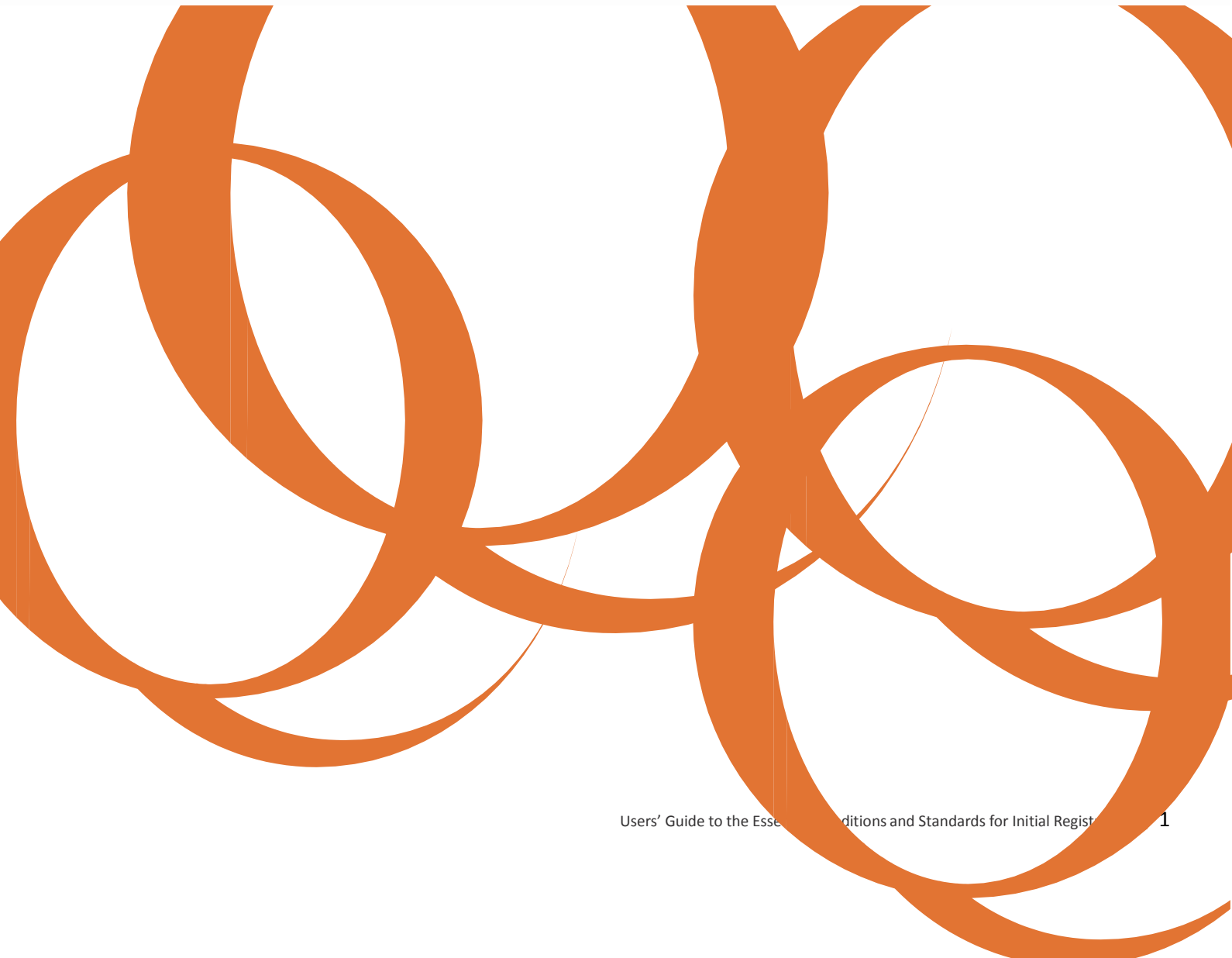




Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration



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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION TO AQTF

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is the national set of standards which assures nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment services for the clients of Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system. The AQTF was initially established in 2001 for implementation in 2002 and this version is effective from 1 July 2010.

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

Components of the AQTF

The components of AQTF are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key features of the AQTF

Outcomes focussed

The AQTF focuses on the quality of services and outcomes being achieved for clients rather than the inputs used to get there. This means that RTOs have more flexibility in demonstrating how their individual approaches provide quality training outcomes for their clients.

Nationally consistent

Individuals expect that they can use the skills from nationally endorsed qualifications across Australia and employers expect that the staff they hire have the same skills no matter where they were trained. For this reason the AQTF includes national guidelines for a registering body to ensure consistent interpretation and implementation of AQTF.

Streamlined

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

Transparent

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

The beneficiaries of the AQTF

Learners have equitable access to quality training and assessment services tailored to their needs and the learning outcomes they seek.

Industry, unions, enterprises and regulators have confidence that RTOs are delivering training and assessment services to achieve the skill requirements of nationally recognised qualifications developed by industry.

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) can focus on providing quality training and assessment in the way that best suits their business. No matter what the size or scope of the organisation, an RTO can also seek recognition of excellence.

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

SECTION 2

ABOUT THIS USERS' GUIDE

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

The guide is to help entities applying for registration as a registered training organisation (RTO) to interpret the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration*. It is also designed to help applicants to determine how, as an RTO, they will manage and continuously improve their training and assessment outcomes in order to meet the needs of industry and learners.

The guide does not prescribe how an applicant should manage its operations nor does it mandate the form that evidence used in a registration audit must take. The type of evidence an applicant provides will vary depending on its size and scope. The guide does describe the features of a compliant entity applying for registration as an RTO. It offers suggestions about the types of evidence an applicant may provide during a registration audit to demonstrate that it has the capacity to comply with the standards and achieve quality outcomes.

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

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

- *AQTF Audit Handbook*
- AQTF National Guidelines for a Registering Body, which includes:
 - AQTF National Guideline for Audit Consistency
 - AQTF National Guideline for Conducting Audits of the Inter-jurisdiction Operations of RTOs
 - AQTF National Guideline for Managing Non-compliance
 - AQTF National Guideline for Responding to Complaints about VET Quality
 - AQTF National Guideline for Risk Management
 - AQTF National Guideline for Industry Body Engagement

All AQTF national documents and templates are publicly available at www.nssc.natese.gov.au

This guide is to be read in conjunction with the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* as it includes operational requirements once registration as an RTO is gained.

Terminology

Some terms used in this guide have been defined in Section 8. These terms are identified in the text in bold and coloured font.

SECTION 3

WHAT'S IN THE AQTF ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS AND STANDARDS FOR INITIAL REGISTRATION?

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

- Nine Conditions of Registration
- Three Standards, each comprising several elements.

These are underpinned by:

A focus on outcomes

The standards and their elements specify the key requirements to be met by each applicant seeking **registration** as an **RTO**. The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* does not specify detailed **processes** but explains the **outcomes** to be achieved through the application of each Standard. An applicant must be able to demonstrate that it has the capacity to implement a systematic approach to its management and **continuous improvement** and that it is focused on improving its outcomes in relation to each Standard.

A systematic approach

A systematic approach to the management and delivery of services helps an applicant to meet initial registration requirements and to achieve **quality** throughout its registration period. Systematic approaches are planned, purposeful and repeatable actions to improve products and services for clients. Applicants applying for registration as an RTO vary in size and complexity and the processes they use to comply with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* will differ considerably. For example, the quality of outcomes to be achieved by a one-person RTO, a secondary school offering school-based apprenticeships, a community-based provider, an enterprise-based RTO and a TAFE institute may be the same, but the differences in the scale and operating context of these five applicants may lead to differences in the nature of their systematic approaches and the **management systems** they use.

Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is an integral part of the AQTF. When an applicant achieves registration, continuous improvement processes will lead to the continual enhancement of an RTO's performance so that the changing needs of clients and **industry** continue to be met. Continuous improvement does not relate to actions to achieve compliance as such actions are considered rectifications. An effective quality **system** includes processes that encourage and achieve continuous improvement. This means developing a planned and ongoing process to systematically review and improve policies, **procedures**, products and services through analysis of relevant information and collection of **data** from clients and other interested parties, including **staff**. While the **Quality Indicators** cannot be applied until an organisation achieves registration as an RTO, it is important that these organisations familiarise themselves with the Quality

Indicators and include them in their planning.

The value for RTOs of adopting a continuous improvement cycle is in its potential to create a stronger, more sustainable business that meets the needs of clients and **stakeholders**. Such a cycle also enables RTOs to adapt quickly to changing external environments, such as economic factors and skills needs. Types of continuous improvement processes and tools are not prescribed and organisations seeking registration as an RTO have the flexibility to consider their own business context.

Access and equity

The National Skills Framework has a strong focus on providing opportunities for everyone to access and participate in learning and to achieve their learning outcomes. An applicant applying for registration as an RTO needs to ensure that its planned practices are as inclusive as possible and do not unreasonably prevent any clients from accessing its services. While access and equity are explicit in Standard 2, they are relevant to all three Standards.

The three components of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* are discussed in more detail in the following Sections of this guide.

SECTION 4

PREPARING FOR REGISTRATION

This section of the guide explains how applicants for registration as an RTO can prepare themselves to register and operate as an RTO.

Scope of operations

Applicants should have a clear idea of the following:

The reason for registering as an RTO

Operating as an RTO requires a sustained effort to maintain and improve the quality of the RTO's operations. The applicant should have a clear business case for becoming an RTO, which means that it should have identified:

- Who its clients will be
- Whether there is an identified need for the services to be provided
- What services it will provide
- Where it will operate
- How training and/or **assessment** will be provided
- What resources will be required to sustain these operations

Where relevant, what profit it can realistically make in the first few years of its operations. The applicant should balance this against other methods for achieving the outcomes it wants to achieve, for example, engaging the services of a training organisation that holds registration or entering into a **partnering** agreement with an established RTO.

Scope of registration

The applicant needs to carefully consider which **qualifications/accredited courses** or Units of Competency / **modules** it wishes to deliver and/or assess. It is advisable to limit the proposed **scope** of registration in the initial application so that if the application is successful the RTO can consolidate the quality of its operations before extending its scope. This will also limit the establishment costs as for each item the applicant seeks to place on its scope of registration it must have the required resources in place.

Research

The applicant should seek out as much information as possible when preparing to apply for registration.

Sources of information include:

- *The AQTF Users' Guide to Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*
- The registering body
- Industry skills councils
- Licensing bodies
- Established RTOs
- Professional associations and licensing bodies
- The national training website, www.training.gov.au
- The **TRAINING.GOV.AU** website

- *AQF Implementation Handbook*, available at www.aqf.edu.au.

Audit

The purpose of the registration **audit** is to determine whether the applicant has the capability to operate effectively as an RTO. The audit should not be used as a way of testing partially developed systems, processes and resources. The implications of substantial **non-compliance** at registration audit are serious because:

- The applicant may be responsible for the costs of subsequent registration audit
- When the applicant gains registration it may be given a higher risk rating, meaning that it will be subject to higher levels of scrutiny than low risk RTOs.

It is important that the applicant is as well prepared as possible for the registration audit. The auditor/s will require evidence that the applicant has a clear plan for how the RTO will operate and that it is ready to 'hit the ground running' when it receives registration. This means that its planning must be comprehensive and supported by processes and resources so that it can provide quality outcomes for clients.

SECTION 5

EXPLAINING THE CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION AND THE STANDARDS

The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* focus on the quality of services and outcomes to be achieved for clients. They allow applicants applying for registration as an RTO some flexibility in demonstrating how they will meet clients' needs in the context of the scope and nature of their business.

Conditions of Registration

The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* includes Conditions of Registration.

The Conditions of Registration consist of nine non-negotiable requirements that form an RTO's contractual agreement with the registering body. The obligations in the Conditions of Registration include:

- Arrangements for consumer protection, such as financial management and viability as well as insurance
- Agreement to operate according to the requirements of the national VET system, for example, by observing the protocols of national consistency in issuing Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) certification, and recognition of AQF certification issued by other RTOs, **data** retention. Section 6 provides suggestions in regards to each Condition under the following subheadings:

Explanatory notes

This is a brief explanation of how the Condition applies to the **operations** of an applicant once it gains RTO registration.

