Skills Reform

Australian Government

Draft Standards for RTOs

Draft Standards

October 2022

DRAFT STANDARDS FOR REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

Note for consultation purposes: These Standards do not reflect all requirements for RTOs and should be read in the broader reform context. Further information can be found in the consultation paper at www.skillsreform.gov.au

1. Training and assessment	Training and assessment enables learners to gain industry-relevant skills and knowledge
1.1 Training	Training is consistent with the training product, reflects industry needs, and supports learners to achieve training outcomes.
1.2 Assessment	Learners' skills and knowledge are assessed in a way that is fair and appropriate, and assessment outcomes are reliable.
1.3 Facilities, equipment, and resources	Facilities, equipment, and resources are safe, fit-for-purpose and support the delivery of training outcomes.
1.4 Recognition of prior learning and credit transfer	Learners are supported to progress through the training product where they have existing skills, knowledge, and competencies.

1.1. Training

1.1.1   Training design and practice is consistent with the training product, relevant to the needs of industry and appropriate to enable learners to achieve training outcomes.

1.1.2   The amount of training and the modes of delivery are appropriate to enable learners to achieve training outcomes.

1.2. Assessment

1.2.1.   The assessment system and practices are consistent with the training product.

1.2.2.   Assessment is conducted in a way that is consistent with the following principles of assessment:
   a)   fair - taking into account the learner's needs, applying reasonable adjustments where appropriate and enabling reassessment if necessary,
   b)   flexible - such that it is appropriate to the context, training product and learner, and assesses competencies held by the learner no matter how or where they have been acquired,
   c)   valid - such that assessment of skills and knowledge is integrated with practical application and could enable the learner to demonstrate these skills and knowledge in similar situations, **and**
   d)   reliable - such that evidence is interpreted consistently and the outcomes of assessment are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.

1.2.3.   Assessors make individual assessment judgements that are justified based on the following rules of evidence:
   a)   sufficient - to assure the assessor that the quality, quantity, and relevance of the assessment evidence enables a judgement of competency to be made,
   b)   authentic - to assure the assessor that the assessment evidence presented is the learner's own work, **and**
   c)   current - to assure the assessor that the assessment evidence reflects the current skills, knowledge, and competencies of the learner.

1.2.4.   Pre-validation of assessment tools occurs prior to use to ensure they are fit-for-purpose.

1.2.5.   Validation of assessment tools and practices is undertaken for each training product on scope to ensure assessment tools and practices are fit-for-purpose and consistent with the principles of assessment and rules of evidence.

1.2.6.   The focus of validation within the training product is determined based on risk and complexity, and validation:
a)   occurs regularly (at least every 5 years), with the frequency informed by risks to training outcomes, any changes to training products and feedback from learners, trainers, assessors, and industry,
b)   is based on a sample of assessment judgements,
c)   is undertaken by people who collectively have:
   (i)   qualifications, or equivalent skills and knowledge, relevant to the training product,
   (ii)   current understanding of industry practice relevant to the training product, and
   (iii) the relevant validation credential (as described in the Guidelines), **and**
d)   for specified training products (as described in the Guidelines):
   (i)   occurs following the first cohort of learners completing the training and assessment, **and**
   (ii)   is undertaken by people who are not employed or subcontracted by the RTO to provide training and assessment and have no other involvement or interest in its operations.

1.2.7.   Validation outcomes are documented, used to inform revisions to the assessment system, and are not solely determined by those who have delivered or designed the training or assessment.

1.3.   Facilities, equipment, and resources

1.3.1.   Facilities, resources (including online resources) and equipment for each training product are safe, accessible, sufficient and fit-for-purpose.

1.4.   Recognition of prior learning and credit transfer

1.4.1.   Where learners identify as having prior skills, knowledge, and experience relevant to the training product, recognition of prior learning is undertaken in accordance with the assessment system.

1.4.2.   Where learners identify as having previously completed a relevant training product which is determined by the RTO to be equivalent in content and training outcomes, credit transfer is granted (unless prevented by licensing or regulatory requirements) where this is evidenced by:
a)   AQF certification documentation issued by another RTO or AQF authorised issuing organisation, **or**
b)   authenticated VET transcripts issued by the Student Identifiers Registrar.

