Set, or
- Enterprise Trainer—Mentoring Skill Set.

New staff are required to undertake the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment with an RTO engaged by PQR Education, completing a customised program that focuses on the challenges of delivering trade qualifications through a mixture of workplace and offline delivery. A mentor is assigned to work with the new staff member until they have completed the qualification.

This ensures very close supervision at the beginning of the program, with the mentor observing at least two training sessions per week. The level of supervision gradually decreases as the trainer reaches predetermined competency milestones and ends once the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment has been achieved.

A formal review is held each Friday to provide feedback. Review sheets are signed by both parties and retained in both the mentor’s and the new staff member’s human resources files. When the new trainer has completed the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, the mentor is also required to confirm that the person has met the requirements of PQR Education to provide unsupervised training and assessment.

The trainer under supervision cannot determine assessment outcomes until they have completed the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and have met PQR Education’s requirements.



Clauses 1.22 to 1.24⁷—Employ experts to teach trainers and assessors

Clause 1.22

To deliver any AQF qualification or skill set from the Training and Education Training Package (or its successor), the RTO must ensure all trainers and assessors delivering the training and assessment hold the training and assessment qualification at least to the level being delivered.⁸

Clause 1.23

To deliver the training and assessment credential specified in Item 1 or Item 2 of Schedule 1, or any assessor skill set from the Training and Education Training Package (or its successor), the RTO must ensure all trainers and assessors delivering the training and assessment:

- a) hold the training and assessment credential specified in Item 7 of Schedule 1; or
- b) work under the supervision of a trainer that meets the requirement set out in a) above.

Clause 1.24

The RTO must ensure that any person working under supervision for the purposes of Standard 1.23 b):

- a) does not determine assessment outcomes
- b) holds the following:
 - on or prior to 31 March 2019, the training and assessment credential specified in Item 1 or Item 2 of Schedule 1; or
 - on or after 1 April 2019, the training and assessment credential specified in Item 2 of Schedule 1.

What clauses 1.22 to 1.24 mean for your RTO

It is critical that training products from the TAE Training Package are delivered to the highest levels of quality, so that trainers and assessors hold all the skills and knowledge required. These training products underpin the quality of VET in Australia and graduates in these qualifications are responsible for training much of the Australian workforce.

As of January 2017, people delivering the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or any assessor skill set from the TAE Training Package have been required to hold a relevant credential or alternatively, they can work under the supervision of a person that holds one of the relevant credentials.

The relevant credentials have been updated⁹ to include:

- TAE50111 Diploma of Vocational Education and Training (or its successor)
- TAE50116 Diploma of Vocational Education and Training (or its successor)
- TAE50211 Diploma of Training Design and Development (or its successor)
- TAE50216 Diploma of Training Design and Development (or its successor)
- a higher level qualification in adult education.

The requirements do not apply to delivery of TAE units of competency within qualifications or skill sets from other training packages or within accredited courses.

A guide to compliance

Your RTO must retain evidence of the qualifications of trainers and assessors delivering TAE qualifications or skill sets.

⁷ Clause 1.21 is no longer applicable. RTOs should refer to clauses 1.22 and 1.23 for current requirements in relation to trainers and assessors delivering training and assessment qualifications.

⁸ From 1 January 2017, the requirements set out in clause 1.22 continue to apply to any other AQF qualification or skill set from the TAE Training Package (or its successor).

⁹ In the [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) Amendment 2017](#).



From 1 January 2017, you must retain evidence that any person delivering the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or any assessor skill set who does not hold the required diploma or higher level qualification:

- is working under the supervision of a person who does hold the required credentials
- does not determine assessment outcomes.

As with any other training product, trainers and assessors delivering TAE training products must hold current industry skills and knowledge. While the Standards do not prescribe how trainers and assessors must maintain this currency, it is the responsibility of your RTO to retain evidence showing:

- the current industry skills and knowledge of your trainers and assessors
- that their skills and knowledge directly relate to the training and/or assessment they are providing.

The industry skills and knowledge held by trainers and assessors must be consistent with:

- those identified through your industry engagement activities
- any specific requirements expressed in the TAE Training Package.

How can my RTO demonstrate and provide evidence of compliant practice?

You must be able to demonstrate how you have verified evidence about qualifications, vocational competencies and current industry skills. This may include:

- viewing qualifications and contacting the provider named on the person's qualification to confirm that the document is genuine
- reviewing academic transcripts
- conducting referee checks at the time of employment to confirm relevant industry experience.

You should retain evidence, for example by maintaining records on each person's human resources file of how you have verified this information.

You should also retain evidence of your approach to professional development and how you engage with industry to confirm, review and update the required skills and knowledge for trainers and assessors.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

- Clauses 1.23 and 1.24 do not apply.
- An RTO is required to be registered for two years before it can be registered to deliver any qualification or assessor skill set from the TAE Training Package.



Case study—Trainer and assessor qualifications

Southern Training College Australia delivers TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to its students.

Karen, the trainer and assessor nominated to deliver TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment for the RTO, is required to demonstrate that she holds TAE50111 or TAE50116 Diploma of Vocational Education and Training; TAE50211 or TAE50216 Diploma of Training Design and Development; or a higher level qualification in adult education.

Karen provides a copy of her qualification and record of results for the TAE50111 Diploma of Vocational Education and Training in order to demonstrate her training and assessment competencies and to demonstrate she also meets the assessor requirements as described in the TAE Training Package.

Southern Training College Australia's compliance officer conducts a verification check of Karen's qualification (by contacting the RTO and confirming the qualification earned by Karen) and retains the verified copy.

Evidence of TAE50111 Diploma of Vocational Education and Training will satisfy the TAE training and assessment requirements of the Standards (clause 1.23).



Clause 1.25—Independent validation of training and assessment qualifications

Clause 1.25

To deliver any AQF qualification or assessor skill set from the Training and Education Training Package (or its successor), the RTO must have undergone an independent validation of its assessment system, tools, processes and outcomes in accordance with the requirements contained in Schedule 2 (and the definitions of **independent validation** and **validation**).

What clause 1.25 means for your RTO

Validation is critical for ensuring that:

- assessment is appropriately rigorous
- graduates are fully capable of carrying out the tasks that their qualification claims they can complete.

RTOs delivering or applying to deliver qualifications from the TAE Training Package must have undergone an external, independent validation of their assessment system, tools, processes and outcomes. The extent and nature of this validation activity varies depending on whether the qualification or skill set is already on the RTO's scope of registration, but the **validation must be carried out by someone who has had no involvement with the RTO other than conducting the validation activity**.

A guide to compliance

An application to add any qualification or assessor skill set from the TAE Training Package to your scope of registration (even if other qualifications from the TAE Training Package are already on your RTO's scope) must include evidence of:

- an external and independent validation of assessment (for any training products specified in ASQA's application process)
- the assessment system your RTO will adopt for the training products being applied for (including evidence that this assessment system has been externally and independently validated and will meet these requirements when fully implemented).

RTOs applying to add TAE Training Package products to their scope of registration are required to submit additional evidence.

If you are seeking to add TAE training products to your RTO's registration, the following application requirements apply:

1. Your RTO must have held continuous registration (either with ASQA, the Western Australia Training Accreditation Council or the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority) for at least two years.
2. You must provide evidence demonstrating that your RTO has undergone an independent external validation of:
 - five qualifications and/or units of competency on the RTO's explicit scope of registration from training packages other than the TAE or TAE10 (or if the RTO has fewer than five qualifications and/or units of competency on its scope of registration, all other qualifications and/or units of competency on the RTO's explicit scope of registration)
 - any current TAE training products on the RTO's scope of registration
 - the assessment system your RTO will adopt for delivery of the TAE qualifications or the assessor skill sets applied for.

For more information, please refer to [ASQA's advice on applying for TAE Training Package products](#).

If your RTO has any qualification or assessor skill set from the TAE Training Package on its scope of registration, you must retain evidence that an external and independent validation of the assessment system has been carried out for those training products. This requirement applies to TAE units that are embedded within qualifications from other training packages that form a TAE assessor skill set where the RTO delivers this assessor skill set. Evidence provided must include confirmation that the assessment system and outcomes meet the requirements of Standard 1 and the TAE.

How can my RTO demonstrate and provide evidence of compliant practice?

- Ensure that you fully document how you selected your independent validator and how they meet the definition of independent validation in the Standards.
- Maintain complete records of the validation process, outcomes and any action taken in relation to outcomes.



If your organisation is seeking registration as an RTO

- Clause 1.25 does not apply.
- An RTO is required to be registered for two years before it can be registered to deliver any qualification or assessor skill set from the TAE Training Package.



Case Study—Arranging independent validation of TAE qualifications

An RTO, Quality Training Inc., has the Diploma of Training, Design and Development on its scope of registration.

Quality Training Inc.'s compliance manager has arranged for the owner of another RTO, HIJ Training—which also has the Diploma of Training, Design and Development on its scope of registration—to conduct the independent validation. The owner of HIJ Training holds the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and Diploma of Training, Design and Development, and keeps up to date with vocational skills and knowledge by attending VET professional development training about assessment with an industry association, reading ASQA newsletters, and attending ASQA information sessions and webinars. Quality Training Inc.'s compliance manager keeps evidence of this on a register.

The independent validation includes Quality Training Inc.'s assessment policies and procedures and assessment materials, tools and judgements. A validation template is used to document whether the RTO's assessment system, tools and outcomes ensure that TAE assessments are consistent and are based on the principles of assessment and rules of evidence.

The independent validation identifies that improvements and amendments to Quality Training Inc.'s TAE assessment tools and processes are required. These are recorded into the Quality Training Inc.'s continuous improvement register with an action officer and due date.

Quality Training Inc. retains evidence that the validation was conducted by an independent person and evidence that demonstrates the improvements have been actioned.



Clauses 1.26 to 1.27—Manage transition from superseded training products

Clause 1.26

Subject to clause 1.27 and unless otherwise approved by the VET Regulator, the RTO ensures that:

- where a training product on its scope of registration is superseded, all learners' training and assessment is completed and the relevant AQF certification documentation is issued or learners are transferred into its replacement, within a period of one year from the date the replacement training product was released on the national register
- where an AQF qualification is no longer current and has not been superseded, all learners' training and assessment is completed and the relevant AQF certification documentation issued within a period of two years from the date the AQF qualification was removed or deleted from the national register
- where a skill set, unit of competency, accredited short course or module is no longer current and has not been superseded, all learners' training and assessment is completed and the relevant AQF certification documentation issued within a period of one year from the date the skill set, unit of competency, accredited short course or module was removed or deleted from the national register
- a new learner does not commence training and assessment in a training product that has been removed or deleted from the national register.

Clause 1.27

The requirements specified in clause 1.26 (a) do not apply where a training package requires the delivery of a superseded unit of competency.

What clauses 1.26 and 1.27 mean for your RTO

ASQA's strategic review into the marketing and advertising practices of RTOs found that almost 12 per cent of a random sample of 238 RTO websites were found to be marketing qualifications after the relevant transition period had expired. This is of significant concern, as the average consumer would not recognise that the courses being offered were out of date.

Students are entitled to graduate with a qualification that reflects the current skill needs of the relevant industry. If a qualification is superseded or discontinued, this is a clear indication that industry needs have changed and the previous qualification is no longer the most suitable.

To best meet the needs of your students and of industry, transfer students from superseded qualifications into replacement qualifications as soon as possible.

Superseded training products

Where a training product is superseded by a replacement version, all delivery to all students in the superseded version must finish within one year. This may require the student to be transferred to the replacement product; however, before this can happen, you must ensure that the replacement training product is on your RTO's scope of registration.

Where the developer responsible for the parent training package deems the replacement training product is equivalent to the superseded qualification, in most cases ASQA will automatically update your RTO's scope of registration to include the replacement training product. Your scope will be updated immediately after the endorsement process, unless your RTO:

- has 'opted out' of this process, or
- has unresolved compliance issues that prevent the scope update.

In cases where the training product is not considered equivalent to the earlier version or where your RTO has 'opted out' of automatic updates, before transferring any student enrolments you will need to:

- apply to ASQA for the replacement to be added to your RTO's scope of registration
- have that application approved.

An RTO that holds a delegation from ASQA (to manage its own scope of registration) can add the relevant training products to their scope without application¹⁰.

¹⁰ Except for designated qualifications and skill sets from the TAE Training Package.

Students who will complete their study in the superseded product and be issued with a qualification or statement of attainment within the one-year transition period do not need to be transferred to a replacement training product.

During the one-year transition period, students may still commence training in the superseded training product; however, these students must then either be completed or transferred out before the end of the transition period.

ASQA will remove the superseded training product from your RTO's scope of registration **one year from the date it was superseded**. From this date, you must not:

- enrol or train students in that training product
- issue a qualification or statement of attainment for that training product (except as a replacement for a previously issued qualification or statement of attainment).

Removed or deleted qualifications

In some instances, training package developers determine there is no longer sufficient demand for a qualification to justify it being maintained. The qualification is removed or deleted without being superseded by another.

In this case, there is no clearly identified replacement qualification for students to transfer to, although you may be able to identify one that is the closest to meeting your students' needs. Whether it is practical to transfer students to a suitable qualification will depend on a range of factors, including how close to completion each student is, but the guiding principle should be what will best meet the needs of the student. If completing the qualification is the best path for the student, your RTO must ensure that all training, assessment and issuance of certification is completed within two years of the date the qualification was removed.

You must not allow a new student to commence training or assessment from the date a qualification is removed or deleted from the national register of providers and courses, training.gov.au.

Two years after a qualification is removed or deleted from the national register, ASQA will remove the qualification from your RTO's scope of registration. From that date, you must not:

- enrol or train any remaining students in that qualification
- issue that qualification (except as a replacement for a previously issued qualification).

Removed or deleted skill sets, units, courses and modules

Where a skill set, unit, course or module (not attached to a qualification) is removed or deleted, your RTO must ensure that all training, assessment and issuance of certification is completed within one year of the date the skill set, unit or module was removed or deleted.

You must not allow a student to commence training or assessment from the date a skill set, unit, course or module is removed or deleted from the national register.

One year after a skill set, unit or module is removed or deleted from the national register, ASQA will remove the training product from your RTO's scope of registration. From that date you must not:

- enrol or train students any remaining students in that skill set, unit, course or module
- issue a statement of attainment for that skill set, unit, course or module, except as a replacement for a previously issued statement of attainment.