Evidence of adherence to Condition

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

Standards

The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* includes three Standards. Each Standard is supported by elements that provide more detail about demonstrating how applicants can demonstrate capability to meet the requirements of the Standard. Each Standard describes continuous improvement requirements. Continuous improvement relates to the continual enhancement of an RTO's performance so that the changing needs of clients and industry continue to be met. Continuous improvement does not relate to actions to achieve compliance as such actions are considered rectifications. Applicants for registration will not be able to demonstrate continuous improvement, but they will be expected to demonstrate that they have planned adequately to implement continuous improvement if they gain registration.

An applicant for registration as an RTO with a specialist function (for example, an assessment only RTO) does not have to demonstrate compliance with elements or aspects of elements that are not relevant to its operations (that is, training).

Section 7 provides suggestions about application of the Standards and elements under the following subheadings:

Intent

The purpose of the element – what an RTO is expected to achieve, rather than specific processes it will follow.

Key actions

Possible approaches that an applicant can take to effectively meet the elements' requirements.

Guide to compliance

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

Explanatory notes

These explain terms that are related to applications for registration.

Preparing for audit

This section suggests possible evidence that an applicant may provide to demonstrate that it has the capacity to meet the requirements of an element. These suggestions are not exhaustive, nor do they prescribe the information to be provided at audit. Applicants will typically have a range of alternative evidence that they wish to provide to auditors.

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

The explanatory notes refer to relevant sections in the *AQTF Users' Guide to Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* so that the applicant understands how the plan might be operationalised.

Relationship with other elements

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

SECTION 6

THE CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

The Conditions of Registration will be audited at initial registration. They are:

Condition 1 – Governance

The applicant's Chief Executive must identify how he or she will ensure that it will comply with the AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration and any national guidelines approved by the National Quality Council or its successors. This applies to all of the operations within the applicant's intended scope of registration.

The applicant must be able to demonstrate to its registering body what its intended objectives as an RTO are, that it has undertaken business planning, and demonstrates the continuing viability including financial viability of its proposed operations.

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

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

Explanatory notes

The applicant's **Chief Executive** role and responsibilities in relation to quality assuring the operations of the applicant must be clearly described.

The applicant must provide evidence to the registering body that it is seeking registration to deliver qualifications (or single units/modules) that fulfil an identified market, that it has a clear plan for the implementation of its training and/or assessment, and that there is a realistic understanding of the costs associated with running an RTO, both in its start-up phase and subsequently. The applicant's business planning must demonstrate that the applicant will be able to meet these costs.

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

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

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

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

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- Position description/role statement for the Chief Executive
- Organisational chart
- Plan for the business
- Evidence of market research
- Minutes of planning meetings or similar where the applicant's Chief Executive takes a leadership role in monitoring and reviewing the applicant's readiness to comply with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration* and other relevant guidelines
- Guidelines/flow charts/procedures relating to decision-making
- Position descriptions/role statements for trainers and assessors that confirm the role of these staff in decision-making of senior management.

Evidence of satisfying fit and proper person requirements could include:

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

Deciding whether a person meets fit and proper person requirements

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

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

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

Evidence of satisfying fit and proper person requirements could include:

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

- A national police check for each of the RTO's senior officers, directors and substantial shareholders
- A record of satisfying fit and proper person requirements of other legislation.

Condition 2 – Interactions with the Registering Body

The application for initial registration must be accompanied by a self-assessment report of the applicant's compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration*.

The applicant's Chief Executive must identify how it will ensure that the applicant will cooperate with its registering body:

- in the conduct of audits and the monitoring of its operations
- by providing accurate and timely data relevant to measures of its performance
- by providing information about significant changes to its operations
- by providing information about significant changes to its ownership
- in the retention, archiving, retrieval and transfer of records consistent with its registering body's requirements by providing a statement demonstrating its financial viability and/or financial projections, and/or financial statements and/or a business plan on request of the registering body.

Explanatory notes

Applicants carry out a self-assessment to confirm that they have the capability to operate effectively as an RTO on registration. The self-assessment must be thorough and supported by evidence of compliance.

RTOs are part of a system that requires them to be accountable for the management of their operations. Accountability is tested, in part by the RTO's participation in external audits, through the data it reports, and through the confirmation that the RTO remains financially viable.

It is the RTO's responsibility to ensure that the registering body is made aware of changes to its operations, for example, significant changes in management, change of address or company structure. These changes must be reported when they happen. The applicant applying for registration must have a strategy in place to communicate these changes to the registering body.

The applicant must have in place systems to satisfy the requirements of Condition of Registration 5 (provision of an audit report to the registering body when required).

When an RTO ceases to operate the registering body must be provided with records of all students in the format required by the registering body. The applicant should identify what records would be provided to the registering body in these circumstances and how these records would be provided.

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

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- Completed self-assessment report, supported by evidence of compliance
- Procedures or guidelines that describe how the applicant will cooperate with the registering body
- Position descriptions/role statements that include responsibility for communicating with the registering body
- Record keeping procedures/guidelines
- A financial viability risk assessment prepared by an independent accountant (refer *AQTF National Guidelines for a Registering Body*)
- The financial projections for the coming two years
- The applicant's business plan which includes a financial plan.

Condition 3 – Compliance with Legislation

The applicant must identify how it will comply with relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation and regulatory requirements that are relevant to its operations and its scope of registration. It will also identify how it will ensure that its staff and clients are fully informed of these requirements that affect their duties or participation in vocational education and training.

Explanatory notes

The applicant must clearly identify any legislation that will relate to its operations and provide information about how it will comply with this legislation.

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

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

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- Staff induction and professional development programs. These programs should include information on relevant legislation and related rights and responsibilities
- Orientation programs that include information on relevant legislation and related rights and responsibilities
- Information for staff about legislation and its impact on the way they work
- Information for students that describes how legislation affects their participation in education and training
- Plans for conducting internal audits to identify any potential breaches of legislation.

Condition 4 – Insurance

The applicant must hold insurance for public liability.

Explanatory notes

The applicant must have made arrangements for public liability insurance to be in place on registration that is at a level suitable for the planned size and scope of its operations.

Evidence of adherence to the condition

Evidence could include:

- Correspondence with insurers to determine the appropriate level of insurance for the applicant
- Insurance policies.

Condition 5 – Financial Management

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

The applicant must identify how it will provide the following fee information to each client:

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

Where the applicant intends collecting student fees in advance it must ensure it complies with one of the following acceptable options:

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

The applicant must provide financial projections for the first two years of operation and the outcome of a review of those projections by a qualified Accountant to Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards, with its application for initial registration.

Explanatory notes

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

The applicant is required to provide financial projections which present the expected financial results for the first two years of operation. The financial projections are required to be reviewed by an independent Accountant. The Accountant should be asked to issue a statement of negative assurance on the reasonableness of the assumptions made in preparing the financial projections. This states that nothing came to the attention of the Accountant that caused them to believe that the assumptions

used do not provide a reasonable basis for the preparation of the projections.

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

The options available to an applicant that intends to collect student fees in advance are designed to protect individual students in the event that the applicant is unable to deliver the training, assessment and support services agreed with the student.

The intent of this part of Condition 5 is to protect the fees paid in advance by individual students, for the provision of nationally accredited training and assessment. Fees paid in advance from other clients (e.g. companies, incorporated bodies, government agencies) on behalf of the student are not intended to be covered by Condition 5, as they may be protected using one of the options or by other systems implemented by the applicant in line with standard business practices. In the case of a Sole Trader, a decision on the client's status either as a business or as an individual student must be agreed at the time fees are collected.

This student protection takes a number of forms:

- protecting a student enrolled at an RTO on the strength of it being administered by a state, territory or commonwealth government agency (Option 1);
- protecting a student against the loss of, or disruption to, their tuition (Option 2); and
- protecting a student against direct financial losses due to lack of financial viability of its RTO (Options 3, 4 and 5).

Option 2 – Approved Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS)

An approved Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS), for the purposes of AQTF Condition 5, is required to either:

1. Guarantees the students of TAS RTOs a suitable placement into a course or qualification that delivers the same outcomes / competencies for the individual, within a timely manner and with minimal disruption¹, in the event of the RTO being unable to provide the agreed training and assessment services and the RTO being unable to refund to the student the fees paid in advance for the training and assessment services it is unable to deliver; or
2. If the TAS is unable to provide the above guarantee, it is to demonstrate that it has the capacity to refund each individual student that it is unable to place into a course or qualification that delivers the same outcomes / competencies for the individual, the fees that the student has paid in advance but for which the agreed tuition and assessment services have not been received.

¹ What is deemed to be an acceptable timeline and minimal disruption is to be based on pre-determined benchmarks defined under the TAS, approved by the TAS approving body, and agreed to by the TAS RTOs under their contractual arrangements.

A TAS is to apply in the event that the RTO is unable to provide² the agreed training and assessment services, and unable to refund to the student the fees paid in advance for the training and assessment services it is unable to deliver.

Given the complexity of the VET sector, each applicant that intends to collect student fees in advance is in the best position to assess whether membership of a TAS is the most appropriate option. For qualifications on an RTO's scope that are unable to be covered by a TAS, the RTO will need to make alternative arrangements where collecting student fees in advance (i.e. exercising one of the other options available under Condition 5).

For applicants wishing to be an RTO or for RTOs wishing to add qualifications to their scope of registration, the TAS is to award a provisional membership conditional on the applicant gaining registration or the RTO's change of scope being approved by the Registering Body. Full membership of the TAS will be awarded following confirmation of registration by the appropriate Registering Body, with only full TAS members being able to call upon the TAS.

Option 3 – Limiting the amount of fees collected in advance

A maximum on the amount of fees able to be collected in advance will limit the amount that a student may lose if an RTO collapses with no financial assets. At no point in time should the individual student have paid any more than \$1,500 to the RTO for tuition or other services yet to be delivered to the student. This threshold is to apply to each course / qualification that the student is enrolled.

The threshold is to apply to all training, assessment and other services that the RTO has agreed with the student would be provided.

Option 4 – Unconditional financial guarantee from a bank operating in Australia

An unconditional financial guarantee for an amount of no less than the amount that an RTO collects in advance will ensure that students are able to get back the money they have prepaid to an RTO. The applicant / RTO needs to ensure, prior to executing the guarantee with a bank or financial institution operating in Australia, that the financial guarantee is structured in such a way that it is able to refund the students fees paid in advance in circumstances where the applicant / RTO is no longer able to deliver the agreed training and assessment services (e.g. through a trust arrangement operated by an independent party).

Applicants / RTOs also need to demonstrate to the Registering Body, upon request, how they determined the level of the financial guarantee required and how they will monitor and ensure that this level is at all times greater than the amount of student fees held that are paid in advance.

Option 5 – Alternative fee protection measure of equal rigour

This option provides Registering Bodies with the power to approve alternative fee protection measures. This ensures the Registering Body has the flexibility under Condition 5 to consider and endorse alternative measures based on their individual merits.

Alternative fee protection measures are to be approved by individual Registering Bodies and apply only to its applicants / RTOs. In making decisions regarding alternative fee protection arrangements of equal rigour, the Registering Body is to consider the '*Principles underpinning the approval of an alternative fee protection measure of equal rigour*', which have been endorsed by the NQC and are published within the National Guidelines for a Registering Body.

²The definition of '...being unable to provide...' is to be based on pre-determined benchmarks defined under the TAS, approved by the TAS approving body, and agreed to by the TAS RTOs under their contractual arrangements.

The approval of an alternative fee protection measure can be revoked by the Registering Body at any time. In doing so the Registering Body is to have regard to any transitional arrangements that may be required for RTOs to transition to an alternative measure to protect student fees paid in advance.

It is important to note that, as with all of the Options, this Option is to occur in the instance that the RTO is no longer able to deliver the agreed training, for which the student has paid fees in advance, and nor can it refund the fees paid in advance (i.e. the RTO has gone into voluntary administration or is bankrupt). This Option is not to replace or unduly influence the day-to-day operation of an RTO, in particular the application of its fee refund policy.