2. Learner support	Learners are treated fairly and are properly informed, protected, and supported
2.1 Information	Learners have access to accurate and comprehensive information to support them to make informed decisions.
2.2 Training support	The support that learners receive to undertake training is appropriate for their individual needs.
2.3 Wellbeing and equity	Learner wellbeing is supported through access to support services, and delivery of training and assessment in an inclusive, equitable, and safe environment.
2.4 Feedback, complaints, and appeals	Learners are encouraged to provide feedback and have access to avenues for making complaints and appeals, and appropriate action is taken in response.

2.1.   Information

2.1.1   Information disseminated by the RTO or on its behalf is plainly expressed, accurate and current.

2.1.2   Each learner receives written information prior to enrolment (or the commencement of training and assessment, whichever comes first) to enable them to make informed decisions about undertaking training and assessment, accompanied by an explanation of any technical terms, that includes:
   a) **information about the training product**, including training product code and title, duration, modes of delivery, location, commencement dates, scheduling, any requirements to commence or complete the training product, whether any licencing requirements apply, and details of any third-party arrangements,
   b) **information about training support services**, including access to trainers, learning resources, and language, literacy, numeracy, and digital skills programs,
   c) **information about wellbeing support services,** including contact points, types of services available and how to access them,
   d) **information about all fees and costs,** including payment terms and conditions, refund policies, the implications of any government training entitlements and subsidy arrangements and the potential for any changes in fees,
   e) **information outlining a learner's obligations or liabilities,** including obligations relating to work placements, materials, equipment or IT, costs and processes associated with learner withdrawal and obtaining a Unique Student Identifier,
   f) **information about training and assessment policies and requirements,** including enrolment, progression, recognition of prior learning, credit transfer, and assessment, **and**
   g) **information about learners' rights,** including relevant human rights and consumer rights, complaints and appeals processes, including how to access them, and processes should the RTO close or cease delivering services.

2.1.3   Learners are informed as soon as practicable about changes to the services that may affect them.

2.2.   Training support

2.2.1. Prior to enrolment (or the commencement of training and assessment, whichever comes first), the RTO reviews the existing skills and competencies of the learner, including their language, literacy, numeracy, and digital proficiency, and provides advice about the appropriateness of the training product to meet their needs.

2.2.2. The learner's training support needs are identified, and learners are provided with access to the necessary training support services to undertake the training product.

2.2.3. Where a training product is superseded, deleted, or expired, learners are:
   a) informed as soon as practicable, including prior to enrolment for superseded training products, so they are not disadvantaged,
   b) not enrolled in a training product that has been removed or deleted from the National Register, **and**
   c) supported to complete the training product, transition to its replacement, or transfer to another training product.

2.2.4. Learners have reasonable access to trainers and assessors, and receive timely responses to queries, so they are supported to progress through the training product.

2.2.5. Reasonable adjustments are made to support learners with disability to access and participate in training and assessment on an equal basis.

2.2.6. Where reasonable and appropriate, the RTO's processes or practices are adapted, or assistance is provided, where a learner's personal circumstances may have an adverse effect on their progression.

2.3   Wellbeing and equity

2.3.1. Learners have access to wellbeing support services, with the services promoted or offered being informed by the needs of the learner cohort.

2.3.2. Policies and practices, including in relation to enrolment, training, and assessment, create equitable opportunity for achievement of training outcomes by all individuals, and:
   a) are inclusive and recognise the diversity of learners,
   b) ensure the safety of children and young people, and other vulnerable cohorts, **and**
   c) support the delivery of culturally safe training and assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, giving specific consideration to their recruitment, participation and completion.

2.4   Feedback, complaints, and appeals

2.4.1. Learners are encouraged to provide feedback about their experience with the RTO, and avenues for providing feedback and making complaints are publicly available and easy to access.

2.4.2. Learners have access to avenues for seeking an appeal to review decisions made by the RTO, including where third parties are acting on the RTO's behalf.