In all cases, the date shown on the national register is considered to be the date of publication, deletion or removal.

Sometimes, a qualification or accredited course will specify a core or named elective unit or module that has been superseded, removed or deleted from another training package. In these cases, you must continue to include the component/s as named in the qualification or course being delivered.

Where ASQA has agreed that exceptional circumstances apply to a certain cohort of students justify delivery beyond the allowable timeframes, e.g. where apprenticeship arrangements necessitate, this information will be published on www.asqa.gov.au. In such cases, the exemption will apply to any RTO, but only for delivery to a student whose enrolment matches the identified criteria.

A guide to compliance

The type of evidence available will differ, depending on how your RTO manages transitions.

Evidence from a student management system showing that no students were enrolled in a superseded qualification beyond the relevant date may be sufficient, particularly if the system:

- prevents enrolment of students into superseded, removed or deleted training products
- does not issue qualifications or statements of attainment beyond the allowable timeframes.

If your RTO is using a decision made by ASQA to allow delivery in specific circumstances beyond the usual allowable timeframes, retain evidence that all students involved match the identified criteria for this delivery.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

Clauses 1.26 and 1.27 do not apply. It is not possible to apply to be registered for superseded, removed or deleted training products.



Case study—Training product version changes

XYZ Training has the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care on its scope of registration. Recently the qualification changed from version 3 to 4. In that version change, changes were made to the core units.

XYZ Training arranges for its students to be transitioned into version 4 of the Certificate III in Early Childhood and Care within 12 months in order to comply with the new packaging rules incorporating the updated core units.

Chapter 5—Completion

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the completion phase of the student's experience with their registered training organisation (RTO); the end of their training and assessment; and the issuance of their certification. This is the fifth and final phase of the student's journey.

The integrity of qualifications issued is critically important to students (and their employers). They need to be confident that their training and assessment has been high quality. Students want to receive their certification in a timely way to ensure they are not disadvantaged in seeking employment.

Under the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* (the Standards) relevant to the completion phase of the student journey, RTOs are responsible for:

- providing secure certification (clauses 3.1 to 3.4)
- participating in the Student Identifier scheme (clause 3.6).



Clauses 3.1 to 3.4—Provide secure certification

Clause 3.1

The RTO issues AQF [Australian Qualifications Framework] certification documentation only to a learner whom it has assessed as meeting the requirements of the training product as specified in the relevant training package or VET [vocational education and training] accredited course.

Clause 3.2

All AQF certification documentation issued by an RTO meets the requirements of Schedule 5.

Clause 3.3

AQF certification documentation is issued to a learner within 30 calendar days of the learner being assessed as meeting the requirements of the training product if the training program in which the learner is enrolled is complete, and providing all agreed fees the learner owes to the RTO have been paid.

Clause 3.4

Records of learner AQF certification documentation are maintained by the RTO in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 5 and are accessible to current and past learners.

What clauses 3.1 to 3.4 mean for your RTO

Your RTO must have controls in place to ensure qualifications, statements of attainment and records of results are not issued unless the student has completed all assessment requirements. Inappropriately issued certification poses a significant risk to your RTO's reputation and to the VET sector.

To reduce this risk, you should have systems in place to ensure that:

- certification is only issued to students that have fully demonstrated competence in all training product requirements
- evidence of this can be demonstrated.

If your RTO delivers at multiple locations and/or through third-party arrangements, consider centralising issuance of certification to strengthen these controls.

To ensure the credibility of VET sector qualifications, RTOs must meet the requirements of the [AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy](#) and include any additional information specific to the VET sector, as per Schedules 4 and 5 of the Standards.

RTOs may include additional relevant information on AQF certification documentation, including the name and/or logo of a third-party involved in the training and assessment. However, such information must be accurate and it must be clear which organisation is issuing the certification.

RTOs must also consider the requirements of clause 3.6 and ensure qualifications or statements of attainment are not issued until the RTO has obtained and verified a Unique Student Identifier (USI) for that person (unless exempt).

When issuing certification:

- issue in a timely manner, so students can provide proof of their competence to employers (or potential employers) and obtain any industry licences or accreditation. Providing all fees have been paid, AQF certification documentation must be issued within 30 calendar days of the student exiting their course or the student's final assessment being completed
- issue AQF certification documentation directly to the student, not to another party, such as an employer
- issue students who have completed all units or modules in a qualification with a testamur and a record of results
- issue a student who has completed one or more units/modules (but not a full qualification) and has finished their training with your RTO with a statement of attainment (a record of results may also be issued in this case)
- ensure students can access records of certification issued to them.

In accordance with the [AQF Qualifications Register Policy](#), as an issuing organisation your RTO must:

- maintain a register of all AQF qualifications it is authorised to issue
- maintain a register of all AQF qualifications it issues to graduates.

To avoid possible delays in issuing certification, ensure that your RTO has processes in place to verify a student's USI well in advance of when certification is expected to be issued. It is strongly advised that you collect and verify a student's USI at the point of their initial enrolment.

You are only required to issue AQF certification documentation when a student has completed their program of training and assessment with your RTO. You are not required to issue 'interim' documentation at any time.

Your RTO must retain records of qualifications and statements of attainment issued for 30 years. If you have gathered and retained full Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) data, this would suffice. You must retain sufficient data to be able to reissue a qualification or statement of attainment during this 30-year period, regardless of the storage method used. If your organisation ceases being an RTO, you will be required to provide this information to ASQA in digital form.

Your RTO must ensure that current and past students are able to access records of their achievements. All students who have provided a verified USI, and whose results have been reported into the national VET provider collection, will be able to access their records through the USI system. If a student's achievements have not been recorded through the USI system, you will need to have processes in place to ensure that this student can access their records in another way.

A guide to compliance

Your RTO must retain evidence that sufficient controls are in place to prevent certification being issued before a student is determined competent in all assessment requirements of the relevant training product. Some electronic student management systems require evidence checklists to be completed before generating documentation. RTOs may also use manual methods, such as:

- completing a checklist before a qualification is printed or signed
- requiring all completed assessment to be presented to the person signing or issuing the certification.

Your RTO must retain evidence that qualifications and statements of attainment meet all the requirements of the AQF and Schedules 4 and 5 of the Standards. You may be required to provide evidence that any additional content included on certification is accurate and does not create confusion about which organisation is issuing the certification.

The issuing organisation must have, and implement where necessary, a policy that enables the replacement of certification documentation.

The issuing organisation is responsible for authentication and verification of any replacement certification documentation.

Your RTO must demonstrate that it has mechanisms in place to reduce fraudulent reproduction of certification. At a minimum, you must include your RTO's name, code and logo, and the issuance date, on all certification.

You should retain evidence that:

- certification is issued within 30 days of a student completing their training and/or assessment (subject to all fees having been paid)
- all students receive all documents they are entitled to, including records of results where applicable.

You must also retain:

- evidence of how current and past students can access records of certification issued to them
- evidence that these records are or will be retained for a period of 30 years.



Tips for ensuring the integrity of qualifications

ASQA will focus on evidence demonstrating the integrity and credibility of qualifications issued.

This might mean testing that your systems and risk controls are robust. ASQA may look at whether your issuance practice aligns with your documented systems (for example confirming with past students when their certification was issued).

ASQA's previous regulatory experience has found examples of non-compliance with these requirements. To ensure the integrity of qualifications, RTOs should avoid:

- inadequate verification of identity when online delivery and assessment is used—for example, not ensuring that the person completing the assessment is the person to whom the credential is issued
- using outdated course nomenclature or outdated information such as superseded units of competency
- not clearly identifying the RTO
- inaccurate or incomplete registers
- not providing information about the language of instruction (for an organisation providing training in languages other than English).



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You must provide evidence of:

- how your organisation will ensure certification is only issued when all required assessments have been completed
- templates for qualifications, records of results and statements of attainment that meet all requirements
- how you will ensure certification is issued within 30 days
- a register of qualifications and statement of attainment that will record to whom and when the qualification and statement of attainment was conferred and issued
- a policy that permits the replacement of certification documentation
- how students will access records of certification issued to them
- how you will retain records of qualifications and statements of attainment issued for 30 years.

ASQA has developed sample templates that are included in the [ASQA fact sheet on sample AQF documentation](#).



Clause 3.6—Participate in the Student Identifier scheme

Clause 3.6

The RTO meets the requirements of the Student Identifier scheme, including:

- a) verifying with the Registrar, a Student Identifier provided to it by an individual before using that Student Identifier for any purpose
- b) ensuring that it will not issue AQF certification documentation to an individual without being in receipt of a verified Student Identifier for that individual, unless an exemption applies under the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*
- c) ensuring that where an exemption described in clause 3.6 (b) applies, it will inform the student prior to either the completion of the enrolment or commencement of training and assessment, whichever occurs first, that the results of the training will not be accessible through the Commonwealth and will not appear on any authenticated VET transcript prepared by the Registrar
- d) ensuring the security of Student Identifiers and all related documentation under its control, including information stored in its student management systems.

What clause 3.6 means for your RTO

The AVETMISS is a national data standard that ensures consistent and accurate capture and reporting of VET information about students.

The Student Identifier scheme, enabled by the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*, allows students to access a single online record of their VET outcomes. The scheme also helps employers and other RTOs to confirm these outcomes.

The online system provides each student with a USI.

Unless the student him/herself or the training the student undertakes is exempt, your RTO must only issue a qualification or statement of attainment to a student after:

- the student has provided you with a verified USI, or
- you have applied for a USI on behalf of the student.

Some RTOs are exempt from providing full AVETMISS data under the [National VET Provider Collection Data Requirements Policy](#) for delivery of certain training programs to certain types of student. Where an exemption has been acknowledged, you do not have to obtain a USI before issuing a qualification or statement of attainment. However, you must advise students before they enrol or start their training or assessment that their achievements will not appear on their authenticated VET transcript or be available to them via the USI transcript service.

USIs can be created and verified using the [USI Organisation Portal](#). To avoid any delays in issuing certification documentation, ensure that you apply for or verify the student's USI when they enrol.

Your RTO must protect the security of all information related to USIs. Put sufficient security measures in place to protect both digital and hard-copy records from loss, damage or unauthorised access. This may include:

- storing records in locked cabinets
- restricting access to data stored on networks
- requiring strong passwords on all network-connected computers
- other security measures.

Create back-up copies of records and store them securely.

Records of all AQF certification documentation issued by RTOs must be kept for 30 years. Where a qualification or statement of attainment is recorded in the Student Identifier scheme, your RTO will not need to retain additional records to demonstrate this, as the records required will exist within the Student Identifier scheme.

A guide to compliance

For many RTOs, a proprietary student management system provides most or all of the evidence required to demonstrate compliance with clause 3.6. An effective system ensures a verified USI for a student is stored in the system prior to their qualification or statement of attainment being issued. Be prepared to demonstrate that records have been stored correctly in your student management system.

Some students are exempt from requiring a USI

An RTO should ensure prior to or at enrolment if a student is entitled to a USI. There are approved exemptions identified in the *Student Identifiers Act 2014* and the [National VET Provider Collection Data Requirements Policy](#) identifying students who are exempt from requiring a USI.

You must retain evidence about the security of both digital and hard-copy records. The evidence may vary depending on the approach taken, but must show that records are secure from unauthorised access, loss or damage.

If your RTO's delivery to a particular student has an exemption from reporting AVETMISS data (and therefore from requiring a verified USI prior to issuance) you must retain evidence of that exemption having been granted to the RTO or being entitled to by the student.

Where exemption applies, you must also retain evidence that you inform students that their assessment results will not appear on their authenticated VET transcript or be available to them through the USI system. For example, this might involve a declaration the student acknowledges during the enrolment process.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You must provide evidence of how your RTO will ensure compliance with all requirements of the Student Identifier scheme.

Additional guidance

The [National VET Provider Collection Data Requirements Policy](#) and the USI Office's published [exemptions from reporting the USI](#) provide details of the current exemption arrangements. In 2017, these include situations where the collection and reporting of training data by specified types of RTOs:

- raises national security, border protection and policing issues
- affects the provision of emergency, fire, rescue or first-aid services to the Australian community
- relates to a specific list of short standalone units/modules.

If your RTO holds an exemption (for certain types of training to certain types of student) from the USI and reporting requirements, you must inform your clients and students (before training starts) that the training:

- will not be included in the National VET Provider Collection
- will not appear on the authenticated VET transcript obtainable from the USI Registry System.

Where an exemption applies, training organisations will be able to issue VET qualifications and statements of attainment to students who do not have a USI. Training organisations with an exemption will not be required to include a USI for those students in any submissions of AVETMISS data to the National VET Provider Collection.

Chapter 6—Regulatory compliance and governance practice

Introduction

The *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* (the Standards) and clauses relevant to registered training organisations' (RTOs) regulatory compliance, reporting and governance practice underpin the good management of RTOs—and, as a result, their effective functioning and sustainability as businesses.

These Standards support RTOs to provide high-quality student experiences and learning outcomes.

Under the Standards relevant to regulatory compliance and governance, RTOs are responsible for:

- ensuring authorised executive officers are in place and meet Fit and Proper Person Requirements (clause 7.1)
- satisfying Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements (clause 7.2)
- complying and reporting (clauses 2.1 and 8.4 to 8.6)
- recording, monitoring and reporting third-party arrangements (clauses 2.3, 2.4 and 8.3)
- holding public liability insurance (clause 7.4)
- meeting Data Provision Requirements (clause 7.5)
- providing requested information to ASQA (clauses 8.1 and 8.2).



Clause 7.1—Authorised officers

Ensure authorised executive officers are in place and meet Fit and Proper Person Requirements.

Clause 7.1

The RTO ensures that its executive officers or high managerial agent:

- are vested with sufficient authority to ensure the RTO complies with the RTO Standards at all times
- meet each of the relevant criteria specified in the Fit and Proper Person Requirements in Schedule 3.

What clause 7.1 means for your RTO

RTOs are responsible for:

- ensuring authorised officers are in place and vested with sufficient authority to ensure compliance
- ensuring authorised officers meet Fit and Proper Person Requirements.

To operate effectively, managers must have authority to ensure that their RTO complies with the Standards at all times. If your RTO is part of a larger organisation, it is particularly important that the people actually managing the RTO are able to make decisions that ensure compliance.