Evidence of adherence to the condition

The applicant should provide a statement of how they intend to meet their consumer protection obligations under Condition 5.

Evidence could include:

- A fees, charges and refunds **policy** that meets the requirements of Condition 5
- Pre-engagement information for clients about fees, charges and refunds that is clear and accessible
- Templates for invoices that clearly state the components of the fees
- Financial projections that align with the applicant's business planning and have been reviewed by an independent Accountant
- Option 2 - Demonstrated provisional membership of an approved Tuition Assurance Scheme
- Option 3 - Procedure that describes the process that will be used to ensure the student fees paid in advance are not more than the thresholds described in Option 3
- Option 4 - In principle agreement for a financial guarantee and procedures to ensure the financial guarantee covers the amount of student fees paid in advance at all times
- Option 5 - Written confirmation from its registering body that the applicant intends to use an alternative fee protection mechanism that has been approved under this option.

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

The applicant must identify how it will issue to persons whom it has assessed as competent in accordance with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course, a qualification or statement of attainment (as appropriate) that:

- Meets the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) requirements
- Identifies the RTO by its national provider number from the National Training Information Service
- Includes the Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo in accordance with the current conditions of service.

The applicant must retain client records of attainment of units of competency and qualifications for a period of 30 years.

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

The applicant must identify how it will provide returns of its client records of attainment of Units of Competency and Qualifications to its registering body on a regular basis, as determined by the registering body.

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

Explanatory notes

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

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

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

The registering body requires RTOs to provide accurate and complete information on the attainment of each learner engaging in nationally recognised training. The applicant seeking registration as an RTO must therefore have an effective system in place to ensure that these **records** are kept and reported as required. On application the applicant will need to demonstrate that it can retain student records for thirty years in an accessible format.

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- Compliant awards
- Certification and Issuing of qualifications and **statement of attainment** procedures
- A records management procedure including requirements to review on-going accessibility of records
- An induction program for administrative staff, including information about issuing awards and records management
- A records management system which is AVETMISS compliant. Refer to Appendix 1, *AQTF Users' Guide to Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.
- Capability to use the national **unique student identifier**. Refer to Appendix 1, *AQTF Users' Guide to Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.

Condition 7 – Recognition of Qualifications Issued by Other RTOs

The applicant must confirm that it will recognise the AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by any other RTO.

Explanatory notes

Potential learners should be made aware of opportunities for recognition of AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by other RTOs. The applicant must have a process in place so that this recognition occurs before commencement of the **learning program**.

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

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- A recognition of qualifications and of Statements of Attainment issued by other RTOs policy and procedure
- Information about recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs in pre-engagement materials.

Condition 8 – Accuracy and Integrity of Marketing

The applicant must demonstrate that its proposed marketing and advertising of AQF qualifications to prospective clients is ethical, accurate and consistent with its scope of registration. The NRT logo must be employed only in accordance with its conditions of use.

Explanatory notes

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

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

The conditions for using the NRT logo are clearly defined in the NRT logo specifications and must be adhered to. NRT logo specifications can be sourced at www.nssc.natese.gov.au.

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

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- A marketing procedure that aligns with the requirements of Condition 8
- Marketing materials
- An induction program for relevant staff, including information about how to ensure that marketing is accurate and is not misleading.

Condition 9 – Transition to Training Packages/Expiry of Accredited Courses

The applicant must identify how it will manage the transition from superseded Training Packages within 12 months of their publication on the National Training Information Service and the transition from superseded accredited courses so that it will deliver only currently endorsed Training Packages or currently accredited courses.

Explanatory notes

RTOs cannot deliver and/or assess revised Training Packages or accredited courses unless they have gained approval from the registering body, confirmed by the inclusion of the revised Training Package or accredited course on the RTO's scope of registration the TGA website training.gov.au.

The applicant will have processes planned so that:

- The requirements of the revised Training Package or accredited course are met within the transition period
- The necessary strategies for training and assessment and related resources are in place to deliver and assess in the Training Package/accredited course
- Templates for qualifications and statements of attainment testamurs and marketing materials are updated
- Trainers and assessors are aware of changes in the revised Training Package or accredited course and related training and assessment strategies and resources
- Learners, employers and other relevant stakeholders affected by these changes are advised of how the changes will affect them
- Where a Training Package has been revised and new qualifications developed, student enrolments within the new qualification must commence as soon as possible and no later than 1 year after publication of the revised Training Package
- A strategy is developed for transitioning students to the new qualification/course or 'teach out' students in the superseded qualification/course within a timely manner, within the timeframe designated by the registering authority.
- The management system, including management of enrolment, student records management and relevant policies and procedures is reviewed to accommodate the necessary changes. Processes must ensure that students are not enrolled in qualifications that adversely affect their opportunities for employment and/or future study pathways.

Evidence of adherence to the Condition

Evidence could include:

- Policies and procedures/guidelines to guide staff on transition requirements.

SECTION 7

THE STANDARDS

Standard 1 The applicant has strategies in place to provide quality training and assessment across all its operations

Elements

1.1 The applicant has a defined continuous improvement strategy that allows for the collection and analysis of data. The strategy includes implementation of continuous improvement activities for training and assessment.

1.2 Strategies for training and assessment meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course and are developed in consultation with industry.

1.3 Staff, facilities, equipment and training and assessment materials to be used by the applicant are consistent with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course and the applicant's own training and assessment strategies.

1.4 The applicant has a defined strategy, procedures and measures to ensure training and assessment services are conducted by trainers and assessors who:

- a) have the necessary training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors, and
- b) have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and
- c) can demonstrate current industry skills directly relevant to the training/assessment being undertaken, and
- d) continue to develop their Vocational Education and Training (VET) knowledge and skills as well as their industry currency and trainer/assessor competence.

1.5 The applicant has a defined strategy and procedures in place to ensure that assessment, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

- a) will meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course
- b) will be conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence
- c) will meet workplace and, where relevant, regulatory requirements
- d) is systematically validated.

Element 1.1 The applicant has a defined continuous improvement strategy that allows for the collection and analysis of data. The strategy includes implementation of continuous improvement activities for training and assessment

Intent

The applicant has a clear plan to collect data and improve training and assessment in response to the data collected.

Continuous improvement processes will lead to performance **over and above** compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* and achieving outcomes over and above those previously achieved.

Key actions

The applicant applying for registration demonstrates its capacity to implement a continuous improvement approach that will be systematic, involves staff, clients and other stakeholders, and will use qualitative and/or quantitative data to determine the need for improvements to training and assessment.

The strategy shows how the applicant's continuous improvement processes will lead to performance **over and above** compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* after it has achieved registration and how it will achieve outcomes over and above those previously achieved.

Guide to compliance

The applicant has a strategy in place for the systematic collection of data and for the systematic continuous improvement of training and assessment so that:

- Relevant and sufficient stakeholders are identified, related to the scope of the proposed RTO's operations
- A range of data is collected, sufficient to provide the applicant with valuable improvement opportunities
- Processes for analysing the data and planning and implementing improvements are determined
- Processes for monitoring continuous improvement activities and for reviewing data collection,
- continuous improvement processes and outcomes are decided

Explanatory notes

The complexity of the continuous improvement strategy will differ depending on the applicant's proposed scope of registration and size of operations. The strategy should be **documented** so that it provides a useful guide to the applicant once it gains registration. For smaller applicants this could be a flow chart; for applicants seeking to become enterprise-based RTOs this could be an explanation of how the RTO's operations will align with those of the parent company.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit, the strategy could include:

- A process/procedure for data collection and continuous improvement
- A description of who data will be collected from, when, how and by whom
- Tools for collecting data, such as questionnaires, focus group questions and instructions for their use
- A description of how data will be collated, analysed and acted upon
- A description of how improvements made will be monitored to check their effectiveness
- A description of how continuous improvement processes will be reviewed.

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

Refer to Element 1.1 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for a discussion of how an RTO systematically improves training and assessment and the evidence that could be provided to demonstrate this.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.2–1.5

Element 1.2 Strategies for training and assessment meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course and are developed in consultation with industry.

Intent

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

Key actions

The applicant develops training and assessment strategies and **training programs** that provide sufficient information to guide trainers and assessors. These strategies will ensure that learners receive training and assessment that meets their needs and meets current industry requirements.

Guide to compliance

Each training and assessment strategy is clearly articulated and informed by information collected on industry requirements and learners' needs through effective consultation with industry.

Each strategy and training program specifies the resources, both human and physical, that will be used to meet the requirements of the Training Package qualification (or unit of competency) or accredited course (or unit/module).

The strategy includes processes to be used for its monitoring and review.

Explanatory notes

Each training and assessment strategy is a 'roadmap' for the delivery and assessment of a qualification (or **unit of competency**) or accredited course (or module). It shows how the requirements of the Training Package or the accredited course will be addressed, and is a document or set of documents that can be given to trainers and assessors to guide them in their practice.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit applicants should have a strategy for training and assessment in place for each qualification, course or unit/module it intends to place on its scope. If the applicant is intending to place single units on its scope of registration there should be a strategy in place for these units or groups of units, if they will be delivered and/or assessed together. The applicant should be able to demonstrate how the Industry consultation carried out shaped the strategies for training and assessment.

The applicant should also consider how the strategies will be disseminated to trainers and/or assessors and how they will be reviewed with input from industry.

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

Refer to Element 1.2 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of what could be included in a strategy for training and assessment and what consultation could be carried out.

Relationship with other elements

Refer elements 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5

Element 1.3 Staff, facilities, equipment and training and assessment materials to be used by the applicant are consistent with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course and the applicant's own training and assessment strategies.

Intent

The resources to be used by the applicant when it gains registration as an RTO across all of its operations are consistent with current industry standards and Training Package requirements.

Key actions

The applicant demonstrates that it has ready access to the resources required to conduct training and assessment for its intended scope of registration. The appropriateness of these resources is confirmed as a result of thorough planning.

Guide to compliance

The applicant demonstrates it has ready access to the required resources.

The applicant develops a process so that resources specified in each training and assessment strategy and training program for the relevant qualification (or unit of competency) or accredited course (or unit/module) will be used across all of the applicant's operations by staff and learners.

A plan is in place so that the currency, sufficiency and effectiveness of the staff, facilities, equipment and training and assessment materials are systematically reviewed and improvements made where needed.

Explanatory notes

Applicants need to demonstrate that they will be able to provide training and assessment for all qualifications (or units of competency), accredited courses (or units/modules) as soon as they gain registration.

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have located and arranged access to suitable equipment and facilities to meet the requirements of the Training Package qualifications/accredited course. Some applicants will be required by licensing and regulatory requirements to demonstrate that all required resources, equipment and planning approval are in place in order to gain registration. It is essential that applicants inform themselves of any licensing or regulatory requirements that relate to their proposed scope of registration and meet these requirements.

Regarding training and assessment resources, applicants are expected to have developed or sourced suitable training and assessment resources. If the applicant intends to use commercially produced training materials they need to be able to demonstrate that they have reviewed these resources to confirm that they meet Training Package/accredited course requirements as well as the requirements of the intended clients. The applicant for registration will also need to demonstrate how the resources will be used, and have designed a program in line with the strategy and the identified target group.

Refer to Element 1.4 for a discussion of trainer/assessor requirements and Element 1.5 for a discussion of requirements for assessment.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit the applicant could:

- Provide agreements for the use of equipment and machinery that demonstrate that the strategies for training and assessment can be implemented on registration
- Demonstrate that they have master copies of the required training and/or assessment resources and confirmation that copies of these resources will be available for use at registration
- Provide planning approval for the conduct of training and assessment at the proposed premises, where relevant
- Provide a plan for familiarising trainers and/or assessors with the training and/or assessment materials and dissemination of these materials
- Develop venue checklists to use when confirming training rooms are adequate and safe and fit for purpose
- Develop a plan for the review of resources as part of the applicant's continuous improvement processes.

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

Refer to Element 1.3 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of reviewing the resources used.