2.4.3. Complaints and appeals policies and practices:
   a) ensure complaints and appeals, and their outcomes, are recorded,
   b) deliver timely resolution of complaints and appeals,
   c) ensure procedural fairness is afforded,
   d) are applied consistently, fairly and without reprisal,
   e) provide for confidentiality, **and**
   f) for learner-initiated complaints and appeals, provide for review by an appropriate independent party without charge or at reasonable cost to the learner if internal processes fail to resolve a complaint or appeal.

2.4.4. Timely and appropriate action is taken in response to complaints and appeals, and communicated to the complainant or appellant.

3. Workforce	Learners are trained and assessed by people who are qualified, skilled, and committed to continuous learning and development
3.1 Workforce competencies	Trainers and assessors have current industry skills and knowledge, effectively engage learners, and competently deliver training and assessment.
3.2 Continuous learning and development	Trainers and assessors continuously build both industry-relevant skills and training and assessment skills.

3.1. Workforce competencies

3.1.1. Each person delivering, or providing direction to a person delivering, training and/or assessment, has:
   a) qualification(s), and/or skills and knowledge, appropriate in content and level for what they are delivering and/or assessing, **and**
   b) an understanding of current industry practices relevant to the training product.

3.1.2. Each person delivering training and/or assessment either:
   a) has the relevant training and/or assessment credential (as described in the Guidelines), **or**
   b) works under the direction of a person with the relevant credential (as described in the Guidelines), does not make assessment judgements, **and**:
      (i) is actively working towards the relevant training and assessment credential (as described in the Guidelines), **or**
      (ii) has another credential relevant to the training and/or assessment they are delivering (as described in the Guidelines), **or**
      (iii) is an industry expert who, despite not having a training and assessment credential, has specialist expertise which is relevant to what they are delivering and/or assessing and is of direct benefit to learners.

3.2. Continuous learning and development

3.2.1. Trainers and assessors:
    a) undertake professional development, including through structured learning, to ensure current skills and knowledge in training and assessment, including engaging and supporting learners, **and**
    b) continuously build industry-relevant skills to inform their approach to training and assessment.

4. Engagement	Effective industry, employer and community engagement ensures learners receive relevant skills and knowledge, and supports lifelong learning
4.1 Industry and employers	Industry and employer engagement informs training and assessment.
4.2 Community	Community linkages facilitate pathways into, through and from training.

4.1. Industry and employers

4.1.1. The RTO ensures the industry relevance of training and assessment by:
    a) identifying relevant industry representatives and employers,
    b) seeking meaningful advice and feedback from those representatives and employers, **and**
    c) using their advice and feedback to inform changes to training and assessment practices.

4.2. Community

4.2.1. As relevant to the learner cohort and the training being offered, the RTO forms linkages with others in the community such as educational institutions, community groups, job networks and wellbeing support services to support progression through the training product and facilitate pathways into, through and from training.

5. Governance	Effective governance ensures integrity of operations, commitment to quality delivery, and continuous improvement
5.1 Leadership and accountability	Management is accountable for the effective operation of the organisation, including ensuring services delivered by and on behalf of the RTO meet the requirements of the Standards.
5.2 Continuous improvement	Ongoing monitoring and evaluation informs the continuous improvement of services.

5.1. Leadership and accountability

5.1.1. Management is accountable for leading a culture:
    a) of quality training and assessment and continuous improvement,
    b) of integrity, transparency, and fairness,
    c) of inclusion, safety and wellbeing for staff and learners, **and**
    d) free from discrimination and harassment.

5.1.2. Management is accountable for the RTO meeting the requirements of these Standards, including to ensure:

a) where training, assessment or other services are delivered by a third party on the RTO's behalf, the services meet the requirements of these Standards,

b) the number of staff (including trainers and assessors) is appropriate to support the delivery of services, **and**

c) risks to the achievement of the outcomes described in these Standards are identified and managed.

5.1.3. Staff and third parties are informed about relevant changes to legislative and regulatory requirements.

5.1.4. Financial viability is maintained to:

a) ensure adequate resourcing, staff, and facilities to support the delivery of training and assessment, **and**

b) refund any pre-paid fees where the RTO is unable to deliver the training and/or assessment for which the learner has paid fees.