All executive officers (defined by the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* (NVR Act) as anyone who has a role in managing the RTO or who owns more than 15 per cent) and high managerial agents (defined by the NVR Act as anyone with responsibilities that may represent the organisation) of your RTO must meet all relevant criteria of the Fit and Proper Person Requirements at all times as outlined in Schedule 3.

A 'fit and proper person' declaration, including any relevant disclosures, is to be provided in accordance with ASQA's requirements, when:

- you apply for initial registration or to renew registration as an RTO
- you engage a new manager or agent (on either an employment, contract or volunteer basis)
- a person procures more than 15 per cent of the RTO's ownership (either directly or through their ownership of another corporation).

In your annual declaration on compliance, you will also be required to testify that:

- all executive officers and high managerial agents have been reported to ASQA
- that they continue to meet the Fit and Proper Person Requirements.

Based on information disclosed in fit and proper person declarations and any other information available or accessible to ASQA, ASQA will assess whether your organisation satisfies the Fit and Proper Person Requirements for initial or continued registration.

You also need to advise ASQA if anything happens that means one or more people may no longer meet the requirements.

A guide to compliance

Evidence that shows compliance will vary depending on the structure of the organisation:

- If you are a sole trader or the sole shareholder/director, it is obvious that the relevant authority is in place and no evidence would be required.
- If your RTO is larger, with multiple influential managers and agents, you might demonstrate that managers and agents have sufficient authority by providing organisational charts, position descriptions, duty statements and delegation documents.

Evidence would usually be provided with applications for initial registration or renewal of registration, or when you notify ASQA of any new managers. ASQA's registration and notification processes provide guidance to RTOs about any evidence required at that point. These processes can be accessed on ASQA's website at <https://www.asqa.gov.au/news-publications/forms-guides>

Be aware that under ASQA's proactive risk-based approach to regulation, ASQA may request evidence at any time.

Disclosure that a manager or agent has reportable history against the fit and proper person criteria does not necessarily mean the RTO does not satisfy the requirements. Likewise, removal of a manager or agent who has reportable history does not necessarily mean the RTO does satisfy the requirements.

ASQA makes decisions about whether an RTO satisfies the Fit and Proper Person Requirements through a holistic assessment. This assessment considers multiple factors including officers' disclosures, known information, provider cooperation and potential risk exposure.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You must provide relevant evidence with your application. The application process provides guidance to applicants about the specific evidence required for all executive officers and high managerial agents to declare reportable history against suitability criteria and for the entity to demonstrate how it satisfies the Fit and Proper Person Requirements.



Clause 7.2—Assessment of financial viability risk

Clause 7.2

The RTO satisfies the *Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements*.

What clause 7.2 means for your RTO

Your RTO is required to present an acceptable level of financial viability risk at all times (this includes considering any parent entities). ASQA assesses each RTO's financial viability risk to evaluate the likelihood of business continuity and the RTO's capacity to achieve quality outcomes, as outlined in the *Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements 2011*. ASQA considers this against the potential for adverse consequences if your entity collapses or becomes unviable, and makes a judgement about whether the level of risk is acceptable, unacceptable, or requires additional controls.

To enable a preliminary financial viability risk assessment, the initial registration application requires the applicant to provide:

- a range of financial sustainability information
- independent certification.

ASQA may also require your RTO to undergo a financial viability risk assessment at any other time.

A guide to compliance

Evidence that shows compliance will vary depending on the structure of the organisation and its business.

- A small RTO that enrolls students on pay-as-you-go, fee-for-service arrangements and receives no government funding would have low financial viability risk exposure. This RTO would be likely to be allowed a high level of tolerance by ASQA.
- A large RTO that relies largely on public funding—or other demand-driven narrow revenue sources—would present as higher risk. This RTO would require more in-depth consideration and ongoing scrutiny.

ASQA may require you to provide evidence of acceptable financial viability risk. This evidence may include:

- financial statements and tax records
- business plans or projections
- Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) reports
- dependency statements
- independent financial assessments or audit opinions
- government contracts.

ASQA may request this evidence with applications for initial registration or renewal of registration, or at any other time.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You must provide relevant evidence with your application. The application process provides guidance to applicants about the specific evidence required to demonstrate that the organisation satisfies the Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements.



Clauses 2.1 and 8.4 to 8.6—Compliance and reporting

Clause 2.1

The RTO ensures it complies with these Standards at all times, including where services are being delivered on its behalf. This applies to all operations of an RTO within its scope of registration.

Clause 8.4

The RTO provides an annual declaration on compliance with these Standards to the VET [vocational education and training] regulator and in particular whether it:

- a) currently meets the requirements of the Standards across all its scope of registration and has met the requirements of the Standards for all AQF [Australian Qualifications Framework] certification documentation it has issued in the previous 12 months
- b) has training and assessment strategies and practices in place that ensure that all current and prospective learners will be trained and assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Standards.

Clause 8.5

The RTO complies with Commonwealth, state and territory legislation and regulatory requirements relevant to its operations.

Clause 8.6

The RTO ensures its staff and clients are informed of any changes to legislative and regulatory requirements that affect the services delivered.

What clauses 2.1 and 8.4 to 8.6 mean for your RTO

Under these Standards, RTOs are responsible for:

- compliance with the Standards at all times and compliance with all relevant legal requirements (clauses 2.1 and 8.5)
- reporting on compliance (clause 8.4)
- keeping staff and clients informed (clause 8.6).

You must remain compliant with the Standards at all times. When you monitor and review your RTO's services, ensure you include any arrangements where services are provided by a third party—your RTO is at all times responsible for the quality and compliance of **all services** provided under its RTO registration, regardless of where or by whom they are delivered.

You are required to provide an annual declaration on whether your RTO complies with the Standards. Failure to submit this annual declaration is a breach of your conditions of registration as an RTO. All RTOs registered by ASQA as at 1 January in a given year must submit an annual declaration by 31 March that year. The declaration must cover your entire RTO scope (including any third-party services within Australia or overseas).

Your RTO must also comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, demonstrating compliance (if applicable) with:

- the NVR Act and the legislative instruments it enables
- the VET Quality Framework
- legislation, regulations and standards related to delivery of training to overseas students
- VET Student Loans legislation and rules
- workplace health and safety legislation and regulations
- anti-discrimination legislation and regulations
- consumer protection requirements.

You must keep your staff and clients (including students) informed about any changes to legislative and regulatory requirements that may affect the delivery of training and assessment. It is your RTO's responsibility to ensure it is aware of all relevant requirements.

A guide to compliance

Providing an annual declaration confirms you have systematically monitored your RTO's compliance with the Standards and whether any issues identified have been rectified or otherwise appropriately risk-managed. The declaration must be signed by your RTO's chief executive officer (CEO), who is responsible for the RTO's operations.

The declaration requires your CEO to testify that:

- all information about the RTO on training.gov.au is accurate (or, if it is inaccurate, that ASQA has been notified of necessary changes)
- to the best of the CEO's knowledge, all owners and high managerial agents meet the Fit and Proper Person Requirements.

ASQA reviews your provider's profile prior to audit or at any time there is concern about risks, triggered by information from ASQA's risk intelligence. Your provider profile incorporates information about your RTO from a broad range of sources, including your annual declaration. At audit, ASQA will seek to determine that your practice matches what you have referenced in your annual declaration.

You should use the annual declaration as an opportunity to make a self-assessment of your RTO's systems and practices against the Standards, but your RTO may also choose to undertake more frequent self-assessments. ASQA has developed a self-assessment tool to assist RTOs in this task. The tool is available [here](#).

In terms of keeping your staff and students informed about any changes to legislative and regulatory requirements, your RTO might demonstrate compliance with requirements by showing that you have:

- published updates on legislation on a staff intranet
- sent regular newsletters to staff and students
- published online information about relevant changes.

ASQA may notify the relevant regulatory agency in cases where an RTO has not complied with any legislative or regulatory requirement. Breaches of legislative or regulatory requirements may have an impact on the continued registration of the RTO.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

In relation to clause 2.1, you should ensure you have documentation in place to meet your obligations under clauses 2.3 and 2.4, as this will demonstrate that you are in a position to comply with the Standards at all times in relation to any third-party arrangements.

In relation to clauses 8.4 to 8.6, you could show that you have identified all relevant legislative requirements and have processes in place to advise staff and students of any updates as they occur.



Clauses 2.3, 2.4 and 8.3—Recording, monitoring and reporting third-party arrangements

Clause 2.3

The RTO ensures that where services are provided on its behalf by a third party the provision of those services is the subject of a written agreement.

Clause 2.4

The RTO has sufficient strategies and resources to systematically monitor any services delivered on its behalf, and uses these to ensure that the services delivered comply with these Standards at all times.

Clause 8.3

The RTO notifies the Regulator:

- a) of any written agreement entered into under clause 2.3 for the delivery of services on its behalf within 30 calendar days of that agreement being entered into or prior to the obligations under the agreement taking effect, whichever occurs first, and
- b) within 30 calendar days of the agreement coming to an end.

What clauses 2.3, 2.4 and 8.3 mean for your RTO

RTOs are responsible for:

- monitoring independent third parties (clauses 2.3 and 2.4)
- reporting on any third-party arrangements entered into or concluding (clause 8.3).

If you do not use other organisations to provide any RTO-related services, you do not need to take any action relating to these requirements.

Your RTO is responsible for all services delivered under its registration, regardless of where these are conducted, including in other countries. This responsibility applies to all your obligations as an RTO, including:

- providing data
- cooperating with ASQA
- complying with advertising and marketing standards
- informing prospective students
- dealing with complaints and appeals
- collecting fees
- record-keeping.

Third-party arrangements must be documented and transparent to assist you in managing the quality of services and in effectively identifying and managing the risks.

You must have a written agreement with any third party that delivers services under your RTO's registration, including services such as:

- training and/or assessment
- providing educational and support services
- recruiting prospective students.

The requirement for a written agreement **does not apply** when:

- you hire trainers and/or assessors as contractors
- you make arrangements for advertising your services
- a workplace supervisor contributes to evidence collection or training.



Guidance for VET Student Loans-approved providers

VET Student Loans-approved providers are **prohibited from using any third party in recruiting students or providing information about VET Student Loans.**

What kind of third-party arrangements could RTOs have?

An RTO might be involved in third-party arrangements with:

- other RTOs
- non-registered training providers
- recruitment agents or brokers
- employment/job services agencies.

Third-party arrangements with other RTOs

An RTO may engage another RTO in order to provide specific training and assessment to its students on its behalf. (This type of arrangement was sometimes previously referred to as a 'partnership' or 'auspicing' arrangement.) For example, the RTO, ABC Training, delivers SIS30313 Certificate III in Fitness, which requires the delivery of HLTAID003 Provide First Aid as a core unit. ABC Training decides to engage a third-party RTO 'Uptown Training' to deliver HLTAID003 Provide First Aid to its SIS30313 learners.

Although Uptown Training undertakes the training and assessment, it is ABC Training that would record the outcome for the unit and issue the record of results and testamur accordingly.

Third-party arrangements with non-registered training providers

An RTO may engage another organisation that is not an RTO in order to provide specific training and assessment to its learners on its behalf.

For example, an RTO, 'DEF Training', delivers CHC30212 Certificate III in Aged Care. DEF Training decides to engage the 'Autumn of our Lives Aged Care Facility' to deliver learning and assessment which has been contextualised to the workplace.

Third-party arrangements with student recruitment agents or brokers

An RTO may engage an individual or party to recruit students on behalf of the RTO.

For example, a third-party organisation, 'Skills Today', advertises SIT40313 Certificate IV in Hospitality on its website on behalf of 'ABC Training'. As part of its third-party arrangement, Skills Today collects student enrolment information on behalf of ABC Training. Skills Today subsequently provides the student enrolments to ABC Training. This is considered a third-party arrangement, whether or not a commission is paid to Skills Today.

Employment service provider

An RTO might provide training for clients of an employment service provider (an organisation that helps find jobs for individuals seeking employment). In order to source employment for its clients and provide skilled workers to employers, an employment service provider may source training from one or more RTOs in order to upskill their clients.

For example, an employment service provider, 'Top Skills Employment', has an agreement in place with an RTO, 'ABC Training', which specifies that Top Skills Employment may utilise ABC Training for training and assessment to be provided to its clients. ABC Training may or may not provide a fee to Top Skills Employment in exchange for the enrolment of Top Skills' clients into a training product delivered by ABC Training.

Government-appointed intermediaries (in certain cases only)

- A government-appointed intermediary refers clients to various programs, including to training provided by RTOs.
- Government-appointed intermediaries do not recruit students on behalf of specific RTOs, but rather, fulfil their obligations in relation to their clients, on behalf of government departments. These intermediaries do not receive funding from a government departments, RTOs or prospective students in exchange for referrals.
- For example, a government-appointed intermediary—CUE Training Centre—has an arrangement in place with a government department to provide programs to unemployed youth, which may include a training component. CUE Training Centre refers its clients to one or more government-contracted RTOs in order to provide training to its clients.
- Examples of government appointed intermediaries include Australian Apprenticeship Centres; the Disability Services Commission; departments of correctional services; some employment service providers; and Migrant Resource Centres.
- However, in some cases, these government-appointed intermediaries may be providing other services or referring other prospective students on behalf of the RTO. **These cases are considered third-party arrangements and are therefore subject to the relevant Standards.**



Case study—Third-party arrangements with an employment agency

The ABP Workfind employment agency has been appointed by a government agency to identify if their clients are in the target group for a funded training program place. ABP Workfind refers its clients to one of several RTOs under this arrangement. ABP Workfind does not receive a fee for this referral and is not considered to be a third party as it is operating on behalf of the state government.

However, ABP Workfind also has an agreement in place with a specific RTO—Quality Training—which specifies that ABP Workfind will utilise Quality Training for training and assessment to be provided to its clients. Quality Training may or may not pay ABP Workfind a fee in exchange for the enrolment of clients into a training product delivered by Quality Training. This arrangement would be considered a third-party arrangement.

Activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners (students) may only be undertaken by a third party where these activities are subject to a written agreement. If a third party is directly engaging in two-way communication with individual prospective students about undertaking training and/or assessment at your RTO, they are undertaking activities related to the recruitment of prospective students.