Relationships with other elements

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

Element 1.4 The applicant has a defined strategy, procedures and measures to ensure training and assessment services are conducted by trainers and assessors who:

- a) have the necessary training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors, and**
- b) have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and**
- c) can demonstrate current industry skills directly relevant to the training/assessment being undertaken, and**
- d) continue to develop their Vocational Education and Training (VET) knowledge and skills as well as their industry currency and trainer/assessor competence.**

Intent

On registration, all trainers and assessors of nationally recognised training will meet nationally agreed competency requirements and continue to develop their competence (refer to Appendix 2 *AQTF Users' Guide to Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*, for the NQC policy in regards to training and assessing competencies for trainers and assessors).

Key actions

The applicant has a strategy, procedures and measures to establish and verify that trainers and assessors meet nationally agreed competency requirements and continue to develop their competence by:

- Supporting them in meaningful engagement with industry and relevant professional bodies
- Supporting their professional development in teaching and learning methods and in understanding the requirements of the VET system
- Fostering a culture of critical evaluation and innovation.

Guide to compliance

The applicant demonstrates it has ready access to the required training and assessment staff.

The defined strategy:

- Is sufficient to ensure that trainers' and assessors' competence, including vocational currency, is established, verified and monitored
- Ensures that assessors who have the vocational competencies, but not the assessment competencies required, work together to conduct assessment with a person who has the required assessment competencies
- Includes direct supervision arrangements for trainers that will be implemented and managed as required
- Includes processes for continuously developing trainers' and assessors' competencies.

Explanatory notes

Applicants do not necessarily have to demonstrate that they have engaged staff to act as trainers and assessors, but they must be able to demonstrate that they are adequately prepared to engage trainers and/or assessors who meet the National Quality Council requirements (refer to Appendix 2 *AQTF Users' Guide to Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*).

The defined strategy, procedures and measures should identify how many staff are required, given the applicant's proposed scope of registration and on what basis they will be engaged (casual, **contractor**, full-time, permanent).

The strategy, procedures and measures should include processes to be used for ensuring that adequate staff are employed, that they are fully inducted and that their competencies and VET knowledge is further developed, maintained and reviewed.

The strategy, procedures and measures should include a process for establishing vocational competence of trainers and assessors by verifying that they hold the required qualifications and experience.

If there is likelihood that the applicant will engage trainers and/or assessors who do not have appropriate trainer and/or assessor competencies or demonstrated equivalent competencies, the strategy should include processes to be used for supervision and **co-assessment**.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will have ready access to suitably qualified trainers and assessors the applicant could have the following in place:

- Position descriptions and selection criteria for trainers/assessors
- Advertisements for trainers/assessors
- Staff agreements or contracts
- Staff induction materials
- Policies and procedures or other guidance regarding selection of trainers and assessors
- Details of any potential staff who have been provisionally selected and confirmation that they meet the requirements of Element 1.4
- Plans for staff review and professional development.

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

Refer to Element 1.4 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of establishing the competence of trainers and assessors, supervision and co-assessment for staff who do not hold the required trainer and/or assessor competencies or demonstrated equivalent competencies, and maintenance of vocational currency and knowledge of VET.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3

Element 1.5 The applicant has a defined strategy and procedures in place to ensure that assessment, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

- (a) will meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course**
- (b) will be conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence**
- (c) will meet workplace and, where relevant, regulatory requirements**
- (d) is systematically validated.**

Intent

On registration, assessment will ensure that only learners who hold the requisite skills and knowledge are certified as **competent**.

Key actions

- The applicant applying for registration:
- Ensures that assessment will meet the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course
- Demonstrates its capacity to ensure that assessors will systematically validate and improve assessment processes, tools and evidence requirements.

Guide to compliance

The applicant demonstrates it has ready access to the required assessment resources.

The strategy and procedures are sufficient to ensure that assessment (which includes RPL):

- Meets the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course
- Is consistent with the training and assessment strategy
- Is valid, reliable, flexible and fair
- Focuses on the application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace
- Involves the collection of sufficient, valid, authentic and current evidence to enable a judgement to be made about whether competency has been attained
- Confirms that workplace and regulatory requirements are met.
- Is validated and/or moderated

Explanatory notes

Applicants for registration need to demonstrate that they will be able to provide assessment for all qualifications (or units of competency), accredited courses (or units/modules) on gaining registration.

Regarding assessment resources, applicants seeking registration as an RTO are expected to have developed or sourced suitable assessment resources. If the applicant intends to use commercially produced assessment materials they need to be able to demonstrate that they have reviewed these resources to confirm that they meet Training Package/accredited course requirements as well as the requirements of the intended clients.

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

The strategy developed by the applicant will include the strategies for training and assessment (refer element 1.2) and supporting documents such as **assessment tools**, including those for RPL, information for assessors, and plans for validation of assessment.

Procedures will address:

- Carrying out assessment, including RPL
- Recording and reporting assessment outcomes
- **Assessment validation** and/or **moderation**.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will implement assessment that meets the requirements of Element 1.5, the applicant could have the following in place:

- Master copies of assessment tools, including RPL assessment tools for each qualification/accredited course or unit of competency/module that the applicant intends to place on its scope
- Procedures for developing assessment tools
- Procedures relating to validation of assessment and moderation of assessment
- Processes for recording the outcomes of assessment
- Assessor guides
- Information about how simulated **assessment environments** will be provided
- Information about specific licensing authority, workplace or regulatory requirements and evidence that these have been met.

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

Refer to Element 1.5 in the AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration for an explanation of meeting Training Package or accredited course requirements, ensuring that assessment meets the requirements of workplace and regulatory requirements, and validating assessment tools and evidence.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3.

Standard 2 The applicant has strategies in place to adhere to the principles of access and equity and to maximise outcomes for its clients.

Elements

2.1 The applicant has a strategy in place detailing how it will establish and meet the needs of clients.

2.2 The applicant has a strategy in place for the implementation of continuous improvement of client services informed by the analysis of relevant data.

2.3 The applicant has in place a process and mechanism to provide all clients information about the training, assessment and support services to be provided, and about their rights and obligations, prior to enrolment or entering into an agreement.

2.4 Where identified in the learning and assessment strategy, the applicant has engaged or has a defined strategy in place to engage with employers or other parties who contribute to each learner's training and assessment on the development, delivery and monitoring of training and assessment.

2.5 The applicant has a defined process and mechanism in place to ensure learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs.

2.6 The applicant has a defined process and mechanism in place to ensure learners have timely access to current and accurate records of their participation.

2.7 The applicant has a defined complaints and appeals process that will ensure learners' complaints and appeals are addressed effectively and efficiently.

Element 2.1 The applicant has a strategy in place detailing how it will establish and meet the needs of clients.

Intent

On registration, **client services** will meet clients' needs.

Key actions

The applicant demonstrates its capability to:

- Identify the services required by its clients
- Provide these services
- Make improvements based on data collected about the quality of these services.

Guide to compliance

The strategy includes processes to ensure that:

- The needs of clients are established
- Client services will be in place or accessed to address the identified needs
- The provision of services will be monitored to ensure that they continue to address the identified need.

Explanatory notes

The strategy should describe:

- The clients to whom the applicant will be providing services and how client needs will be identified. Clients' needs could be identified through:
 - Meetings with workplace supervisors and management
 - Focus groups and market research
 - Questionnaires before commencement of programs
 - Research reports or studies
 - Training trainers and assessors to identify students at risk and in need of support services.
- The client services the applicant has developed or negotiated to be in place once registration has been achieved. Smaller RTOs might collaborate with other RTOs and share resources to provide a greater range of support services. Services include the following:
 - Pre-enrolment materials
 - Study support and study skills programs
 - Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) programs or referrals to these programs
 - Equipment, resources and /or programs to increase access for learners with disabilities
 - Learning resource centres
 - Mediation services or referrals to these services
 - Flexible scheduling and delivery of training and assessment
 - Counselling services or referrals to these services
 - Information technology (IT) support
 - Learning materials in alternative formats, for example, in large print
 - Learning and assessment programs customised to the workplace.

- How the effectiveness of the services will be monitored to ensure that identified client needs are met. The RTO ensures that the services provided to clients continue to meet the needs identified. This could include:
 - Reviewing the progress of groups of learners to check that they are progressing satisfactorily and reviewing the support services provided where necessary
 - Maintaining ongoing contact with workplace supervisors and management to gauge the effectiveness of services provided
 - Monitoring the usage of services to ascertain whether learners are accessing these services.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will meet the needs of clients the applicant could provide:

- A plan for establishing the needs of clients and correspondence or other documentation that illustrates that potential clients' needs have been identified
- Information for staff and learners about client services to be established or already established
- A plan for the monitoring and review of the suitability of client services.

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

Refer to Element 2.1 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of how to establish client needs, examples of client services that a RTO may have in place, and information about monitoring and reviewing client services.

Related elements

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

Element 2.2 The applicant has a strategy in place for the implementation of continuous improvement of client services informed by the analysis of relevant data.

Intent

The applicant has a clear plan to collect, analyse and act on data and improve client services when it commences operation.

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

Key actions

The applicant demonstrates its capacity to continuously improve its client services.

Guide to compliance

The strategy describes:

- How data on client services will be collected and analysed as the basis for continuous improvement
- A proposed continuous improvement approach that is systematic
- How improvements to client services will be planned and implemented
- How improvement will be monitored
- How continuous improvement will be reviewed

Explanatory notes

The strategy might be described in a simple document like a table or a flowchart and/or in policies and procedures for continuous improvement or a continuous improvement plan. Its complexity will depend on what type of RTO is planned.

The strategy should describe how a range of data will be collected. The size and the complexity of the proposed RTO and the characteristics of the proposed RTO's clients determine how much and what kind of data will be collected. The strategy could include a description of:

- What form the data will take and about what aspects of client services data will be collected. Data includes
 - Feedback from stakeholders, such as students and employers
 - Results from internal/ external audits
 - Organisation self-assessment outcomes
 - Records of concerns, complaints, appeals and their resolution
- When and how often it is planned to collect data
- How data is to be collected, collated and analysed and by whom
- Who will coordinate the data collection, its analysis and subsequent planning.

Additional processes for collecting data include:

- Benchmarking with other RTOs
- Collection of feedback through surveys, focus groups, SWOT analyses, telephone interviews and discussions
- End of program evaluation
- Client satisfaction surveys/ questionnaires
- Interviews, focus groups
- Consultation with learners, enterprise clients, industry organisations and licensing bodies
- Records of complaints and appeals and their resolution
- Internal audit reports and organisational self assessment
- Outcomes of benchmarking activities
- Consulting with the learner and organisations it is to support people with additional needs – for example, relating to low vision, hearing impairment or low mobility – and reviewing and adjusting client services accordingly.

The strategy should identify how the applicant intends to implement its continuous improvement cycle.

This could include information on how:

- Improvements will be planned and monitored
- Continuous improvement processes will be reviewed to determine whether they were effective and productive.

Sufficient and relevant data

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

- The clarity and accuracy of information provided to learners before enrolment
- Processes for learner selection, enrolment and induction/ orientation
- Complaints and appeals processes
- The effectiveness of assistance provided in the areas of English language, literacy and numeracy
- The effectiveness of support provided to workplace based or online learners
- Support services such as disability, guidance and welfare services, including external services
- The extent to which learners were provided with access to their records of participation and progress
- RPL processes
- The effectiveness of support provided to individual learners, for example, the extent to which LLN programs improve LLN levels
- The student profile in relation to use of support services, including trend statistics to determine if there are groups of students who are not accessing services.

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

Making improvements

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

- Higher levels of client satisfaction
- Higher completion rates
- Revisions to information provided to clients so that it is clearer or in a more suitable format
- Streamlined enrolment processes
- Improved referral information for clients with special needs
- Revised induction/ orientation processes
- Improved results in assessments of language use, literacy and numeracy
- Changes to complaints and appeals processes
- Increased levels of engagement with employers, researchers, industry and/ or regulators to determine the characteristics and needs of specific groups of learners

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

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will collect and analyse data about the effectiveness of client services and continually improve these services, the applicant could provide:

- A continuous improvement plan for the first 12 months of its operations
- Policies and procedures for the continuous improvement of client services
- Tools for collecting, collating and analysing data
- Induction materials for staff about their role in continuous improvement
- Orientation materials for learners that describe their input to continuous improvement of client services.