5.1.5. Systems are in place for ensuring high managerial agents and executive officers are fit and proper persons to oversee the operations of the RTO.

5.2. Continuous improvement

5.2.1 Systematic monitoring and evaluation:

a) is informed by feedback from stakeholders including trainers, assessors, learners, industry, and employers,

b) enables the RTO to measure its performance against the Standards and continuously improve, **and**

c) enables the RTO to identify and manage risks to the achievement of the outcomes described in the Standards.

Glossary

Amount of training means the quantity of learning activities provided to a learner, including classes, lectures, or tutorials as well as trainer-directed learning and practice, and workplace learning.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) has the same meaning as in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

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.

Assessment judgement means a determination of whether competency has been achieved by a learner consistent with the training product and clause 1.2.3 of these Standards.

Assessment system means a coordinated set of documented policies and procedures (including assessment materials and tools) designed to ensure that assessment, including recognition of prior learning, meets the requirements of these Standards.

Assessment tools contain multiple assessment instruments designed for the purpose of gathering evidence of knowledge and skills, and include:

- the context and conditions of assessment,
- the tasks to be administered to the learner, and
- an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the candidate and evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (i.e. the assessment decision-making rules).

Authenticated VET transcript has the meaning given in the *Student Identifiers Act 2014.*

Credit transfer is a process that provides learners with credit outcomes for training products based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes.

Direction means oversight, guidance and quality assurance provided in respect of an individual who does not have the full training and/or assessment credential to ensure the quality of training and/or assessment delivered by that person. The RTO is responsible for determining the nature and extent of direction required and any necessary restrictions, and ensuring the quality of training and assessment is consistent with the Standards.

Executive officer has the same meaning as in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

Guidelines means the *Standards for RTOs – Guidelines* made by the Ministerial Council which consist of two parts: Credential Guidelines and Specified Training Products.

High managerial agent has the same meaning as in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

Management means the person(s) and/or body(ies) responsible for overseeing, directing and administering the operations of the RTO, and includes high managerial agents and executive officers.

Mode of delivery means the method adopted to deliver training and/or assessment, including face-to-face, online, distance, or blended methods.

Pre-validation is the review of the assessment tools prior to use to ensure that the assessment system meets the requirements of the training product and the requirements of these Standards. It does not include validation of assessment practices and judgements.

Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made by an RTO in alignment with Part 3 of the Disability Standards for Education 2005, including a reasonable measure or action that has the effect of assisting a learner with disability to enrol, commence or complete a training product with the RTO in line with the requirements of that training product, and use facilities or services provided by or on behalf of the RTO, on the same basis as a learner without disability.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning and experience (including skills and knowledge obtained through formal and informal learning) to determine the extent to which they meet the requirements specified in the training product.

Scope means scope of registration as defined in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

Services means training and/or assessment, training support services, wellbeing support services where the RTO offers them, and any activities related to the recruitment of learners, including where these services are delivered through a third party arrangement.

Student Identifiers Registrar has the meaning given in the *Student Identifiers Act 2014.*

Unique Student Identifier has the same meaning as the term 'Student Identifier' as 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 and assessors are people delivering training and/or assessment as described in clause 3.1.2 with the exclusion of industry experts who are working under supervision.

Training product means:

- AQF qualification, being an AQF qualification type endorsed in a training package or accredited in a VET accredited course,
- skill set, being 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,
- unit of competency, being the specification of the standards of performance required in the workplace as defined in a training package, and
- accredited short course, being a course that leads to a statement of attainment accredited by the VET Regulator in accordance with the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 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).

Training support services means services and resources designed to support learners to meet training product requirements and complete the training product in which they are enrolled.

Wellbeing support services means personal support services and resources to assist with learners' physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, which may include mental health resources, counselling, health services, crisis support providers and emergency services, and legal, advocacy, accommodation and welfare services.

Validation is the review of assessment systems designed to ensure that the assessment tools are consistent with the training product and the requirements of these Standards, and ensure consistent outcomes are achieved through assessment practices and judgements.