To help each party understand its obligations, your written agreement should explain what is expected from each party in detail. For example, as your RTO is responsible for all marketing of your RTO's services, details of how marketing undertaken by the third party will be approved by your RTO should be included in the written agreement.

The written agreement must require that any third party delivering services cooperate with ASQA by providing information at any time it is requested and during audits and other monitoring activities.

Some RTOs closely control these arrangements and require third parties to only use resources provided by the RTO or to submit completed assessment material before qualifications or statements of attainment are issued.

Other RTOs operate in a much more flexible way, sometimes to the extent of allowing third parties to issue qualifications on behalf of the RTO. Be aware that the more flexible these arrangements are, the greater the risk to your RTO and the more closely you should monitor these arrangements to ensure the third party has complied with your written agreement.

ASQA's regulatory experience has identified that it is a particular area of concern where RTOs allow third parties to issue qualifications and statements of attainment on their behalf. Unless there are significant factors that make this necessary, **it is not recommended that third parties be permitted to issue qualifications or statements of attainment on behalf of your RTO.**

A guide to compliance

RTOs only need to retain evidence relating to these clauses if they have arrangements with third parties in place.

Your RTO must retain evidence of current written agreements for all third-party arrangements. While you can determine the format these agreements, any agreements should clearly describe the obligations of each party.

Your RTO must also retain evidence that you have developed and implemented strategies to systematically monitor services provided under third-party agreements to ensure that these services comply with the Standards. The evidence required to demonstrate compliance will depend on the extent of these arrangements. For example:

- if your RTO has multiple arrangements, or arrangements for delivery outside Australia, a scheduled monitoring program may be required to make sure the monitoring is systematic and that enough resources are available, and
- if your RTO has a single, tightly controlled arrangement, less formality may be needed.

Evidence could include schedules of reviews conducted and reports on these reviews. If a review identifies non-compliance, your RTO needs to retain evidence that this has been corrected and that the RTO is now compliant.

Your RTO must notify ASQA whenever it starts or ends a third-party agreement. Third-party arrangements may increase risk to the quality of your services; as such, any third-party arrangements will be considered as part of your provider risk profile.

You must notify ASQA of third-party arrangements using the [online form on the ASQA website](#).

ASQA's [fact sheet on third-party arrangements](#) includes additional guidance on meeting your obligations in relation to any such arrangements.

You should be aware that ASQA may interview third parties to verify how your arrangements are being implemented and monitored in practice and how practices align with your written agreements.



Tips on developing a written agreement

Your RTO can determine the format and content of your written agreement; however, the lists below include some basic guidance on what you might choose to include.

A written agreement with a third party providing training and assessment services on your behalf might include:

- the name of your RTO and the third party
- the start and end date of the agreement
- details of the RTO's operations, including all delivery locations in Australia or elsewhere
- clauses detailing your RTO's obligations under the agreement—for example, which party will:
 - issue qualifications and statements of attainment
 - provide pre-enrolment information
 - collect student fees and enrolment information.
- clauses detailing the obligations of the third party—for example, which party will provide the training and assessment materials, resources and facilities
- the mechanisms through which your RTO will systematically monitor the third party—for example, if the third-party is developing marketing initiatives and providing the training and assessment materials, resources and facilities:
 - how you will review these prior to use for all delivery sites
 - how you will ensure that trainers and assessors provided by the third-party meet the requirements of the Standards.
- record-keeping procedures for student enrolment information and completed student assessments
- clauses relating to which party will validate completed student assessments
- any of your RTO's obligations, or the third-party's obligations, relating to VET Student Loans, government-funded subsidies or other financial support

- clauses requiring the third party to cooperate with ASQA and to provide accurate responses to requests about delivery of services.

A written agreement with a third party providing recruitment services on your behalf might include:

- the name of your RTO and the third party
- the start and end date of the agreement
- clauses detailing your RTO's obligations under the agreement—for example, you might stipulate that your RTO will:
 - review all marketing initiatives
 - provide current and accurate pre-enrolment information
 - ensure that all information provided to a student meets the requirements specified in clauses 4.1, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 of the Standards
 - arrange translation of all materials in languages other than English.
- clauses detailing the obligations of the third party—for example, you might stipulate that the third party will:
 - provide your RTO with all marketing material before publishing
 - provide student enrolment information and student fees to the RTO
 - train their staff to assist with training package and enrolment enquiries
- any of your RTO's obligations, or the third party's obligations, relating to VET Student Loans, government-funded subsidies or other financial support
- detail of arrangements for commission or fees to be retained by the third party
- the mechanisms through which your RTO will systematically monitor the third party
- clauses requiring the third party to cooperate with ASQA and to provide accurate responses to requests about provision of services.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

If you are intending to use any third-party arrangements, you must have written agreements in place.

You must be able to show how you intend to monitor such arrangements.



Clause 7.5—Provide accurate information about performance and governance

Clause 7.5

The RTO provides accurate and current information on its performance and governance consistent with the *Data Provision Requirements* as updated from time to time.

What clause 7.5 means for your RTO

RTOs are responsible for providing accurate information about their performance and governance in accordance with clause 7.5.

The Data Provision Requirements outline information that your RTO is required to submit. Apart from information required with applications, this falls generally into two categories:

- Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) data
- quality indicator data.

Data such as national training activity is very important—this informs decision-making about policies and funding for the national VET system and allows measurement of the system's performance.

Quality indicator data provides information for RTOs about their students' experience of their services and can be used to continuously improve services for students and employers.

National VET provider collection data

AVETMISS is a national VET data standard that ensures the consistent and accurate capture and reporting of VET information about students, providers, courses and training outcomes. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is the custodian of the Standard, which forms the basis for collecting data for the national VET provider collection. Information on AVETMISS is available from the NCVER website.

Your RTO must obtain and report full AVETMISS data for all learners, except for specified training that is exempt under the *National VET Provider Collection Data Requirements Policy*.

Most student management systems can record and report AVETMISS data without additional entry. Some systems also manage online enrolment by learners. While this significantly reduces data entry by your RTO, data should be checked to make sure it is correct.

A register of data entry tools and student management systems is available on the NCVER website.

There are a number of other tools available on the NCVER website to support RTOs in submitting AVETMISS compliant data:

- a free online AVETMISS data entry tool if you do not have a student management system including data entry tools for RTOs with fewer than 100 students
- a free online AVETMISS data validation tool for RTOs to validate their data before submission. This entails a check to ensure that all mandated data fields are populated with data in an acceptable format.

Quality indicator data/quality surveys

All RTOs must collect quality indicator data using the required learner engagement and employer satisfaction questionnaires and provide an annual summary report of their performance against the learner engagement and employer satisfaction quality indicators to ASQA using one of the following systems:

- the survey management, analysis and reporting tool (no longer available for download)
- ASQA's [quality indicator annual summary report template](#).

You must submit your quality indicator data reports for the previous calendar year (1 January to 31 December) in full to qidata@asqa.gov.au by close of business 30 June each year.

A guide to compliance

ASQA's regulatory experience shows that some RTOs are not lodging their AVETMISS data or are lodging data that is rejected as it is not AVETMISS-compliant. Many tools and supports are available to assist RTOs and these should be used to ensure the requirements of the Standard are met.

All RTOs must report to the national collection, including:

- those that access state or territory government funding arrangements, which usually require more frequent reporting through their state training authority
- those that only deliver training activity that is exempt from requiring full AVETMISS compliance, which are required to report aggregate competency commencement and completion data instead
- those that conducted no VET activity and issued no VET certification in a reporting year, which are required to submit a 'nil activity' report.

National VET provider collection data—due by the end of February each year

RTOs must retain evidence that they have submitted full AVETMISS data for all learners as required in the *National VET Provider Collection Data Requirements Policy*. This is due annually by the end of February for the previous calendar year.

RTOs that conducted no VET activity—that is, no student enrolment, training/assessment delivery or AQF certification issuance—in the previous calendar year are still required to report this through the AVETMISS validation system.

Quality indicator data—due to ASQA in June each year/quality surveys

RTOs must retain evidence they have collected and/or submitted quality indicator data—or, if they have been registered for less than a year, that they will be able to submit quality indicator data—using the required learner engagement and employer satisfaction questionnaires. This is due to ASQA annually by 30 June for the previous calendar year.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You will need to demonstrate that your organisation has the means to collect and submit complete AVETMISS data.

This may be in the form of an installed student management system with this capacity. Note that a quote for such a system is not sufficient evidence—be prepared to demonstrate that the system has been installed, configured and is available to relevant staff who are trained in its use.

You will also need to provide evidence of how your organisation will collect and report learner engagement and employer satisfaction quality indicator surveys.



Clause 7.4—Hold public liability insurance

Clause 7.4

The RTO holds public liability insurance that covers the scope of its operations throughout its registration period.

What clause 7.4 means for your RTO

RTOs are responsible for ensuring they hold public liability insurance throughout their registration period.

Your RTO must hold public liability insurance to cover all training and/or assessment activities it provides as an RTO.

A guide to compliance

RTOs can retain evidence that they hold public liability insurance by keeping a copy of a certificate of currency or similar. Quotes and invoices are not sufficient evidence to prove that insurance is actually in place. The evidence provided must:

- identify that your RTO is covered by the policy
- either confirm that training and assessment activities are covered, or that there are no restrictions on the activities covered.



Guidance for enterprise RTOs

Generally, enterprise RTOs exist as a function within the enterprise business structure, rather than an independent business entity (i.e. the RTO shares the same Australian Business Number as the business within which it is embedded).

As such, enterprise RTOs generally do not hold public liability insurance in their own right. Therefore, enterprise RTOs might demonstrate compliance by providing evidence of the public liability insurance for the overarching business entity.

You are required to confirm that you will obtain suitable public liability insurance as soon as registration is granted. This may be checked at any time and will be checked at the post-initial audit (approximately 12 months after your RTO commences operations).



Clauses 8.1 and 8.2—Provide requested information to ASQA

Clause 8.1

The RTO cooperates with the VET Regulator:

- a) by providing accurate and truthful responses to information requests from the VET Regulator relevant to the RTO's registration
- b) in the conduct of audits and the monitoring of its operations
- c) by providing quality/performance indicator data
- d) by providing information about substantial changes to its operations or any event that would significantly affect the RTO's ability to comply with these standards within 90 calendar days of the change occurring
- e) by providing information about significant changes to its ownership within 90 calendar days of the change occurring
- f) in the retention, archiving, retrieval and transfer of records.

Clause 8.2

The RTO ensures that any third party delivering services on its behalf is required under written agreement to cooperate with the VET Regulator:

- a) by providing accurate and factual responses to information requests from the VET Regulator relevant to the delivery of services
- b) in the conduct of audits and the monitoring of its operations.

What clauses 8.1 and 8.2 mean for your RTO

RTOs are responsible for:

- cooperating with ASQA
- ensuring any third party delivering services on the RTO's behalf is required to cooperate with ASQA.

Your RTO and any third parties delivering services on your behalf must cooperate with ASQA in responding to requests for information, undergoing audits and managing records. The information you and third parties provide to ASQA must be accurate, truthful and authentic. Any documentation provided at audit must be an accurate representation of your RTO's practices.

You must notify ASQA within 90 days of the following:

- changes to executive officers or high managerial agents
- changes to financial administration status (e.g. liquidators being appointed)
- changes to legal name or type of legal entity
- changes to ownership, directorship or control (including changes to parent entities)
- significant mergers or associations with other RTOs
- registration (or application) with other education regulators (e.g. higher education provider with the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency)
- anything that may affect the fit and proper person status of an influential representative of the RTO
- changes to any fundamental funding/revenue source (e.g. access to or loss of government funding contract allocation)
- changes to the RTO's business strategy (e.g. more to online delivery, assessment-only delivery, offshore delivery)
- delivery to apprentices or trainees employed under a training contract
- any other significant event.

[See this web page](#) for information about how to notify ASQA of changes, and the information and evidence that must be attached in each case.

Make sure you notify ASQA immediately if the contact details for your RTO change. Information on how to notify ASQA is [available here](#).

ASQA will use the contact details published on the national register to contact your RTO.

ASQA is not able to provide any information about your RTO's registration to anyone other than the published contacts.

As outlined in relation to clauses 1.8 to 1.12, you must securely retain all completed assessment items relating to each unit or module for six months from the date the decision on competence for the individual unit or module was made. If you can't retain the actual item (e.g. construction projects or perishable items), retain evidence, such as photographs, that the standard of the item or work completed justifies the assessment outcome. **Completed assessment items, such as assignments, should not be handed back to students until the six-month period has expired, although you could provide them with a copy.**

ASQA auditors will not require you to provide completed assessments that are more than six months old (unless you have been specifically directed by ASQA to retain these records for longer). However, you may have to retain these records for longer if you deliver training under a funding contract or are subject to additional record retention requirements. For more information, refer to ASQA's [General direction—retention requirements for completed student assessment items](#).

As outlined in relation to clause 7.5, your RTO must collect and report on a range of data about your business and operations, including:

- AVETMISS-compliant Total VET Activity data
- quality indicator data.

If requested, you must provide ASQA with:

- business registration records e.g. ASIC reports
- information demonstrating that the organisation satisfies the Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements
- information demonstrating relevant people associated with the organisation satisfy the Fit and Proper Person Requirements
- information on strategies, resources and other materials used to conduct training and assessment
- documents demonstrating trainer and assessor credentials
- information about delivery operations such as modes, venues, funding, student types and activity conducted
- evidence about record management systems
- public liability insurance coverage
- the names of current or past students, who may be surveyed about satisfaction levels
- any other information required to demonstrate compliance with the VET Quality Framework.

Should your organisation stop operating as an RTO, you will need to transfer sufficient digital records to ASQA to confirm the training and assessment each student has completed. Information about withdrawing your registration is available from www.asqa.gov.au.

If your RTO uses third parties to provide services, you must ensure they cooperate with ASQA during any audits and by retaining and providing records or other information. Your RTO is responsible for ensuring any third party meets these requirements. Your written agreements with any third parties must specify that they are required to cooperate with ASQA by providing information where requested and in the conduct of audits.

A guide to compliance

Your RTO can demonstrate compliance through cooperation with ASQA at any time information is requested, if ASQA checks information and confirms that it is accurate.

At audit, ASQA may seek evidence to verify that your information and practices are aligned. ASQA may interview students, trainers and assessors and third parties to validate information.