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

Refer to Element 2.2 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of how data might be collected and continuous improvement.

Related elements

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

Element 2.3 The applicant has in place a process and mechanism to provide all clients information about the training, assessment and support services to be provided, and about their rights and obligations, prior to enrolment or entering into an agreement.

Intent

On registration, clients will be provided with accurate and sufficient information to make an informed choice about their enrolment and/or entering into an agreement.

Key actions

The applicant demonstrates its capacity to systematically provide sufficient, relevant and accurate pre-engagement information to clients.

Guide to compliance

The mechanism to provide information to clients is comprehensive.

The applicant has developed information for prospective clients that:

- Is clear and sufficient to assist them to make an informed choice
- Accurately describes the services to be provided.
- The applicant has developed an agreement between the proposed RTO and the client that is clearly defined and accurate.

Explanatory notes

Depending on how the applicant intends to operate, clients could include enterprises, companies and/or groups of learners. The mechanism for providing information to clients before they enrol or enter into an agreement could be one of, or a combination of:

- Information sessions
- Information on the applicant's website
- Tool box talks
- Pamphlets or course guides
- Providing information about the RTO to Australian apprenticeship centres or employment agencies.

The applicant should clearly outline how information will be provided and how this method of providing information is suitable for its prospective clients.

An applicant applying for registration should develop the information it intends to provide to its clients as part of its preparation for the registration process.

This information should be in a format that is easy to access and understand, taking into account the client's abilities and access to information.

The following list is not exhaustive and may not apply in all contexts, but the types of information a client might expect could include:

- Fees, including course fees, administration fees, materials fees and any other charges. The RTO must meet the requirements of Condition of Registration 5. The provision of clear information about all fees, charges and refunds will help to protect both client and RTO
- Course outcomes and pathways. Clients are better able to make decisions about which qualifications they will undertake if they know: what skills and knowledge the course covers; whether the course will provide them with a qualification or a specific skill set; and, whether it will provide them with entry requirements to employment and/or to other qualifications
- Training and assessment arrangements, including RPL. Clients want to know how RTOs will provide training and assessment. This should include information about the RPL process and how to apply and where and how training and assessment will be carried out
- Selection and enrolment of learners. Where there is clear information about selection, prospective learners can assess whether they will meet the requirements of a course. There will also be less likelihood of clients complaining that they have been unfairly excluded or that, after the course begins, that it is inappropriate for them
- Client support services, for example, support provided in LLN or for clients with a disability. If clients have support needs, they need to know either how the RTO will provide the required support or how they can source this support externally
- Legislative and occupational licensing requirements. This could include pre-requisites and conditions relating to training and assessment, such as the requirement to be employed in the industry
- Policy and practice are compliant with disability and discrimination legislation and are reviewed on a regular basis
- Analysing research about characteristics of specific groups of learners, (for example, prisoners, or people from CALD backgrounds) and adjusting pre-engagement information where appropriate
- Including information about equity support at information sessions; providing opportunities for students to present at information sessions, or to act as points of contact for prospective students
- Complaints and appeals procedures. Clients need to know that there is a fair and transparent process in place for handling complaints and appeals and that they can raise concerns about their programs. In addition to describing internal complaints processes, the RTO could also refer clients to external bodies, such as the state or territory registering body and to the National Training Hotline, telephone: 13 38 73.

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

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

Agreement

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

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

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

Demonstrating improvements to client information services

Improvements to client information services could be demonstrated through:

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

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will provide clients with comprehensive pre-engagement information the applicant:

- Should provide the information it intends to provide to clients when it gains registration as an RTO.
- Could provide a process, which could be described in a procedure, an enrolment flowchart and/or information for relevant staff to ensure that clients receive the information before they enrol or sign an agreement.

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

Refer to Element 2.2 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of the types of information that could be provided to clients before enrolment, how to ensure that this information is accurate, and what the term 'contract' means.

Related elements

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

Element 2.4 Where identified in the learning and assessment strategy, the applicant has engaged or has a defined strategy in place to engage with employers or other parties who contribute to each learner’s training and assessment on the development, delivery and monitoring of training and assessment.

Intent

On registration, learners, including apprentices and trainees, receive support from all parties engaged in their training and assessment.

Key actions

The applicant has a strategy to:

- Involve relevant workplace personnel in planning workplace programs
- Ensure that the training and assessment program will make full use of opportunities at the workplace
- Monitor each learner’s progress and the support provided to them by workplace personnel.

Guide to compliance

If the applicant intends to provide workplace-based training and/or assessment it consults with workplace personnel in the development of workplace training and assessment program or has a strategy in place to do so.

The strategy describes how:

- The applicant will inform workplace personnel of their training and assessment roles and responsibilities, where relevant to the training and assessment program
- The applicant will monitor the contribution of workplace personnel in supporting each learner’s training and assessment
- The applicant will monitor the learner’s progress
- Information from workplace personnel will be used to continuously improve training and assessment.

Explanatory notes

The strategy will confirm that the applicant has a clear plan for engaging with employers or other parties, such as workplace supervisors.

Workplace personnel will be able to provide information on:

- Opportunities for training and assessment at the workplace
- Information about job roles and the range of conditions under which employees work
- Equipment and machinery that are used at the workplace, and their availability for training and assessment activities
- Personnel at the workplace who can support the RTO and the learners in training and assessment, and who can provide any other support that the learners may require
- Reasonable adjustments that can be made for assessment in the workplace
- Seasonal and shift times that might restrict opportunities for training and assessment

- Opportunities that learners will have at the workplace to develop competency across the scope of the competency standards
- Workplace induction processes provided to learners
- Workplace policies and procedures that may need to be integrated into the training and assessment program
- Any special projects that the learners could be involved in
- Any conditions imposed on learners or on workplaces through licensing/ regulatory requirements and industrial agreements
- Personnel who have the required competencies to conduct workplace assessment, where relevant

This information is invaluable to the RTO when developing a training and assessment program for trainees, apprentices and learners participating in work experience/ placement as part of an institution-based program.

The strategy could include information about how the applicant:

- Will provide information to employers and other parties about their roles and responsibilities related to supporting the learners at the workplace. These roles and responsibilities could include:
 - Providing input to **Training Plans**
 - Providing learners with opportunities for skills development
 - Gathering evidence of on-the-job performance for assessment processes
 - Providing opportunities for learners to be withdrawn from routine work for the purpose of developing competencies in other ways
 - Completing documentation, for example, signing off on third party evidence or verifying logbook entries to the satisfaction of the licensing authority (if applicable)
 - Acting as a point of contact for the RTO
 - Ensuring duty of care and providing support
- Intends to engage workplace personnel in identifying opportunities for development and consolidation of the learners' skills and/or contribute to assessment. Workplace personnel can provide feedback on how effectively training, assessment and client services meet workplace requirements by:
 - Contributing to training and assessment strategies
 - Participating in assessment validation events, such as seminars
 - Co-assessing with RTO staff
 - Providing feedback, through client satisfaction surveys, on the RTO's training and assessment approaches and client services
- Intends to monitor and review the contribution of the employer or other parties to the learners' development. This could include
 - OHS induction
 - Pairing up the learner with a mentor
 - Providing extra time or opportunities for learning
 - Providing opportunities for assessment and/or being involved in the assessment process
 - Ensuring that the learner has access to workplace services, such as counselling, if these are in place
 - Discussing training and assessment resources with workplace supervisors before assessment to discuss opportunities for workplace support during training and assessment

Will ensure that learners are being provided with an adequate level of support. Learners' progress must be monitored to ensure that they are developing skills and knowledge as planned. This monitoring will also help the RTO to confirm that learners are receiving the support they need. The key to effective monitoring is communicating regularly with learners and their workplace supervisor to:

- Discuss progress
- Confirm that the agreed roles and responsibilities are being carried out
- Identify further support needed
- Adjust plans for training and assessment
- Negotiate further opportunities for training and assessment

There are often requirements to document this monitoring in learners' Training Plans when a government-funded training contract is in place for trainees and apprentices.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will engage with employers or other parties, the applicant could provide:

- Evidence of consultation with potential employers, such as correspondence or meeting notes
- A proposal for services to be provided to potential employers
- A statement of roles and responsibilities of employers
- Draft **Training Plans** that designate responsibilities to the RTO and workplace staff
- A schedule of workplace visits to monitor learners' progress
- Proposed strategies for training and assessment (refer element 1.2) that reflect the information gained from consultation with workplace personnel.

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

Refer to Element 2.4 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of how employers can be consulted when developing workplace-based training and/or assessment programs, possible roles and responsibilities of workplace personnel, providing workplace support for learners, and monitoring the progress of learners.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2

Element 2.5 The applicant has a defined process and mechanism in place to ensure learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs.

Intent

On registration, learners will have every reasonable opportunity to complete their training program.

Key actions

The applicant demonstrates its capacity to ensure that:

- Learners' needs are assessed
- Learners know how to access the services they will require to successfully complete their training and assessment programs.

Guide to compliance

The applicant has processes and mechanisms in place to ensure that:

- Learners' training and learning support needs are systematically assessed in a timely manner
- Learners have access to relevant learning support services, which might include access to assistive technologies and materials in alternative formats, or assistance with language, literacy and numeracy
- Training, assessment and learning support services provided to each client are consistent with the training and assessment strategies
- Learning, assessment and learning support services are monitored and improved.

Explanatory notes

Processes to assess learner needs could include a combination of:

- Gathering information about each learner's prior learning, and encouraging learners to seek recognition for this learning through RPL.
- Identifying the mode of delivery and attendance patterns (if relevant) best suited to each learner's needs.
- Asking learners to identify at interview or on their enrolment form anything that might prevent them from progressing through the training and assessment program (for example, anything related to physical ability, cultural background or educational background) combined with an assessment of the learner
 - Asking learners to complete a formal assessment of their language skills, literacy and/or numeracy
 - Ensuring that trainers and assessors are equipped to identify students at risk and in need of support services.

Mechanisms that could be used are:

- Pre-course interview forms and questionnaires
- RPL self-assessment forms
- Enrolment forms with questions that identify support needs
- **Credit transfer** forms
- LLN assessment tools.

Providing access to learning support

The extent of the support services that RTOs provide will depend on its clients' needs and its capacity to provide these services. Support for learners could include a combination of:

- Providing study skills or LLN programs, concurrently with the VET program
- Providing a contact person for equity issues
- Assigning each learner a mentor or coach
- Providing staff training in cross cultural communication
- Offering peer support
- Disability support
- IT support
- Telephone, email, networking and tutorial support for learners engaged in flexible delivery programs
- Assistance with job search and placement
- Personal counselling
- Career guidance

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

- Learners are provided with information about support services and any external support available. This information is provided before enrolment, for example, in marketing materials, on the RTO website, and, where relevant, at commencement – for example, at induction or orientation
- Personnel and resources are in place to assist learners. These could be, for example, a staff member who has expertise in disability support, learning and assessment resources that are designed to develop LLN, a process where learners are referred to an outside agency that offers counselling support, or staff who have expertise in delivery to Indigenous learners

Providing services consistent with strategies for training and assessment

The nature and extent of support services RTOs provide will vary according to:

- The type and depth of the training and/or assessment program
- Where and how the training and assessment takes place, for example, at the workplace, or at the training organisation, or by distance or online delivery
- Whether learners are working with the RTO for the first time or are continuing
- The requirements of the qualification (for example, LLN support is more likely to be provided at lower AQF levels)

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

Monitoring and improving

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

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

- Improved access to and use of learners' support services during the program
- Changes to processes for assessing clients' training and learning support needs
- Modifications to resources, facilities and equipment
- Improved rates of learner progression and completion
- Improved levels of satisfaction data on services received

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will ensure learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs the applicant could provide a combination of:

- RPL application forms
- Pre-commencement assessment tools to establish language, literacy and numeracy support requirements
- Questionnaires to identify issues that might have an impact on the training and assessment program, such as disability, rural isolation and work commitments of learners
- Pre-commencement interview questions and record forms for interview responses
- Procedures for determining support needs
- Information about arrangements planned or developed for the provision of services to support students
- Information for learners about support services available and how to access them.