Guidance for applicants for initial registration

You must demonstrate that:

- you have systems in place for collecting, managing and reporting accurate and current information
- any third-party agreements include a requirement for cooperation with ASQA
- staff are trained in the protocols and use of systems and understand the requirements of this Standard.

Appendix 1

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Appendix 2

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015



Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

made under subsection 185(1) and subsection 186(1) of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* (the Act).

Compilation No. 1

Compilation date: 6 July 2017

Includes amendments up to: Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) Amendment 2017 [F2017L00882]

Prepared by the Department of Education and Training, Canberra

Corrected Authorised Version registered 10/10/2017 F2017C00663

About this compilation

This compilation

This is a compilation of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* that shows the text of the law as amended and in force on 6 July 2017 (the **compilation date**).

The notes at the end of this compilation (the **endnotes**) include information about amending laws and the amendment history of provisions of the compiled law.

Uncommenced amendments

The effect of uncommenced amendments is not shown in the text of the compiled law. Any uncommenced amendments affecting the law are accessible on the Legislation Register (www.legislation.gov.au). The details of amendments made up to, but not commenced at, the compilation date are underlined in the endnotes. For more information on any uncommenced amendments, see the series page on the Legislation Register for the compiled law.

Application, saving and transitional provisions for provisions and amendments

If the operation of a provision or amendment of the compiled law is affected by an application, saving or transitional provision that is not included in this compilation, details are included in the endnotes.

Modifications

If the compiled law is modified by another law, the compiled law operates as modified but the modification does not amend the text of the law. Accordingly, this compilation does not show the text of the compiled law as modified. For more information on any modifications, see the series page on the Legislation Register for the compiled law.

Self-repealing provisions

If a provision of the compiled law has been repealed in accordance with a provision of the law, details are included in the endnotes.

Commonwealth of Australia
National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011
Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

PART 1 PRELIMINARY

1. Name of Instrument

This legislative instrument may be cited as the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*.

2. Authority

This legislative instrument is made under:

- (a) Subsection 185(1) of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*; and
- (b) Subsection 186(1) of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

3. Purpose

3.1 The purpose of this instrument is to make:

- (a) *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations*, being those standards specified in Attachment A; and
- (b) *Fit and Proper Person Requirements*, being those requirements specified in schedule 3 of Attachment A.

3.2 For the purposes of subsection 185(2) of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*, the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations* are at Attachment A.

3.3 For the purpose of subsection 186(2) of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*, the *Fit and Proper Person Requirements* are at schedule 3 of Attachment A.

4. Commencement

For each class of person or NVR Registered Training Organisation specified in column 1 of the following table, the provisions of this instrument specified in column 2, commence on the date specified in column 3.

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 1

Compilation No. 1

Compilation date: 06/07/2017

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Column 1 Class of persons or NVR RTOs	Column 2 Provision(s)	Column 3 Date of Commencement
(i) persons applying to register as a new NVR RTO on, or after, 1 January 2015	All	1 January 2015
(ii) All NVR RTOs	Clause 3.6 of Attachment A	1 January 2015
(iii) All NVR RTOs registered: (a) prior to 1 January 2015; or (b) on or after 1 January 2015, where the application for registration was made prior to 1 January 2015.	All provisions, but not including clause 3.6 of Attachment A	1 April 2015

5. Revocation

5.1 For each class of person or NVR Registered Training Organisation specified in column 1 of the following table, the provisions of the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012* specified in column 2, are revoked on the date specified in column 3.

Column 1 Class of persons or NVR RTOs	Column 2 Provision(s)	Column 3 Date of Revocation
(i) persons applying to register as a new NVR RTO on, or after, 1 January 2015	All	1 January 2015
(ii) All NVR RTOs	SNR 12.5 and SNR 23.5	1 January 2015
(iii) All NVR RTOs registered: (a) prior to 1 January 2015; or (b) on or after 1 January 2015, where the application for registration was made prior to 1 January 2015.	All provisions, but not including SNR 12.5 and SNR 23.5	1 April 2015

5.2 For each class of person or NVR Registered Training Organisation specified in column 1 of the following table, the *Fit and Proper Person Requirements 2011* are revoked on the date specified in column 2.

Column 1 Class of persons or NVR RTOs	Column 2 Date of Revocation
(i) persons applying to register as a new NVR RTO on, or after, 1 January 2015	1 January 2015
(iii) All NVR RTOs registered: (a) prior to 1 January 2015; or (b) on or after 1 January 2015, where the application for registration was made prior to 1 January 2015.	1 April 2015

6. Transitional Arrangements

6.1 The revocation of the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012* does not affect the validity of any action taken or decision made under that instrument. A decision made under the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012* is taken to continue to have effect as if it were made under the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*.

6.2 From 1 January 2015, whenever the term 'Unique Student Identifier' is used in the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012*, that term is taken to be replaced with the definition for Student Identifiers within Part 1 of Attachment A, until full revocation of the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012* takes effect on 1 April 2015.

6.3 The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and those RTOs regulated by the VRQA are not bound to comply with this instrument until such time as the Victorian Parliament passes an Act to amend the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) to incorporate appropriate references to the Standards, and that Act has commenced.

6.4 The Western Australian Training Accreditation Council (WA TAC) and RTOs regulated by WA TAC will not be bound by this instrument until such time as the *Vocational Education and Training (General) Regulations 2009* (WA) have been amended to incorporate appropriate references to the Standards, and those amendments have commenced.

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Attachment A

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PART 1 – Preliminary

Name of Standards

These Standards are the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*. These Standards form part of the VET Quality Framework, a system which ensures the integrity of nationally recognised qualifications.

RTOs are required to comply with these Standards and with the:

- *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* or equivalent legislation covering VET regulation in a non-referring State as the case requires
- VET Quality Framework

Note – the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*, or equivalent legislation covering VET regulation in a non-referring State, provides the VET Regulator with the powers necessary to carry out its functions. Nothing in these Standards may be read as limiting or diminishing those powers.

These Standards should be read in conjunction with the:

- Standards for Training Packages
- Standards for VET Accredited Courses
- Standards for VET Regulators

Purpose

The purpose of these Standards is to:

1. set out the requirements that an organisation must meet in order to be an RTO;
2. ensure that training products delivered by RTOs meet the requirements of training packages or VET accredited courses, and have integrity for employment and further study; and
3. ensure RTOs operate ethically with due consideration of learners' and enterprises' needs.

Structure

These Standards consist of eight Standards. Under each Standard is a set of Clauses of the Standard.

To comply with a Standard, the RTO must meet each of the Clauses. A person applying to register as a new RTO must demonstrate the capacity to meet these Standards for all of the person's intended scope of registration.

For each Standard a context statement is also included. The context does not form part of the Standard itself, and has been included to provide background information to help readers understand the Standard.

The Standards and Clauses are collectively referred to as Standards.

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

5

Compilation No. 1

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Definitions

The glossary at the beginning of these Standards defines certain words and expressions which have specific meaning in these Standards.

Glossary

In these Standards, unless the contrary intention appears:

Access and equity means policies and approaches aimed at ensuring that VET is responsive to the individual needs of clients whose age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment or remote location may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of suitable outcomes.

Accredited short course means a course accredited by the VET Regulator in accordance with the Standards for VET Accredited Courses that leads to an AQF statement of attainment.

AQF certification documentation is the set of official documents that confirms that an AQF qualification or statement of attainment has been issued to an individual.

AQF qualification means an AQF qualification type endorsed in a training package or accredited in a VET accredited course.

Assessment means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace, as specified in a training package or VET accredited course.

Assessment system is a coordinated set of documented policies and procedures (including assessment materials and tools) that ensure assessments are consistent and are based on the Principles of Assessment contained in Table 1.8-1 and the Rules of Evidence contained in Table 1.8-2.

Assessors are persons who assess a learner's competence in accordance with Clauses 1.13 to 1.16.

Audit means an audit or compliance audit undertaken by the VET Regulator.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) means the framework for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system, as agreed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory ministerial council with responsibility for higher education.

Authenticated VET transcript has the meaning given in the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*.

Client means a learner, enterprise or organisation that uses or purchases the services provided by an RTO.

Code means the unique identifier for units of competency, skill sets, VET accredited courses, modules, AQF qualifications or training packages as required by the Standards for Training Packages and Standards for VET Accredited Courses.

Competency means the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

Current industry skills are the knowledge, skills and experience required by VET trainers and assessors and those who provide training and assessment under supervision to ensure that their training and assessment is based on current industry practices and meets the needs of industry.

Current industry skills may be informed by consultations with industry and may include, but is not limited to:

- a) having knowledge of and/or experience using the latest techniques and processes;
- b) possessing a high level of product knowledge;
- c) understanding and knowledge of legislation relevant to the industry and to employment and workplaces;
- d) being customer/client-oriented;
- e) possessing formal industry and training qualifications; and
- f) training content that reflects current industry practice.

Data Provision Requirements are the requirements for data provision as agreed by the Industry and Skills Council and implemented by the VET Regulator as required by its governing legislation.

Educational and support services may include, but are not limited to:

- a) pre-enrolment materials;
- b) study support and study skills programs;
- c) language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) programs or referrals to these programs;
- d) equipment, resources and/or programs to increase access for learners with disabilities and other learners in accordance with access and equity;
- e) learning resource centres;
- f) mediation services or referrals to these services;
- g) flexible scheduling and delivery of training and assessment;
- h) counselling services or referrals to these services;
- i) information and communications technology (ICT) support;
- j) learning materials in alternative formats, for example, in large print;
- k) learning and assessment programs contextualised to the workplace; and
- l) any other services that the RTO considers necessary to support learners to achieve competency.

Executive officer means:

- a) a person, by whatever name called and whether or not a director of the organisation, who is concerned in or takes part in the management of the RTO; or
- b) an administrator, receiver and manager, or liquidator of the organisation (other than a receiver and manager, or liquidator, appointed by a court); or
- c) if the RTO is a body corporate:
 - i. a person who, at any time during a period for which the organisation is registered, owns 15% or more of the organisation; or
 - ii. a person who, at any time during a period for which the organisation is registered, is entitled to receive 15% or more of dividends paid by the organisation; or
 - iii. the administrator of a deed of company arrangement executed by an organisation; or
 - iv. a trustee or other person administering a compromise or arrangement made between the organisation and another person or other persons.

Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements means the requirements made under section 158 of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* or equivalent requirements made or adopted by the VET Regulator of a non-referring State as the case requires.

Government entity means:

- a) a Department of State of the Commonwealth; or
- b) a Department of the Parliament established under the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* of the Commonwealth;
- c) an Executive Agency, or Statutory Agency, within the meaning of the *Public Service Act 1999* of the Commonwealth;
- d) a Department of State of a State or Territory; or
- e) an organisation that:
 - (i) is not an entity; and
 - (ii) is either established by the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory (whether under a law or not) to carry on an enterprise or established for a public purpose by an Australian law; and
 - (iii) can be separately identified by reference to the nature of the activities carried on through the organisation or the location of the organisation whether or not the organisation is part of a department or branch described in paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d) or of another organisation of the kind described in this paragraph.

High managerial agent means an employee or agent of the organisation with duties of such responsibility that his or her conduct may fairly be assumed to represent the organisation in relation to the business of providing courses.

Independent validation means, for the purposes of Clause 1.25, that the validation is carried out by a validator or validators who:

- a) are not employed or subcontracted by the RTO to provide training and assessment; and
- b) have no other involvement or interest in the operations of the RTO.

Industry means the bodies that have a stake in the services provided by RTOs. These can include, but are not limited to:

- a) enterprise/industry clients, e.g. employers;
- b) group training organisations;
- c) industry organisations;
- d) industry regulators;
- e) industry skills councils or similar bodies;
- f) industry training advisory bodies; and
- g) unions.

Industry and Skills Council means the Commonwealth, State and Territory ministerial council established by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), or its successor.

Industry engagement, for the purposes of Clauses 1.5 & 1.6, may include, but is not limited to, strategies such as:

- a) partnering with local employers, regional/national businesses, relevant industry bodies and/or enterprise RTOs;
- b) involving employer nominees in industry advisory committees and/or reference groups;
- c) embedding staff within enterprises;
- d) networking in an ongoing way with industry networks, peak bodies and/or employers;
- e) developing networks of relevant employers and industry representatives to participate in assessment validation; and
- f) exchanging knowledge, staff, and/or resources with employers, networks and industry bodies.

Industry regulator means a body or organisation responsible for the regulation and/or licensing arrangements within a specific industry or occupation.

Learner means a person being trained and/or assessed by the RTO for the purpose of issuing AQF certification documentation.

Licensed or regulated outcome means compliance with an eligibility requirement for an occupational licence or a legislative requirement to hold a particular training product in order to carry out an activity.

Mode of delivery means the method adopted to deliver training and assessment, including online, distance, or blended methods.

Module means a group of learning outcomes in a VET accredited course where it can be established that it is not possible to develop an appropriate unit of competency.

National Register means the register maintained by the Commonwealth Department responsible for VET and referred to in section 216 of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) Logo means the logo used nationally to signify training packages and VET accredited courses.

Operations of an RTO include training, assessment and administration and support services related to its registration, including those delivered across jurisdictions and offshore.

Person includes a body politic or corporate as well as an individual.

Professional development means activities that develop and/or maintain an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a trainer or assessor. This includes both formal and informal activities that encompass vocational competencies, currency of industry skills and knowledge and practice of vocational training, learning and assessment, including competency based training and assessment. Examples of professional development activities include:

- a) participation in courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, or formal learning programs;
- b) participation in mentoring, professional associations or other learning networks;
- c) personal development through individual research or reading of publications or other relevant information;
- d) participation in moderation or validation activities; and
- e) participation in industry release schemes.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) means an assessment process that assesses the competency/s of an individual that may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual meets the requirements specified in the training package or VET accredited courses.

- a) formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree);
- b) non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction, but does not lead to the attainment of an AQF

qualification or statement of attainment (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business); and

- c) informal learning refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative).

Record means a written, printed, or electronic document providing evidence that activities have been performed.

Registrar has the meaning given in the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*.

Registration means registration as an RTO by the VET Regulator, where that registration is then entered on the National Register.

RTO means a Registered Training Organisation.

RTO code means the registration identifier given to the RTO on the National Register.

Scope of registration means the training products for which an RTO is registered to issue AQF certification documentation. It allows the RTO to:

- a) both provide training delivery and assessment resulting in the issuance of AQF certification documentation by the RTO; or
- b) provide assessment resulting in the issuance of AQF certification documentation by the RTO.

Services mean training, assessment, related educational and support services and/or any activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners. It does not include services such as student counselling, mediation or ICT support.

Skill set means a single unit of competency or a combination of units of competency from a training package which link to a licensing or regulatory requirement, or a defined industry need.

Standards for VET Accredited Courses are the standards made under subsection 188(1) of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* or the equivalent requirements adopted by a non-referring State.

Statement of attainment means a statement issued to a person confirming that the person has satisfied the requirements of the unit/s of competency or accredited short course specified in the statement.

Statistically valid means for the purposes of these Standards, a random sample of appropriate size is selected to enable confidence that the result is sufficiently accurate to be accepted as representative of the total population of assessments being validated.

Student Identifier has the meaning given in the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*.

Third party means any party that provides services on behalf of the RTO but does not include a contract of employment between an RTO and its employee.

Trainers are persons who provide training in accordance with Clause 1.13, 1.14 and 1.16.

Training is the process used by an RTO or a third party delivering services on its behalf, to facilitate learning and the acquisition of competencies in relation to the training product on the RTO's scope of registration.

training and assessment credential are those qualifications, skill sets and units of competency, or relevant combination of those qualifications, skill sets and units of competency, specified in the table at Schedule 1.

Training and assessment strategies and practices are the approach of, and method adopted by, an RTO with respect to training and assessment designed to enable learners to meet the requirements of the training package or accredited course.

Training Package means the components of a training package endorsed by the Industry and Skills Council or its delegate in accordance with the Standards for Training Packages. The endorsed components of a Training Package are: units of competency; assessment requirements (associated with each unit of competency); qualifications; and credit arrangements. The endorsed components form part of the requirements that an RTO must meet under these Standards. A training package also consists of a non-endorsed, quality assured companion volume/s which contains industry advice to RTOs on different aspects of implementation.

Training Product means AQF qualification, skill set, unit of competency, accredited short course and module.

Unit of competency means the specification of the standards of performance required in the workplace as defined in a training package.

Validation is the quality review of the assessment process. Validation involves checking that the assessment tool/s produce/s valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of the training package or VET accredited courses are met. It includes reviewing a statistically valid sample of the assessments and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes and acting upon such recommendations.

VET means vocational education and training.

VET accredited course means a course accredited by the VET regulator in accordance with the Standards for VET Accredited Courses.

VET Quality Framework comprises:

- a) the Standards for Registered Training Organisations
- b) the Australian Qualifications Framework
- c) the Fit and Proper Person Requirements
- d) the Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements
- e) the Data Provision Requirements

VET Regulator means:

- a) the National VET Regulator; and
- b) a body of a non-referring State that is responsible for the kinds of matters dealt with under the VET legislation for that State.

PART 2 – Training and assessment

Standard 1. The RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices are responsive to industry and learner needs and meet the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses

Context:

Learners, employers and industry must have confidence in the integrity, currency and value of certification documents issued by RTOs, through high quality training and assessment practices that:

- *meet the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses;*
- *is responsive to industry and learner needs; and*
- *is delivered by appropriately qualified trainers and assessors with the right support services, facilities and equipment.*

The RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices must have regard to the amount of training required for the learner to gain the competencies as specified in the relevant training package or VET accredited course. The amount of training will vary depending on the existing skills and knowledge of the learner, the mode of delivery and include any work placement arrangements.

To ensure thorough and rigorous assessment practices and results, RTOs must implement a comprehensive plan of systematic validation. RTOs must use a risk-based approach to developing the plan considering risk indicators such as the potential safety concerns to clients from an assessment outcome that is not valid, the mode of delivery, changes to training packages and/or licensing requirements.

Trainers and assessors who are involved in training and assessment delivery being considered as part of the validation process may also participate in the validation process.

There are differences in the operating characteristics and business objectives of RTOs and the evidence RTOs use to demonstrate compliance with this Standard will reflect those differences.

To be compliant with Standard 1 the RTO must meet the following:

- 1.1. The RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices, including the amount of training they provide, are consistent with the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses and enable each learner to meet the requirements for each unit of competency or module in which they are enrolled.
- 1.2. For the purposes of Clause 1.1, the RTO determines the amount of training they provide to each learner with regard to:
 - a) the existing skills, knowledge and the experience of the learner;
 - b) the mode of delivery; and

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- c) where a full qualification is not being delivered, the number of units and/or modules being delivered as a proportion of the full qualification.
- 1.3. The RTO has, for all of its scope of registration, and consistent with its training and assessment strategies, sufficient:
- a) trainers and assessors to deliver the training and assessment;
 - b) educational and support services to meet the needs of the learner cohort/s undertaking the training and assessment;
 - c) learning resources to enable learners to meet the requirements for each unit of competency, and which are accessible to the learner regardless of location or mode of delivery; and
 - d) facilities, whether physical or virtual, and equipment to accommodate and support the number of learners undertaking the training and assessment.
- 1.4. The RTO meets all requirements specified in the relevant training package or VET accredited course.

Industry relevance

- 1.5. The RTO's training and assessment practices are relevant to the needs of industry and informed by industry engagement.
- 1.6. The RTO implements a range of strategies for industry engagement and systematically uses the outcome of that industry engagement to ensure the industry relevance of:
- a) its training and assessment strategies, practices and resources; and
 - b) the current industry skills of its trainers and assessors.

Learner support

- 1.7. The RTO determines the support needs of individual learners and provides access to the educational and support services necessary for the individual learner to meet the requirements of the training product as specified in training packages or VET accredited courses.

Assessment

- 1.8. The RTO implements an assessment system that ensures that assessment (including recognition of prior learning):
- a) complies with the assessment requirements of the relevant training package or VET accredited course; and
 - b) is conducted in accordance with the Principles of Assessment contained in Table 1.8-1 and the Rules of Evidence contained in Table 1.8-2.

Table 1.8-1: Principles of Assessment

Fairness	<p>The individual learner's needs are considered in the assessment process.</p> <p>Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied by the RTO to take into account the individual learner's needs.</p> <p>The RTO informs the learner about the assessment process, and provides the learner with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be reassessed if necessary.</p>
Flexibility	<p>Assessment is flexible to the individual learner by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reflecting the learner's needs;• assessing competencies held by the learner no matter how or where they have been acquired; and• drawing from a range of assessment methods and using those that are appropriate to the context, the unit of competency and associated assessment requirements, and the individual.
Validity	<p>Any assessment decision of the RTO is justified, based on the evidence of performance of the individual learner.</p> <p>Validity requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• assessment against the unit/s of competency and the associated assessment requirements covers the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance;• assessment of knowledge and skills is integrated with their practical application;• assessment to be based on evidence that demonstrates that a learner could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations; and• judgement of competence is based on evidence of learner performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency and associated assessment requirements.
Reliability	<p>Evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.</p>

Table 1.8-2: Rules of Evidence

Validity	<p>The assessor is assured that the learner has the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements.</p>
Sufficiency	<p>The assessor is assured that the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence enables a judgement to be made of a learner's competency.</p>
Authenticity	<p>The assessor is assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work.</p>

Currency	The assessor is assured that the assessment evidence demonstrates current competency. This requires the assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past.
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1.9. The RTO implements a plan for ongoing systematic validation of assessment practices and judgements that includes for each training product on the RTO's scope of registration:

- a) when assessment validation will occur;
- b) which training products will be the focus of the validation;
- c) who will lead and participate in validation activities; and
- d) how the outcomes of these activities will be documented and acted upon.

1.10. For the purposes of Clause 1.9, each training product is validated at least once every five years, with at least 50% of products validated within the first three years of each five year cycle, taking into account the relative risks of all of the training products on the RTO's scope of registration, including those risks identified by the VET Regulator.

1.11. For the purposes of Clause 1.9, systematic validation of an RTO's assessment practices and judgements is undertaken by one or more persons who are not directly involved in the particular instance of delivery and assessment of the training product being validated, and who collectively have:

- a) on or prior to 31 March 2019:
 - (i) vocational competencies and current industry skills relevant to the assessment being validated;
 - (ii) current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning; and
 - (iii) the training and assessment credential specified in Item 1, or Item 2, or Item 4, or Item 5 of Schedule 1.
- b) on or after 1 April 2019:
 - (i) vocational competencies and current industry skills relevant to the assessment being validated;
 - (ii) current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning; and
 - (iii) the training and assessment credential specified in Item 2 or Item 5 of Schedule 1.

Industry experts may be involved in validation to ensure there is the combination of expertise set out in a) or b) above.

1.12. The RTO offers recognition of prior learning to individual learners.

Trainers and assessors

1.13. In addition to the requirements specified in Clause 1.14 and Clause 1.15, the RTO's training and assessment is delivered only by persons who have:

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- a) vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed;
 - b) current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided; and
 - c) current knowledge and skills in vocational training and learning that informs their training and assessment.

Industry experts may also be involved in the assessment judgement, working alongside the trainer and/or assessor to conduct the assessment.

1.14. The RTO's training and assessment:

- a) if delivered on or prior to 31 March 2019, is delivered only by persons who have the training and assessment credential specified in Item 1 or Item 2 or Item 3 of Schedule 1.
- b) if delivered on or after 1 April 2019, is delivered only by persons who have the training and assessment credential specified in Item 2 or Item 3 of Schedule 1.

1.15. Where a person conducts assessments only, the RTO ensures that:

- a) on or prior to 31 March 2019, the person has the training and assessment credential specified in Item 1, or Item 2, or Item 3, or Item 4, or Item 5 of Schedule 1; or
- b) on or after 1 April 2019, the person has the training and assessment credential specified in Item 2, or Item 3, or Item 5 of Schedule 1.

1.16. The RTO ensures that all trainers and assessors undertake professional development in the fields of the knowledge and practice of vocational training, learning and assessment including competency based training and assessment.

Individuals working under the supervision of a trainer

1.17. Where the RTO, in delivering training and assessment, engages an individual who is not a trainer or assessor, the individual works under the supervision of a trainer and does not determine assessment outcomes.

1.18. The RTO ensures that any individual working under the supervision of a trainer under Clause 1.17:

- a) holds the training and assessment credential specified in Item 6 of Schedule 1.
- b) has vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed; and
- c) has current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided.

1.19. Where the RTO engages an individual under Clause 1.17, it ensures that the training and assessment complies with Standard 1.

1.20. Without limiting Clauses 1.17 - 1.19, the RTO:

- a) determines and puts in place:
 - i) the level of the supervision required; and
 - ii) any requirements, conditions or restrictions considered necessary on the individual's involvement in the provision of training and collection of assessment evidence; and
- b) ensures that trainers providing supervision monitor and are accountable for all training provision and collection of assessment evidence by the individual under their supervision.

Delivery of the training and assessment qualifications for trainers and assessors

1.21. Deleted.

1.22. to deliver any AQF qualification or skill set from the Training and Education Training Package (or its successor) the RTO must ensure all trainers and assessors delivering the training and assessment hold the training and assessment qualification at least to the level being delivered.

1.23. To deliver the training and assessment credential specified in Item 1 or Item 2 of Schedule 1, or any assessor skill set from the Training and Education Training Package (or its successor), the RTO must ensure all trainers and assessors delivering the training and assessment:

- a) hold the training and assessment credential specified in Item 7 of Schedule 1; or
- b) work under the supervision of a trainer that meets the requirement set out in a) above.

1.24. The RTO must ensure that any person working under supervision for the purposes of Standard 1.23 b):

- a) does not determine assessment outcomes; and
- b) holds the following:
 - (i) on or prior to 31 March 2019, the training and assessment credential specified in Item 1 or Item 2 of Schedule 1; or
 - (ii) on or after 1 April 2019, the training and assessment credential specified in Item 2 of Schedule 1.

Independent validation of training and assessment qualifications

1.25. to deliver any AQF qualification or assessor skill set from the Training and Education Training Package (or its successor), the RTO must have undergone an independent validation of its assessment system, tools, processes and outcomes in accordance with the requirements contained in Schedule 2 (and the definitions of **independent validation** and **validation**).

Transition of training products

1.26. Subject to Clause 1.27 and unless otherwise approved by the VET Regulator, the RTO ensures that:

- a) where a training product on its scope of registration is superseded, all learners' training and assessment is completed and the relevant AQF certification documentation is issued or learners are transferred into its replacement, within a period of one year from the date the replacement training product was released on the National Register;
- b) where an AQF qualification is no longer current and has not been superseded, all learners' training and assessment is completed and the relevant AQF certification documentation issued within a period of two years from the date the AQF qualification was removed or deleted from the National Register;
- c) where a skill set, unit of competency, accredited short course or module is no longer current and has not been superseded, all learners' training and assessment is completed and the relevant AQF certification documentation issued within a period of one year from the date the skill set, unit of competency, accredited short course or module was removed or deleted from the National Register; and
- d) a new learner does not commence training and assessment in a training product that has been removed or deleted from the National Register.

1.27. The requirements specified in Clause 1.26 (a) do not apply where a training package requires the delivery of a superseded unit of competency.

Standard 2. The operations of the RTO are quality assured.

Context:

The RTO is ultimately responsible for ensuring quality training and assessment within their organisation and scope of registration, regardless of any third party arrangements where training and/or assessment is delivered on their behalf. This includes where the RTO subcontracts the delivery of services to a third party and the third party further subcontracts the delivery of services, but the AQF certification documentation will be issued by the RTO. The RTO must have a written agreement with any party that delivers services on its behalf.

The RTO is responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating quality training and assessment strategies and practices that meet training package and VET accredited course requirements.

Evaluating information about performance and using such information to inform quality assurance of services and improve training and assessment is sound business and educational practice. The information used to evaluate RTO performance must be relevant to the operating characteristics and business objectives of the RTO and will vary from one RTO to another.