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

Refer to Element 2.5 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of how learners' needs may be assessed and the range of support that could be provided to learners.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

Element 2.6 The applicant has a defined process and mechanism in place to ensure learners have timely access to current and accurate records of their participation.

Intent

Learners will have access to their records.

Key actions

The applicant demonstrates its capacity to:

- Systematically manage learners' records
- Ensure that staff understand and meet their responsibilities for record-keeping and records management
- Monitor and review the records system.

Guide to compliance

Processes and mechanisms are in place so that:

- Learners will be informed about how to gain access to their records.
- Records of learners' participation and progress through their training program will be systematically collected, recorded and stored.
- Records management practices will be monitored and improvements are demonstrated.

Explanatory notes

Processes and mechanisms to inform learners about how to gain access to their records include:

- Course information sessions and materials
- Marketing materials
- Handbooks
- Website information
- Learners' bulletins.
- Learner portals
- The applicant should identify what records it will collect and how it will systematically collect them, store them and retrieve them.

Learners' records should include:

- Enrolment details
- Learning support needs
- Attendance records
- Records of complaints and appeals
- Outcomes at a unit of competency or module level and qualification level
- Licenses gained as a result of training
- Statements of attainment and qualification issued
- Records are systematically collected, recorded and stored when:
- Administrative staff know what their record collection, recording and storage responsibilities are, and carry out these responsibilities effectively
- Staff are provided with professional development about managing records

- The RTO keeps accurate and current records of assessment results that lead to judgements about competence
- Records can be easily accessed
- Privacy is protected
- Information collected from and about learners meets the requirements of state and territory registering bodies and licensing authorities, where relevant.

Monitoring and improving

Evidence to demonstrate the effective management of learner records could include:

- Outcomes of internal audits relating to records
- Data on client service standards for records
- Changes to procedures and systems for managing learners' records, including privacy protection and security systems
- Client feedback data and responses made to feedback
- Staff feedback that records are easily accessed when needed
- Regular written reports on progress that also identify strengths and improvement required

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will ensure learners have timely access to current and accurate records of their participation an applicant could provide:

- Information for students about accessing their records
- Records management policies and procedures
- Staff induction materials, which include reference to how students gain access to their records
- Records management systems that meet AVETMISS requirements
- Service standards relating to provision of records to clients.

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

Refer to Element 2.6 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of the learners' records that are kept by an RTO and how records are systematically collected and stored.

Related elements

Refer elements 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3.

Element 2.7 The applicant has a defined complaints and appeals process that will ensure learners' complaints and appeals are addressed effectively and efficiently.

Intent

Complaints and appeals will be managed fairly, efficiently and effectively.

Key actions

The applicant demonstrates its capacity to:

- Effectively manage **complaints** and **appeals**
- Ensure that clients and staff know about and follow the system
- Take corrective action to deal with the identified causes of complaints
- Monitor and improve the system.

Guide to compliance

The complaints and appeals process ensures that:

- Complaints and appeals will be effectively managed and resolved
- Complaints and appeals will be monitored and reviewed to prevent their recurrence and to improve the RTO's operations or services.

Explanatory notes

The complaints and appeals process could be described in a policy and procedure and information for learners and staff about complaints and appeals. A complaints and appeals form and register, where relevant, will accompany the policy and procedure.

Managing complaints and appeals

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

The benefits of creating this environment include:

- The RTO gains more valuable feedback on which to base continuous improvement activities
- Issues are less likely to be escalated into formal complaints
- Learners and other clients are more likely to be satisfied with the RTO's performance, which is likely to reduce attrition rates and to promote return business

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

- Providing information to them about how feedback is valued
- Providing avenues for them to provide feedback, for example, student forums, suggestion boxes, scheduled weekly meetings with a staff member whose role it is to support learners, weekly phone calls to workplace supervisors
- Thanking them for their feedback, responding to issues raised quickly and providing them and other clients with information about how such issues have been addressed
- Creating a role for a learner representative/ advocate for groups of learners
- Using focus groups of learners or other clients or conduct SWOT analyses with these groups to identify issues at each stage of the learners' 'life cycle' with the RTO

- Providing comprehensive professional development to staff relating to eliciting and providing feedback
- Complaints arise when a client is dissatisfied with an aspect of the RTO's services and requests action to be taken to resolve the matter.

Appeals arise when a client is not satisfied with a decision that the RTO has made in regard to a complaint. Appeals can relate to assessment decisions, but they can also relate to other decisions, such as a decision to exclude a learner from a program.

Clients should be encouraged to resolve complaints through the RTO's complain mechanisms. If they are not satisfied with the outcomes of these processes, they should be referred to the state or territory registering body or the National Training Hotline, telephone: 13 38 73.

Learners and other clients will feel confident that they are being treated fairly when:

- They are clearly informed in a timely way about how to complain or appeal
- They are provided with support through the complaints or appeals process that recognises and responds to the underlying issues impacting on the individual and their ability to participate effectively in the VET system
- They have opportunity to present their case
- They have access to an independent arbiter if this is needed
- They are clearly informed of the outcomes of the complaint or appeal
- Complaints and appeals are resolved within realistic and fair timelines

Demonstrating effective management and resolution

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

- Data about complaints and appeals
- Records of actions taken to address the root cause of complaints
- Minutes of staff meetings at which actions arising from complaints were agreed
- Documented changes to the RTO's systems.

Preventing complaints and improving practice

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

- Ask for feedback from the client to determine whether they are satisfied with the way the complaint or appeal was dealt with
- Change the practice that led to the complaint, and then check that this improvement is in place and that it is working
- Review records of complaints and appeals to test whether there are specific issues (or staff or services) about which complaints are made, and whether complaints and appeals are being resolved in a timely manner
- Integrate the monitoring and review of complaints and appeals within the continuous improvement cycle.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will effectively address complaints and appeals, the applicant could provide a combination of:

- A complaints and appeals policy and procedure

- A complaints and appeals form
- Information for learners about how to access complaints and appeals processes
- Arrangements with an independent external third party to hear complaints and/or appeals
- Arrangements with an external mediator to facilitate complaints and appeals processes
- A complaints and appeals register.

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

Refer to Element 2.6 in the AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration for an explanation of how to manage complaints and appeals.

Related elements

Refer elements 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1.

Standard 3 The applicant has in place management systems that will be responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO will operate

Elements

3.1 The applicant has a strategy in place detailing how the management of its operations will ensure clients receive the services detailed in their agreement with the applicant.

3.2 The applicant has a defined strategy for the implementation of a systematic continuous improvement approach to the management of operations.

3.3 Where applicable, the applicant has a defined process and mechanism to monitor training and/or assessment services provided on its behalf to ensure that it complies with all aspects of the AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration.

3.4 The applicant has a defined strategy and process to manage records to ensure their accuracy and integrity.

Element 3.1 The applicant has a strategy in place detailing how the management of its operations will ensure clients receive the services detailed in their agreement with the applicant.

Intent

Clients' rights as consumers will be protected.

Key actions

The applicant demonstrates its capacity to fulfil the commitments it makes to its clients.

Guide to compliance

The applicant's strategy ensures that:

- Agreements will be in place with each client
- Clients' rights as consumers will be protected
- Systems are sufficient to support the provision of quality training, assessment and client services.

Explanatory notes

The applicant's strategy includes processes so that clients' rights will be protected.

This should include processes to ensure that:

- Prospective clients know what they are agreeing to
- Fine print and disclaimers are clearly explained
- The applicant does not behave in a misleading or deceptive manner
- Clients are not forced or coerced into an agreement

- Services provided match those in the agreement and are fit- for purpose
- Systems required to support the provision of quality training and assessment and client services are in place.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will provide the quality of service it has committed to in the client agreement, the applicant could provide:

- Evidence that systems have been developed: this could include RTO policies and procedures; appropriate staffing plans; administrative systems; planned management structures; and, plans for the review and continuous improvement of training and assessment resources
- Examples of agreements
- A plan for monitoring client satisfaction with the RTO services provided
- A plan for checking that clients are receiving the services outlined in the agreement.

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

Refer to Element 3.1 in the AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration for an explanation of what agreements are, processes for checking that consumers' rights are protected, systems that assist in delivering quality services, and monitoring and review of services provided to clients.

Related elements

Refer element 2.3, 2.5, 2.7.

Element 3.2 The applicant has a defined strategy for the implementation of a systematic continuous improvement approach to the management of operations.

Intent

The management system ensures that the applicant will meet:

- The *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*
- Legislation and regulations under which it is registered, and that it will systematically improve performance against the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.

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

Key actions

The applicant demonstrates its capacity to implement a continuous improvement approach that will be systematic, involves staff, clients and other stakeholders, and will use qualitative and/or quantitative data to determine the need for improvements to training and assessment.

The strategy shows how the applicant's continuous improvement processes will lead to performance **over and above** compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* after it has achieved registration and how it will achieve outcomes over and above those previously achieved.

Guide to compliance

The applicant has a strategy in place for the implementation of the systematic collection of data and for the systematic continuous improvement of its operations to ensure that:

- Relevant and sufficient stakeholders are identified, related to the scope of the proposed RTO's operations
- A range of data is collected, sufficient to provide the applicant with valuable improvement opportunities
- Processes for analysing the data and planning and implementing improvements are determined
- Processes for monitoring continuous improvement activities and for reviewing data collection, continuous improvement processes and outcomes are decided.

Explanatory notes

The complexity of the strategy will differ depending on the applicant's proposed scope of registration and size of operations. The strategy should be documented so that it provides a useful guide to the applicant once it gains registration. For smaller applicants this could be as simple as a flow chart; for applicants seeking to become enterprise-based RTOs this could be an explanation of how the RTO's operations will align with those of the parent company.

The strategy should identify how the applicant intends to implement continuous improvement processes in a systematic manner.

The strategy should clearly identify the prospective RTO's stakeholders. They typically include students and staff and may include, where relevant, representatives of employers, industry groups, licensing authorities and community groups.

The strategy should also describe what form data on the quality of its operations will take, how it is to be collected, by whom, when and how often. The processes planned for analysis and acting upon data and

the review of continuous improvement processes should also be included in the strategy.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will continually improve its operations, the applicant could provide a combination of:

- A plan for continuous improvement
- An internal audit schedule and tools
- Tools to collect data from stakeholders.

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

Refer to Element 3.2 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of how an RTO uses a systematic and continuous improvement approach to managing its operations.

Related elements

Refer all other elements and Conditions of Registration.

Element 3.3 Where applicable, the applicant has a defined process and mechanism to monitor training and/or assessment services provided on its behalf to ensure that it complies with all aspects of the AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration.

Intent

On registration, services delivered under partnering arrangements will comply with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.

Key actions

The applicant demonstrates its capacity to manage training and assessment provided on its behalf by having processes and mechanisms to document or record agreements that cover the responsibilities of both parties, monitor the implementation of these agreements, and make improvements where required.

Guide to compliance

The applicant has in place documented agreements that it will use with each applicant that provides training and/or assessment on its behalf. The agreements describe the responsibilities of each party and the management strategies to be implemented, including monitoring arrangements.

The applicant has in place processes and mechanisms so that the implementation of the agreement will be monitored to ensure that it is being adhered to and that improvements are made, where required.

Explanatory notes

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

Agreements do not have to be in place in relation to this element when the RTO is engaging contract trainers/assessors. Contractors are included under Elements 1.3 and 1.4.

Processes and mechanisms the applicant could include:

- A sample agreement
- A process and supporting documentation to assist the applicant to determine if the partnering organisation will have the capacity to fulfil its responsibilities under the agreement. This process would be implemented before the agreement is negotiated.
- A process and supporting documentation to demonstrate how the agreement will be quality assured and monitored.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will effectively manage training and/or assessment services provided on its behalf, the applicant could provide:

- Agreements to be used in partnering arrangements
- Procedures and/or plan for monitoring the agreements

- An agreement checklist to use when negotiating agreements
- Position descriptions of staff who will monitor partnering arrangements
- Terms of reference for committee for managing partnering arrangements.

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

Refer to Element 3.3 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of what requirements might be contained in an agreement, possible roles and responsibilities to be specified in the agreement, and how agreements might be monitored.

Related elements

Refer all other elements.

Element 3.4 The applicant has a defined strategy and process to manage records to ensure their accuracy and integrity.

Intent

On registration, records maintained by the applicant support the continuous improvement of its operations and provide evidence of compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.

Key actions

The applicant demonstrates its capacity to systematically manage all records relevant to its operations when it starts operating as an RTO, including the continuous improvement of its operations.

Guide to compliance

The applicant's strategy and process ensures that:

- Records are systematically managed
- Records for demonstrating compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* are maintained
- Staff meet their responsibilities for records management
- The effectiveness of records management is monitored and reviewed.

Explanatory notes

The applicant's strategy and process should include a description of:

- What records will be kept and how they will be accessed
- How the applicant will ensure that records are accurate, complete and current
- How records will be backed up, protected and archived
- How the effectiveness of records management will be monitored and reviewed.

Preparing for audit

To demonstrate capability at audit that the applicant will maintain sufficient records and manage them effectively the applicant could provide:

- Work instructions for staff who will be responsible for managing records and ensuring that they are accurate and current
- Staff induction materials explaining records management requirements
- Records management policies and procedures
- A description of processes to be used to check the accuracy of records.

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

Refer to Element 3.4 in the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration* for an explanation of the range of records RTOs keep, how these records are systematically managed, responsibilities for records management, and the monitoring and review of records systems.

Related elements

Refer elements 2.6, 3.2.

SECTION 8

TERMINOLOGY

The following terms are common to the VET sector and are used in the AQTF documents. Each term is followed by a definition and, where appropriate, further explanation. If the definition of a word or phrase listed below is inconsistent with the definition of the same word or phrase used in particular legislation, the definition provided in that legislation takes precedence.

Access and equity	Policies and approaches aimed at ensuring that vocational education and training are responsive to the individual needs of clients whose age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment, remote location or other personal circumstance may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of suitable outcomes.
Accredited course	A structured sequence of vocational education and training that has been accredited by a state or territory course accrediting body and leads to an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification or statement of attainment.
Appeal	An appeal is where a client of an RTO, or other interested party, may dispute a decision made by the RTO. The decision made by the RTO may be an assessment decision or may be about any other aspect of the RTO's operations.
Apprenticeship/traineeship	A structured training arrangement for a person employed under an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract. It usually involves the person receiving training and being assessed both on- and off-the job.
Apprenticeship/traineeship training contract	A contract governing the terms of an apprenticeship or traineeship that is made between an employer and a person employed by them as an apprentice or trainee. The contract must be registered with the relevant state or territory's government department or agency in accordance with that state's or territory's legislation. The training provided under the contract must be delivered by an RTO approved by that state's or territory's department or agency and a Training Plan developed by the RTO must form the basis of the person's training and assessment.
Articulation	The arrangements that facilitate the movement or progression of learners from one qualification or course to another, or from one education and training sector to another.
Assessment	The process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed by the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a Training Package or by the learning outcomes of an accredited course.
Assessment guidelines	The endorsed component of a Training Package that underpins assessment and sets out the industry's approach to valid, reliable, flexible and fair assessment.

Assessment tools	An assessment tool includes the following components: the context and conditions for the assessment, the tasks to be administered to the candidate, an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the candidate and the evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (i.e. the assessment decision making rules). It also includes the administration, recording and reporting requirements.
<i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i>	The requirements an organisation must meet in order to become a registered training organisation (RTO). The <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i> comprise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Conditions of Registration b) Standards and underpinning elements. c) Quality Indicators.
<i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i>	The requirements an RTO must meet in order to maintain its registration. The <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> comprise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Conditions of Registration b) Standards and underpinning elements. c) Quality Indicators.
Audit	A planned, systematic and documented process used to assess an applicant's or an RTO's compliance with the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i> or the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> . Registering bodies conduct audits as a condition of registration. RTOs can conduct internal audits to assess their compliance with the Standards and their own policies and procedures as part of their continuous improvement process.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	The policy framework that defines all qualifications recognised nationally in post-compulsory education and training in Australia. The AQF comprises titles and guidelines that define each qualification, as well as the principles and protocols covering cross-sectoral qualification links and the issuing of qualifications and statements of attainment.
Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)	The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is a set of nationally agreed quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment services delivered by training organisations. The first version of AQTF was implemented in 2002, and revised in 2002 and 2007. This version of the AQTF was implemented 1 July 2010. The AQTF comprises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i> b) <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> c) <i>AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies</i> d) <i>AQTF Excellence Criteria</i> e) <i>AQTF Standards for Accredited Courses</i> f) <i>AQTF Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies</i>.

Authenticity	One of the rules of evidence. To accept evidence as authentic, an assessor must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the candidate's own work.
AVETMISS	The Australian Vocational Education Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) for VET Providers is a national data standard that ensures the consistent and accurate capture of VET information about students, their courses, units of activity, and qualifications completed. It provides the mechanism for national reporting of the VET system.
Benchmarking	The continuous process of measuring and comparing products, services and practices with comparable systems or organisations both inside and outside the VET sector for the purpose of continuous improvement.
Chief Executive	The most senior executive of an RTO.
Client	A learner, enterprise or organisation that uses or purchases the services provided by an RTO.
Client services	The services provided by an RTO to clients in order to assist and support the successful achievement of learning outcomes.
Complaint	A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with an action product or service of an education and training provider (or of the registering body) made to the registering body.
Compliance	The requirements of the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i> and the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> have been met, based on the evidence reviewed.
Competency	Competency is the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.
Continuous improvement	A planned and ongoing process that enables an RTO to systematically review and improve its policies, procedures, products and services in order to generate better outcomes for clients and to meet changing needs. It allows an RTO to constantly review its performance against the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> and to plan ongoing improvements to its performance. Continuous improvement involves collecting, analysing and acting on relevant information collected from clients and other interested parties, including the RTO's staff.
Contractors	Individuals who are engaged by an RTO through a contractual arrangement to undertake training and assessment. Contractors are included in the group 'staff' for the purposes of the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i> and the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> .

Co-assessment	If a person does not have the assessment competencies determined by the NQC and the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed, one person with all the assessment competencies as determined by the NQC and one or more persons who have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed may work together to conduct the assessments.
Co-requisites	A co-requisite is a unit of competency that must be undertaken as part of the same program of training delivery and/or assessment as another unit, unless it has already been completed.
Course accrediting body	The authority responsible, under the VET legislation and decision-making framework for accrediting courses for delivery both inside and outside Australia.
Credit transfer	Credit transfer assesses the initial course or subject that an individual is using to claim access to, or the award of credit in, a destination course. The assessment determines the extent to which the client's initial course or subject is equivalent to the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards in a qualification. This may include credit transfer based on formal learning that is outside the AQF.
Currency	One of the rules of evidence. In assessment, currency relates to the age of the evidence presented by candidates to demonstrate that they are still competent. Competency requires demonstration of current performance, so the evidence must be from either the present or the very recent past.
Data	The information collected about aspects of an RTO's operations and performance.
Desk audit	An audit where an applicant seeking registration or an RTO submits documents or information to the registering body to be assessed as evidence for compliance with the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i> or the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> .
Dimensions of competency	Dimensions are part of the broad concept of competency, which includes all aspects of work performance as represented by task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills.
Direct supervision	Means that a person conducting training who does not hold the training competencies determined by the National Quality Council (NQC) receives regular guidance, support and direction from a person designated by the RTO who does hold those training competencies determined by the NQC. It is not necessary for the supervising person to be present during all training delivery.
Director	Director of an RTO is a person who controls or governs the affairs of the RTO. A director may be appointed to the position of director or an alternate director and is acting in that capacity, regardless of the name that is given to their position. It also includes those who may not have been validly appointed as a director but act in the position of a director.

Documented	Recorded in written form.
Entry requirements	<p>Specified prior knowledge, skill, and experience, expressed in terms of competency, and may include licensing or industry recognised standards. Where entry requirements are identified, these are mandatory.</p> <p>Entry requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not form part of a qualification for training and assessment purposes • Must be completed prior to enrolling in a qualification • Must be specific to the knowledge, skills or experience required to enter a qualification.
Excellence criteria	A set of criteria in the AQTF against which an RTO may self-evaluate for quality improvement.
Fairness	One of the principles of assessment. Fairness in assessment requires consideration of the individual candidate's needs and characteristics, and any reasonable adjustments that need to be applied to take account of them. It requires clear communication between the assessor and the candidate to ensure that the candidate is fully informed about, understands, is able to participate in, the assessment process, and agrees that the process is appropriate. It also includes an opportunity for the person being assessed to challenge the result of the assessment and to be reassessed if necessary.
Flexible scheduling and delivery of training and assessment	An approach to VET that allows a range of learning and assessment strategies to be adopted in a variety of learning environments, in order to cater for differences in individual learning interests, needs, styles, and opportunities.
Flexibility	One of the principles of assessment. To be flexible, assessment should reflect the candidate's needs; provide for recognition of competencies no matter how, where or when they have been acquired; draw on a range of methods appropriate to the context, competency and the candidate; and, support continuous competency development.
Financial viability risk	An assessment of the current and probable future financial health of an applicant or RTO which indicates the likelihood that it will be unable to operate in the future. This requires an assessment of financial projections at initial registration, and an assessment of the liquidity, financing and other financial risk indicators at continuing registration.
Fit and proper person requirements	Individual characteristics or past behaviour standards that must be met by individuals who are in a position to influence the management of an RTO. Failure to meet the requirements may impact on the suitability of the individual to contribute to the delivery of education and training. A test of whether an individual satisfies fit and proper person requirements may consider past criminal convictions, any record of registration cancellations or conditions on registration, a history of personal bankruptcy or insolvency, disqualifications under the Corporations Act 2001 and other relevant matters.

Industry	Representative bodies that have a stake in the training, assessment and client services provided by RTOs. These representative bodies could include industry skills councils, industry associations, unions, regulatory bodies, licensing bodies and group training companies (not an exhaustive list).
Industry Skills Councils (ISC)	National bodies recognised and funded by the Australian Government to develop and maintain Training Packages specific to the industry area(s) for which they have coverage.
Learner	An individual who is receiving, responding to and processing information in order to acquire and develop competence. This incorporates the processes of preparing and presenting for assessment.
Learning and assessment pathway	A pathway to achievement of competencies/ qualifications that involves participation in a structured and sequenced learning process that provides relevant learning experiences and which combines formative assessment and summative assessment to determine competence.
Learning Outcomes/ Objectives	The set of knowledge, skills and/ or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process.
Learning Resources	Products designed to enhance and support the effectiveness of the learning process, providing an integrated approach that commonly combines guidance, materials, activities and relevant information to support delivery/ facilitation, learning and/or assessment.
Learning program	See Training program.
Learning Strategy	A documented framework to guide and structure the learning requirements and the teaching/ delivery and assessment arrangements of a vocational education and training (VET) qualification.
Management system	The framework of structures, policies and processes used to ensure that the organisation can achieve its objectives.
Moderation	The process of bringing assessment judgements and standards into alignment. It is a process that ensures the same standards are applied to all assessment results within the same Unit(s) of Competency. It is an active process in the sense that adjustments to assessor judgements are made to overcome differences in the difficulty of the tool and/or the severity of judgements.
Module	A group of learning outcomes in an accredited course where the copyright owner can establish that it is not possible to develop an appropriate unit of competency.
Multi-site delivery	An arrangement in which an RTO manages delivery and assessment from a site or sites other than its head office. This definition includes inter-jurisdiction delivery as well as transnational/offshore delivery.