To be compliant with Standard 2 the RTO must meet the following:

- 2.1. The RTO ensures it complies with these Standards at all times, including where services are being delivered on its behalf. This applies to all operations of an RTO within its scope of registration.
- 2.2. The RTO:
 - a) systematically monitors the RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices to ensure ongoing compliance with Standard 1; and
 - b) systematically evaluates and uses the outcomes of the evaluations to continually improve the RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices. Evaluation information includes but is not limited to quality/performance indicator data collected under Clause 7.5, validation outcomes, client, trainer and assessor feedback and complaints and appeals.
- 2.3. The RTO ensures that where services are provided on its behalf by a third party the provision of those services is the subject of a written agreement.
- 2.4. The RTO has sufficient strategies and resources to systematically monitor any services delivered on its behalf, and uses these to ensure that the services delivered comply with these Standards at all times.

Standard 3. The RTO issues, maintains and accepts AQF certification documentation in accordance with these Standards and provides access to learner records.

Context:

To maintain the integrity and national recognition of training products, AQF certification must be consistent in presentation and RTOs must accept the certification issued by other RTOs. This is the purpose of nationally agreed requirements about the nature of certification content and presentation and maintenance. Learner needs should be met through timely issuance of AQF certification documentation and access to their records.

RTOs are not obliged to issue any certification that would be entirely comprised of units or modules completed at another RTO or RTOs.

To be compliant with Standard 3 the RTO must meet the following:

- 3.1. The RTO issues AQF certification documentation only to a learner whom it has assessed as meeting the requirements of the training product as specified in the relevant training package or VET accredited course.
- 3.2. All AQF certification documentation issued by an RTO meets the requirements of Schedule 5.
- 3.3. AQF certification documentation is issued to a learner within 30 calendar days of the learner being assessed as meeting the requirements of the training product if the training program in which the learner is enrolled is complete, and providing all agreed fees the learner owes to the RTO have been paid.
- 3.4. Records of learner AQF certification documentation are maintained by the RTO in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 5 and are accessible to current and past learners.
- 3.5. The RTO accepts and provides credit to learners for units of competency and/or modules (unless licensing or regulatory requirements prevent this) where these are evidenced by:
 - a) AQF certification documentation issued by any other RTO or AQF authorised issuing organisation; or
 - b) authenticated VET transcripts issued by the Registrar.
- 3.6. The RTO meets the requirements of the Student Identifier scheme, including:
 - a) verifying with the Registrar, a Student Identifier provided to it by an individual before using that Student Identifier for any purpose;
 - b) ensuring that it will not issue AQF certification documentation to an individual without being in receipt of a verified Student Identifier for that individual, unless an exemption applies under the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*;

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- c) ensuring that where an exemption described in Clause 3.6 (b) applies, it will inform the student prior to either the completion of the enrolment or commencement of training and assessment, whichever occurs first, that the results of the training will not be accessible through the Commonwealth and will not appear on any authenticated VET transcript prepared by the Registrar; and
 - d) ensuring the security of Student Identifiers and all related documentation under its control, including information stored in its student management systems.

Part 3: Obligations to learners and clients

Standard 4. Accurate and accessible information about an RTO, its services and performance is available to inform prospective and current learners and clients.

Context:

The RTO is ultimately responsible for ensuring transparent and accurate information about RTO services and performance is accessible to prospective and current learners and clients of the RTO, regardless of any arrangements to have this information distributed on behalf of the RTO.

Transparent and accurate information about RTO services and performance enables prospective and current learners and clients to make informed decisions regarding their training and/or assessment needs.

The information about RTO services and performance provided by the RTO must be relevant to and reflect the needs of the client which will vary from RTO to RTO.

To be compliant with Standard 4 the RTO must meet the following:

- 4.1 Information, whether disseminated directly by the RTO or on its behalf, is both accurate and factual, and:
- a) accurately represents the services it provides and the training products on its scope of registration;
 - b) includes its RTO Code;
 - c) refers to another person or organisation in its marketing material only if the consent of that person or organisation has been obtained;
 - d) uses the NRT Logo only in accordance with the conditions of use specified in Schedule 4;
 - e) makes clear where a third party is recruiting prospective learners for the RTO on its behalf;
 - f) distinguishes where it is delivering training and assessment on behalf of another RTO or where training and assessment is being delivered on its behalf by a third party;
 - g) distinguishes between nationally recognised training and assessment leading to the issuance of AQF certification documentation from any other training or assessment delivered by the RTO;
 - h) includes the code and title of any training product, as published on the National Register, referred to in that information;
 - i) only advertises or markets a non-current training product while it remains on the RTO's scope of registration;

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- j) only advertises or markets that a training product it delivers will enable learners to obtain a licensed or regulated outcome where this has been confirmed by the industry regulator in the jurisdiction in which it is being advertised;
 - k) includes details about any VET FEE-HELP, government funded subsidy or other financial support arrangements associated with the RTO's provision of training and assessment; and
 - l) does not guarantee that:
 - i) a learner will successfully complete a training product on its scope of registration; or
 - ii) a training product can be completed in a manner which does not meet the requirements of Clause 1.1 and 1.2; or
 - iii) a learner will obtain a particular employment outcome where this is outside the control of the RTO.

Standard 5. Each learner is properly informed and protected.

Context:

In order to ensure that learners are adequately informed about the services they are to receive, their rights and obligations, and the RTO's responsibilities under these Standards, the RTO must provide learners with information prior to commencement of services including any third party arrangements affecting the delivery of training and/or assessment. This is to occur regardless of the manner in which the learner has been engaged, and whether the learner was initially engaged by the RTO itself or a third party.

The RTO is to provide or make readily available information to the learner that outlines the services the RTO will provide the learner, along with the rights and obligations of the learner and the RTO.

The RTO may provide information to the learner through one or more documents, for example an enrolment form, policy, employment contract or agreement, induction handbook or documented practice, training plan or training contract.

To be compliant with Standard 5 the RTO must meet the following:

- 5.1. Prior to enrolment or the commencement of training and assessment, whichever comes first, the RTO provides advice to the prospective learner about the training product appropriate to meeting the learner's needs, taking into account the individual's existing skills and competencies.
- 5.2. Prior to enrolment or the commencement of training and assessment, whichever comes first, the RTO provides, in print or through referral to an electronic copy, current and accurate information that enables the learner to make informed decisions about undertaking training with the RTO and at a minimum includes the following content:
 - a) the code, title and currency of the training product to which the learner is to be enrolled, as published on the National Register;

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- b) the training and assessment, and related educational and support services the RTO will provide to the learner including the:
 - i) estimated duration;
 - ii) expected locations at which it will be provided;
 - iii) expected modes of delivery;
 - iv) name and contact details of any third party that will provide training and/or assessment, and related educational and support services to the learner on the RTO's behalf; and
 - v) any work placement arrangements.
 - c) the RTO's obligations to the learner, including that the RTO is responsible for the quality of the training and assessment in compliance with these Standards, and for the issuance of the AQF certification documentation.
 - d) the learner's rights, including:
 - i) details of the RTO's complaints and appeals process required by Standard 6; and
 - ii) if the RTO, or a third party delivering training and assessment on its behalf, closes or ceases to deliver any part of the training product that the learner is enrolled in;
 - e) the learner's obligations:
 - i) in relation to the repayment of any debt to be incurred under the VET FEE-HELP scheme arising from the provision of services;
 - ii) any requirements the RTO requires the learner to meet to enter and successfully complete their chosen training product; and
 - iii) any materials and equipment that the learner must provide; and
 - f) information on the implications for the learner of government training entitlements and subsidy arrangements in relation to the delivery of the services.
- 5.3. Where the RTO collects fees from the individual learner, either directly or through a third party, the RTO provides or directs the learner to information prior to enrolment or the commencement of training and assessment, whichever comes first, specifying:
- a) all relevant fee information including:
 - i) fees that must be paid to the RTO; and
 - ii) payment terms and conditions including deposits and refunds;
 - b) the learner's rights as a consumer, including but not limited to any statutory cooling-off period, if one applies;
 - c) the learner's right to obtain a refund for services not provided by the RTO in the event the:

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- i) arrangement is terminated early; or
 - ii) the RTO fails to provide the agreed services.

5.4. Where there are any changes to agreed services, the RTO advises the learner as soon as practicable, including in relation to any new third party arrangements or a change in ownership or changes to existing third party arrangements.

Standard 6. Complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively.

Context:

RTOs must implement a transparent complaints and appeals policy that enables learners and clients to be informed of and to understand their rights and the RTO's responsibilities under the Standards.

Enterprise RTOs and volunteer associations that do not charge fees for the training and/or assessment and only provide training to employees or members are not required to maintain a separate complaints and appeals policy in relation to their training and assessment. These organisations must ensure, however, that their organisation's complaints policy is sufficiently broad to cover the activities as an RTO.

Subject to Clause 6.6, to be compliant with Standard 6 the RTO must meet the following:

- 6.1. The RTO has a complaints policy to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of:
 - a) the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff;
 - b) a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
 - c) a learner of the RTO.
- 6.2. The RTO has an appeals policy to manage requests for a review of decisions, including assessment decisions, made by the RTO or a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf.
- 6.3. The RTO's complaints policy and appeals policy:
 - a) ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process;
 - b) are publicly available;
 - c) set out the procedure for making a complaint or requesting an appeal;
 - d) ensure complaints and requests for an appeal are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable; and
 - e) provide for review by an appropriate party independent of the RTO and the complainant or appellant, at the request of the individual making the complaint or appeal, if the processes fail to resolve the complaint or appeal.

6.4. Where the RTO considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the RTO:

- a) informs the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required; and
- b) regularly updates the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.

6.5. The RTO:

- a) securely maintains records of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes; and
- b) identifies potential causes of complaints and appeals and takes appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

6.6. Where the RTO is an employer or a volunteer organisation whose learners solely consist of its employees or members, does not charge fees for the training and/or assessment, and does not have in place a specific complaints and appeals policy in accordance with Clauses 6.1 & 6.2, the organisation has a complaints and appeals policy which is sufficiently broad to cover the services provided by the RTO.

PART 4 – RTO governance and administration

Standard 7. The RTO has effective governance and administration arrangements in place.

Context:

Business viability is critical to the ongoing sustainability of an RTO and the investment it makes in its services. If RTOs are not viable, then this negatively impacts on the quality of its training and assessment outcomes and on learners.

Operational and financial business standards therefore provide important protective measures for the learner and RTOs, as well as acting as a disincentive for underprepared organisations to enter the market.

The factors determining the viability of an RTO are dependent upon the business objectives and operating characteristics of the RTO. For example, the factors determining the business viability of an enterprise RTO embedded within a major Australian business may be different to those impacting upon a private provider or a publically-owned TAFE Institute.

To be compliant with Standard 7 the RTO must meet the following:

- 7.1. The RTO ensures that its executive officers or high managerial agent:
 - a) are vested with sufficient authority to ensure the RTO complies with the RTO Standards at all times; and
 - b) meet each of the relevant criteria specified in the Fit and Proper Person Requirements in Schedule 3.
- 7.2. The RTO satisfies the *Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements*.
- 7.3. Where the RTO requires, either directly or through a third party, a prospective or current learner to prepay fees in excess of a total of \$1500 (being the threshold prepaid fee amount), the RTO must meet the requirements set out in the Requirements for Fee Protection in Schedule 6.
- 7.4. The RTO holds public liability insurance that covers the scope of its operations throughout its registration period.
- 7.5. The RTO provides accurate and current information as required by the *Data Provision Requirements* as updated from time to time.

Standard 8. The RTO cooperates with the VET Regulator and is legally compliant at all times.

Context:

RTOs need to comply with the requirements of the RTO Standards as well as other relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation. This is critical if RTOs are to deliver training products that have integrity and which fulfil their obligations to their clients.

It is important that third party arrangements are documented and transparent to facilitate the Regulator's knowledge that such arrangements exist. This will enable them to factor this into the risk profile they apply when enforcing compliance with the Standards and to review, in the context of RTO audits, the terms of the third party arrangements and the effectiveness of the arrangements in facilitating compliance with these Standards.

To be compliant with Standard 8 the RTO must meet the following:

- 8.1. The RTO cooperates with the VET Regulator:
 - a) by providing accurate and truthful responses to information requests from the VET Regulator relevant to the RTO's registration;
 - b) in the conduct of audits and the monitoring of its operations;
 - c) by providing quality/performance indicator data;
 - d) by providing information about substantial changes to its operations or any event that would significantly affect the RTO's ability to comply with these standards within 90 calendar days of the change occurring;
 - e) by providing information about significant changes to its ownership within 90 calendar days of the change occurring; and
 - f) in the retention, archiving, retrieval and transfer of records.
- 8.2. The RTO ensures that any third party delivering services on its behalf is required under written agreement to cooperate with the VET Regulator:
 - a) by providing accurate and factual responses to information requests from the VET Regulator relevant to the delivery of services; and
 - b) in the conduct of audits and the monitoring of its operations.
- 8.3. The RTO notifies the Regulator:
 - a) of any written agreement entered into under Clause 2.3 for the delivery of services on its behalf within 30 calendar days of that agreement being entered into or prior to the obligations under the agreement taking effect, whichever occurs first; and
 - b) within 30 calendar days of the agreement coming to an end.

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- 8.4. The RTO provides an annual declaration on compliance with these Standards to the VET Regulator and in particular whether it:
- a) currently meets the requirements of the Standards across all its scope of registration and has met the requirements of the Standards for all AQF certification documentation it has issued in the previous 12 months; and
 - b) has training and assessment strategies and practices in place that ensure that all current and prospective learners will be trained and assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Standards.
- 8.5. The RTO complies with Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation and regulatory requirements relevant to its operations.
- 8.6. The RTO ensures its staff and clients are informed of any changes to legislative and regulatory requirements that affect the services delivered.

Schedule 1

Item	Standard	Training and assessment credentials
1	1.11 1.14 1.15 1.24	The following credential: <i>TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.</i>
2	1.11 1.14 1.15 1.24	One of the following credentials: Credential: <i>TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment <u>or</u> its successor</i> <u>or</u> Credential: <i>TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, <u>and</u> one of the following:</i> (i) <i>TAELLN411 Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills <u>or</u> its successor <u>or</u></i> (ii) <i>TAELLN401A Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills</i> <i><u>and</u> one of the following:</i> (iii) <i>TAEASS502 Design and develop assessment tools <u>or</u> its successor <u>or</u></i> (iv) <i>TAEASS502A Design and develop assessment tools <u>or</u></i> (v) <i>TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools.</i>
3	1.14 1.15	The following credential: <i>A diploma or higher level qualification in adult education.</i>
4	1.11 1.15	The following credential: <i>TAESS00001 Assessor Skill Set</i>

5	1.11 1.15	<p>One of the following credentials:</p> <p>Credential: <i>TAESS00011 Assessor Skill Set <u>or</u> its successor</i></p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Credential: <i>TAESS00001 Assessor Skill Set,</i> <u>and one of the following:</u></p> <p>(i) <i>TAEASS502 Design and develop assessment tools <u>or</u> its successor <u>or</u></i></p> <p>(ii) <i>TAEASS502A Design and develop assessment tools <u>or</u></i></p> <p>(iii) <i>TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools.</i></p>
6	1.18	<p>One of the following credentials:</p> <p>Credential: <i>TAESS00007 Enterprise Trainer – Presenting Skill Set</i></p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Credential: <i>TAESS00014 Enterprise Trainer – Presenting Skill Set <u>or</u> its successor</i></p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Credential: <i>TAESS00008 Enterprise Trainer – Mentoring Skill Set</i></p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Credential: <i>TAESS00013 – Enterprise Trainer – Mentoring Skill Set <u>or</u> its successor</i></p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Credential <i>TAESS00003 Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skill Set</i></p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Credential: <i>TAESS00015 – Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skill Set <u>or</u> its successor</i></p>

7	1.23	<p>One of the following credentials:</p> <p>Credential: <i>TAE50111 Diploma of Vocational Education and Training</i></p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Credential: <i>TAE50116 Diploma of Vocational Education and Training <u>or</u> its successor</i></p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Credential: <i>TAE50211 Diploma of Training Design and Development</i></p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Credential: <i>TAE50216 Diploma of Training Design and Development <u>or</u> its successor</i></p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Credential: <i>A higher level qualification in adult education.</i></p>
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Schedule 2

Independent validation requirements for RTOs delivering training and assessment qualifications or assessor skill sets from the Training and Education Training Package (or its successor)

For the purposes of Clause 1.25, the requirements for independent validation will apply as follows:

- a) For an RTO applying to extend its scope of registration to include the delivery and assessment of an AQF qualification or assessor skill set from the Training and Education Training Package (or its successor), validation is of:
 - i) the RTO's assessment tools, processes and outcomes in relation to other AQF qualifications and/or units of competency on its scope of registration, as directed by the VET Regulator; and
 - ii) the assessment system to be adopted in the delivery of the training and assessment qualification or assessor skill set.
- b) For an RTO where its scope of registration includes the delivery and assessment of an AQF qualification or assessor skill set from the Training and Education Training Package (or its successor), validation is of:
 - i) the assessment system for delivery of the training and assessment qualification or assessor skill set; and
 - ii) the RTO's assessment tools, processes and outcomes in relation to the training and assessment qualification or assessor skill set.

For the purposes of Clause 1.25, independent validation of AQF qualifications or the assessor skill set from the Training and Education Training Package (or its successor) must be conducted by one or more persons who collectively have:

- a) current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning; and
- b) the training and assessment qualification or assessor skill set at least to the level being validated.

Schedule 3

Fit and Proper Person Requirements

Criteria for suitability

In assessing whether a person meets the Fit and Proper Person Requirements, the VET Regulator will have regard to the following considerations:

- a) whether the person has been convicted of an offence against a law of the Commonwealth or a State or Territory of Australia, or of another country, and if so, the seriousness of the offence and the time elapsed since the conviction was recorded;
- b) whether the person has ever been an executive officer or high managerial agent of an RTO at a time that the RTO had its registration on the National Register cancelled or suspended by its VET Regulator for having breached a condition imposed on its Registration;
- c) whether the person has ever been an executive officer or high managerial agent of an RTO at a time that the RTO was determined to have breached a condition of its registration under the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* or the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*;
- d) whether the person has ever become bankrupt, applied to take the benefit of a law for the benefit of bankrupt or insolvent debtors, compounded with his or her creditors or assigned his or her remuneration for the benefit of creditors, and if so, the time elapsed since this event occurred;
- e) whether the person has ever been disqualified from managing corporations under Part 2D.6 of the *Corporations Act 2001*, and if so, whether the disqualification remains in place;
- f) whether the person was involved in the business of delivering courses or other services on behalf of a person that was the subject of regulatory action described in points b) or c) above, and if so, the relevance of the person's involvement;
- g) whether the person has ever provided a VET Regulator with false or misleading information or made a false or misleading statement to a VET Regulator, and if so, whether it is reasonable to assume that the person knew that the statement made or information provided to the VET Regulator was false or misleading;
- h) whether the person has ever been determined not to be a fit and proper person as prescribed under any law of the Commonwealth or of a State or Territory of Australia, and if so, whether that determination remains in place;
- i) whether the public is likely to have confidence in the person's suitability to be involved in an organisation that provides, assesses or issues nationally recognised qualifications;

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- j) whether the person has ever been an executive officer or high managerial agent of an RTO at a time that the RTO was determined to have breached a government training contract; and
 - k) any other relevant matter.

Schedule 4

Conditions of Use of NRT Logo

The Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) Logo is a distinguishable mark of quality for promoting and certifying national vocational education and training leading to AQF certification documentation. The NRT Logo is a registered trade mark.

The following describes a range of situations and conditions for using the NRT Logo.

Advertisements and promotional information in any medium (print, television, radio, banners, internet, etc.)

1. RTOs registered by any VET Regulator may use the NRT Logo to promote nationally recognised training provided that training is within the RTO's scope of registration.
2. Impressions must not be created that may lead an observer to conclude the NRT Logo applies to all training provided by the RTO, if this is not the case. The NRT Logo cannot be used by an RTO where the training is accredited, but is outside the scope of registration of the RTO. Where training is being promoted and does not meet the requirements stipulated in the VET Quality Framework or is outside the RTO's scope of registration, it must be made clear the NRT Logo is not associated with that training.
3. Use of the NRT Logo is only permitted where there is a direct relationship to an AQF qualification and/or unit of competency as specified within training packages or VET accredited courses.

Student information (brochures, course handbooks, prospectuses, etc.)

4. When an RTO is promoting the training it offers and wishes to use the NRT Logo, its promotional material such as brochures, handbooks and prospectuses must clearly distinguish between nationally recognised training within the scope of registration and that which is not nationally recognised.

Corporate stationery, business cards, buildings, training resources and marketing products

5. The NRT Logo must not be used on products such as corporate stationery, business cards, building signage, mouse pads, pens, satchels, packaging around products nor learning resources supporting training.

Certificates, Statements of Attainment and other testamurs

6. The NRT Logo must be depicted on all AQF certification documentation issued by the RTO. These can only be issued by an RTO when the qualification and/or unit of competency are within the RTO's scope of registration. The NRT Logo must not be depicted on other testamurs or transcripts of results.

Schedule 5

Application of the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy within the VET Sector

RTOs must meet the requirements of the AQF for issuing AQF qualifications and statements of attainment, in addition to the following requirements.

Issuing AQF Qualifications

1. RTOs must include the following information on the testamur, in addition to the requirements of the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy:
 - a) the name, RTO code and logo of the issuing organisation;
 - b) the code and title of the awarded AQF qualification; and
 - c) the NRT Logo in accordance with the current conditions of use contained in Schedule 4.
2. The following elements are to be included on the testamur as applicable:
 - a) the State / Territory Training Authority logo (only where use of the logo is directed by State / Territory Training Authorities, e.g. within User Choice contracts);
 - b) the industry descriptor, e.g. Engineering;
 - c) the occupational or functional stream, in brackets, e.g. (Fabrication);
 - d) where relevant, the words, 'achieved through Australian Apprenticeship arrangements'; and
 - e) where relevant, the words, 'these units/modules have been delivered and assessed in <insert language> followed by a listing of the relevant units/modules.
3. RTOs must not include the learner's Student Identifier on the testamur consistent with the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*.
4. RTOs will:
 - f) retain registers of AQF qualifications they are authorised to issue and of all AQF qualifications issued;
 - g) retain records of AQF certification documentation issued for a period of 30 years; and
 - h) provide reports of Records of qualifications issued to its VET Regulator on a regular basis as determined by the VET Regulator.

Issuing Statements of Attainment

5. RTOs must include the following information on a statement of attainment:
 - a) the name, RTO Code and logo of the issuing organisation;
 - b) a list of units of competency (or modules where no units of competency exist) showing their full title and the national code for each unit of competency;
 - c) the authorised signatory;

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- d) the NRT Logo;
 - e) the issuing organisation's seal, corporate identifier or unique watermark;
 - f) the words 'A statement of attainment is issued by a Registered Training Organisation when an individual has completed one or more accredited units';
6. The following elements are to be included on the statement of attainment as applicable:
- a) the State/Territory Training Authority logo (only where use of the logo is directed by State/ Territory Training Authorities);
 - b) the words 'These competencies form part of [code and title of qualification(s)/course(s)]';
 - c) the words, 'These competencies were attained in completion of [code] course in [full title]'; and
 - d) where relevant, the words, 'these units / modules have been delivered and assessed in <insert language>' followed by a listing of the relevant units/modules.
7. RTOs must not include the learner's Student Identifier on the statement of attainment consistent with the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*.
8. RTOs will:
- a) maintain registers of all statements of attainments issued;
 - b) retain records of statements of attainment issued for a period of 30 years; and
 - c) provide reports of its records of statements of attainment issued to its VET Regulator on a regular basis, as determined by the VET Regulator.

Schedule 6

Requirements for protecting fees prepaid by individual learners, or prospective learners, for services

These requirements do not override obligations and requirements of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (Cth).

Type of RTO	Requirement
Government Entity or an Australian university	<p>The RTO implements a policy addressing learner fee protection arrangements. This policy details how, if the RTO is unable to provide services for which the learner has prepaid, the learner will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be placed into an equivalent course such that:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- the new location is suitable to the learner; and- the learner receives the full services for which they have prepaid at no additional cost to the learner; or• be paid a refund of any prepaid fees for services yet to be delivered above the threshold prepaid fee amount.
All other RTOs	<p>The RTO addresses learner fee protection by implementing one or more of the following arrangements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The RTO holds an unconditional financial guarantee from a bank operating in Australia where:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) the guarantee is for an amount no less than the total amount of prepaid fees held by the RTO in excess of the threshold prepaid fee amount for each learner for services to be provided by the RTO to those learners; andb) all establishment and ongoing maintenance costs for the bank guarantee are met by the RTO.2. The RTO holds current membership of a Tuition Assurance Scheme approved by its VET Regulator which, if the RTO is unable to provide services for which the learner has prepaid, must ensure:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) the learner will be placed into an equivalent course such that:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- the new location is geographically close to where the learner had been enrolled; and- the learner receives the full services for which they have prepaid at no additional cost to the learner; orb) if an equivalent course cannot be found, the learner is paid a refund of any prepaid fees for services yet to be delivered above the threshold prepaid fee amount.3. Any other fee protection measure approved by the VET Regulator.

Endnotes

Endnote 1—About the endnotes

The endnotes provide information about this compilation and the compiled law.

The following endnotes are included in every compilation:

Endnote 1—About the endnotes

Endnote 2—Abbreviation key

Endnote 3—Legislation history

Endnote 4—Amendment history

Abbreviation key—Endnote 2

The abbreviation key sets out abbreviations that may be used in the endnotes.

Legislation history and amendment history—Endnotes 3 and 4

Amending laws are annotated in the legislation history and amendment history.

The legislation history in endnote 3 provides information about each law that has amended (or will amend) the compiled law. The information includes commencement details for amending laws and details of any application, saving or transitional provisions that are not included in this compilation.

The amendment history in endnote 4 provides information about amendments at the provision (generally section or equivalent) level. It also includes information about any provision of the compiled law that has been repealed in accordance with a provision of the law.

Misdescribed amendments

A misdescribed amendment is an amendment that does not accurately describe the amendment to be made. If, despite the misdescription, the amendment can be given effect as intended, the amendment is incorporated into the compiled law and the abbreviation “(md)” added to the details of the amendment included in the amendment history.

If a misdescribed amendment cannot be given effect as intended, the abbreviation “(md not incorp)” is added to the details of the amendment included in the amendment history.

Endnotes

Endnote 2—Abbreviation key

Endnote 2—Abbreviation key

ad = added or inserted	o = order(s)
am = amended	Ord = Ordinance
amdt = amendment	orig = original
c = clause(s)	par = paragraph(s)/subparagraph(s) /sub-subparagraph(s)
C[x] = Compilation No. x	pres = present
Ch = Chapter(s)	prev = previous
def = definition(s)	(prev...) = previously
Dict = Dictionary	Pt = Part(s)
disallowed = disallowed by Parliament	r = regulation(s)/rule(s)
Div = Division(s)	
exp = expires/expired or ceases/ceased to have effect	reloc = relocated
F = Federal Register of Legislation	renum = renumbered
gaz = gazette	rep = repealed
LA = <i>Legislation Act 2003</i>	rs = repealed and substituted
LIA = <i>Legislative Instruments Act 2003</i>	s = section(s)/subsection(s)
(md) = misdescribed amendment can be given effect	Sch = Schedule(s)
(md not incorp) = misdescribed amendment cannot be given effect	Sdiv = Subdivision(s)
mod = modified/modification	SLI = Select Legislative Instrument
No. = Number(s)	SR = Statutory Rules
	Sub-Ch = Sub-Chapter(s)
	SubPt = Subpart(s)
	<u>underlining</u> = whole or part not commenced or to be commenced

Endnotes

Endnote 3—Legislation history

Endnote 3—Legislation history

Name	Registration	Commencement	Application, saving and transitional provisions
Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015	21 Oct 2014 (F2014L01377)	see clause 4: 1 Jan 2015 and 1 April 2015	
Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) Amendment 2017	5 July 2017 (F2017L00882)	6 July 2017	-

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

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Compilation No. 1

Compilation date: 06/07/2017

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Endnotes

Endnote 4—Amendment history

Endnote 4—Amendment history

Provision affected	How affected
Part 1	am 2017
Standard 1.11	rs 2017
Standard 1.14	rs 2017
Standard 1.15	rs 2017
Standard 1.18	am 2017
Standard 1.21	rs 2017
Standard 1.22	am 2017
Standard 1.23	rs 2017
Standard 1.24	rs 2017
Standard 1.25	am 2017
Schedule 1	rs 2017