National Recognition	Recognition by an RTO of the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by all other RTOs, thereby enabling national recognition of the qualifications and statements of attainment issued to any person. Recognition by each state and territory's registering body of the training organisations registered by any other state or territory's registering body and of its registration decisions. Recognition by all state and territory course-accrediting bodies and registering bodies of each other's accredited courses and accreditation decisions.
National Skills Framework (NSF)	The system of VET that sets out the system's requirements for quality and national consistency in terms of qualifications and the delivery of training. The NSF applies nationally, and has been endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE).
National Training Information Service (TRAINING.GOV.AU)	The national register for recording information about RTOs, Training Packages and accredited courses. TRAINING.GOV.AU is part of the National Skills Framework.
Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo	The logo used nationally to signify that training and assessment products and services meet the requirements agreed under the National Skills Framework.
Non-compliance	The requirements of the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i> or the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> have not been met, based on the evidence reviewed. There are three categories of non-compliance, each explained below.
	Minor non-compliance The requirements of the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i> or the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> have not been met, based on the evidence reviewed, but there is no, or minor, adverse impact on learners and/or other consumers of goods and services produced in the training environment or the current (or future) workplace.
	Significant non-compliance The requirements of the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i> or the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> have not been met, based on the evidence reviewed, and there are indications of a significant adverse impact on learners and/or other consumers of goods and services produced in the training environment or the current (or future) workplace.
	Critical non-compliance The requirements of the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i> or the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> have not been met, based on the evidence reviewed, and there is a critical adverse impact on learners and/or consumers of goods and services produced in the training environment or the current (or future) workplace.
Operations	An RTO's operations includes training, assessment and support services related to its scope of registration, including those delivered across jurisdictions and offshore.

Outcomes	The consequences of actions implemented by an RTO to achieve high-quality training, assessment and client services.
Outcomes-focussed auditing	An audit approach in which the primary role for the audit team is to confirm that outcomes from RTO processes meet the requirements of the Standards. This decision will be informed by data collected in relation to Quality Indicators and other evidence provided by the RTO.
Packaging requirements	The process of grouping competencies in a Training Package into meaningful combinations which represent whole jobs or key functions in the workplace.
Partnering	Partnering arrangements apply to situations where an organisation conducts training and/or assessment services on behalf of the RTO, or vice versa.
Policy	A documented statement of a definite course of action that is to be adopted and implemented.
Pre-requisites	Units of competency that are critical to achieving the subsequent competency.
Principles of assessment	To ensure quality outcomes, assessment should be fair, flexible, valid, and reliable. See also: Fairness, Flexibility, Reliability and Validity.
Procedure	A documented method or set of instructions that describes how a process is carried out.
Process	The systematic actions, people and resources required to achieve an outcome.
Qualification	Qualification is defined as follows: formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes or competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.
Quality	The ability of a set of inherent characteristics of a product, system or process to meet specified standards or objectives and fulfil the expectations of customers and interested parties.

Quality Indicators	<p>Quality Indicators are a set of three indicators which are part of the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i>.</p> <p>When considered in the context of the RTO's business, data against the Quality Indicators provides a measure of the RTO's performance and the quality of outcomes it is achieving for clients.</p> <p>Three Quality Indicators have been identified as being useful for the purpose of continuous improvement within RTOs and to inform the risk profile of RTOs as established by registering bodies. The quality indicators are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer satisfaction (including satisfaction with competency development and the quality of training and assessment). <p>This indicator focuses on employers' evaluations of learners' competency development, its relevance to work and further training, and the overall quality of training and assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner engagement (learner engagement and competency development). This indicator focuses on the extent to which learners are engaging in the types of activity that are likely to promote high-quality skills, as well as on learners' perceptions of the quality of their competency development and the support they receive from the RTO. • Competency completion rate. This will be calculated for qualifications and units of competency or modules delivered, based on data provided by RTOs about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the number of enrolments in the previous calendar year, and – the number of qualifications completed and/or units of competency or modules awarded in the previous calendar year.
Reasonable adjustment	<p>Adjustments that can be made to the way in which evidence of candidate performance can be collected. Whilst reasonable adjustments can be made in terms of the way in which evidence of performance is gathered, the evidence criteria for making competent/not yet competent decisions (and/or awarding grades) should not be altered in any way. That is, the standards expected should be the same irrespective of the group and/or individual being assessed; otherwise comparability of standards will be compromised.</p>
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	<p>An assessment process that assesses an individual's non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of, a qualification.</p>
Record	<p>A written, printed or electronic document providing evidence that activities have been performed.</p>
Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	<p>A training organisation registered by a state or territory registering body in accordance with the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> within a defined scope of registration.</p> <p>See also Scope of registration.</p>
Registering body	<p>The authority responsible, under the VET legislation and decision-making framework, and in accordance with the <i>AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies</i>, for registering training organisations, including all the processes relating to registration and the imposition of sanctions on RTOs.</p>

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

Sanction	<p>An action that a registering body imposes on an RTO for non-compliance with the <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i>. Sanctions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The imposition of specific conditions on the RTO’s registration (which can cover any aspect of its registration, including its scope of registration, the locations where it may provide training or the type of delivery and assessment activities it may provide) • Amendment of registration (including a reduction in the RTO’s scope of registration) • Suspension of registration • Cancellation of registration.
Scope of registration	<p>The particular services and products that an RTO is registered to provide. The RTO’s scope defines the specific AQF qualifications, units of competency and accredited courses it is registered to provide, and whether it is registered to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both training delivery and assessment services, and to issue the relevant AQF qualifications and statements of attainment, or • Only assessment services, and to issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment.
Senior officer	<p>A senior officer includes directors, secretaries and other people who manage an RTO. A senior officer of an RTO that is neither an individual nor a corporation means a partner in the partnership if the entity is a partnership or an office holder of the unincorporated association if the entity is an unincorporated association. It can also include a person who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part, of the business of the entity or who has the capacity to affect significantly the entity’s operations or financial standing.</p>

Simulated work environment	<p>The requirement for a unit of competency to be assessed in a simulated workplace environment may be identified either within the unit of competency itself or within the relevant Training Package Assessment Guidelines.</p> <p>A simulated workplace may be required for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learner may not have access to a workplace. • The available workplace may not use the relevant skill, equipment or process. • Conducting assessments may be disruptive or interfere with work requirements, e.g. there may be ethical, privacy or confidentiality issues to consider. • It may not be appropriate to apply the skills in the workplace due to potential risks such as health and safety or equipment being damaged. <p>For the purposes of assessment, a simulated workplace may be described as one in which all of the required skills are performed with respect to the provision of paid services to an employer or the public can be demonstrated as though the business was actually operating.</p> <p>In order to be valid and reliable, the simulation must closely resemble what occurs in a real work environment.</p> <p>The simulated workplace should involve a range of activities that reflect real work experience. The simulated workplace should allow the performance of all of the required skills and demonstration of the required knowledge.</p> <p>It is critical that when a simulated workplace is being set up, the assessor is thoroughly familiar with the competency standard/s as well as experienced in the current circumstances and environment of the workplace.</p> <p>In deciding whether a simulation or an assessment environment has been adequately set up, the following should be considered.</p> <p>Are there opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the full range of equipment • Use up-to-date equipment and software • Reflect times and deadlines • Show the complexity of dealing with multiple tasks • Involve prioritising among competing tasks • Deal with customers, including difficult ones • Work with others in a team • Communicate with diverse groups • Find, discuss and test solutions to problems • Explore health and safety issues • Answer practically oriented, applied knowledge questions • Show the level of written and verbal expression sufficient for, but not exceeding, the work requirements.
Site audit	An audit conducted by a registering body at the premises of an applicant seeking registration or an RTO and/or at locations where it delivers training and assessment.
Staff	Individuals working for the RTO, including contractors.
Stakeholders	Individuals or organisations affected by, or who may influence, the RTO's services but who are not directly involved in purchasing or using the RTO's services.

Statement of attainment	A statement of attainment is issued by a registered training organisation when an individual has completed one or more units of competency/modules from nationally recognised qualification(s)/course(s).
Strategic audit	Where a specific area of risk has been identified, a strategic industry audit is conducted to confirm that a RTO's training and assessment services are meeting the requirements of a particular industry or licensing authority.
Substantial shareholder	Substantial shareholders in a listed company are those who hold an interest in 5% or more of the total number of votes attached to the voting shares in a company. Substantial shareholders in an unlisted company are those who hold an interest in 25% or more of the total number of votes attached to the voting shares in a company.
Sufficiency	One of the rules of evidence. Sufficiency relates to the quality and quantity of evidence assessed. It requires collection of enough appropriate evidence to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly. Supplementary sources of evidence may be necessary. The specific evidence requirements of each unit of competency provide advice on sufficiency.
System	A series of processes that are inter-related and repeatedly provide quality outcomes.
Training	The process used by an RTO to facilitate learning.
Training and assessment strategy	A framework that guides the learning requirements and the teaching, training and assessment arrangements of a vocational education and training qualification. It is the document that outlines the macro-level requirements of the learning and assessment process, usually at the qualification level.
Training Package	A nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment guidelines and AQF qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.
Training Plan	A documented program of training and assessment required for an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract. It is developed by an RTO in consultation with the parties to the contract as the basis for training and assessing a person undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship.
Training program	A program (also known as a learning program), developed by an RTO, that meets the training and assessment requirements of a qualification from a Training Package, one or more designated units of competency, or an accredited course. The training program may specify such matters as essential and elective units, the sequence and timing of training and assessments, and the resources required. It may form part of a training and assessment strategy.

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

APPENDIX 1

AVETMISS COMPLIANCE

Why are RTOs required to have an AVETMISS compliant student records management system?

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

It is a requirement of the AQTF under Condition 6 that registered training organisations (RTOs) have a student records management system that has the capacity to provide AVETMISS compliant data.

What is AVETMISS?

The Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) for VET Providers is a national data standard that ensures the consistent and accurate capture and reporting of VET information about students. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is the custodian of the Standard. This Standard forms the basis for collecting data for the National VET Provider Collection.

What information do RTOs need to collect?

RTOs will collect and store in their student management system, information about all of their nationally recognised training activity according to the AVETMIS Standard, for example:

Who they are – age, sex, indigenous and disability information, geographic location

Where they study - type of provider (e.g. government, private), location of training delivery

What they study - enrolments in units of competency, qualification, result obtained, how it was studied (e.g. classroom, workplace or online), and how it was funded.

How do RTOs comply with Condition 6?

To comply with the AQTF requirement under Condition 6, RTOs must have a student records management system in place by 3 January 2011 **which can, when required**, provide data that is AVETMISS compliant.

Do RTOs need to purchase a special system to comply with this AQTF Condition?

Many RTOs already have a student records management system. This may be in the form of a hand written system; an Excel spreadsheet; or an in-house records management system in another program. To check if a student records management system is AVETMISS compliant, NCVER provides free validation software on its website at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/avetmiss/21058.html>. The website also provides a helpline for further information.

However, if RTOs wish to purchase a new system, the NCVER website lists a selection of student management systems known to be compatible with AVETMISS. You may choose to adopt one of these options for a student record management system to collect information in regard to training activity:

- Purchase commercial software (there are many options available see <http://www.ncver.edu.au/content/compliancefaq.htm#advice>)
- Develop 'in-house' software; or
- Use state and territory provided software when in receipt of government funding.

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

If RTOs cannot afford to introduce a student management system, what assistance is available to help them become AVETMISS compliant?

Registering bodies may be able to discuss options that could be available.

NCVER is also investigating the development of a data entry tool to assist very small RTOs in submitting data in an AVETMISS compliant form. It is expected this tool will be available in mid – late 2011. More information will be provided on the NCVER website as development progresses.

What is the relationship between the Competency Completion Quality Indicator and the National VET Provider Collection?

If RTOs submit AVETMISS data into the National VET Provider Collection before the due date (as advised by the State Training Authority) or by 31 March (if submitting directly to NCVER), it will be automatically loaded into the Competency Completion On-Line System (CCOS).

Any additional activity that has not been included within the National VET Provider Collection will need to be entered directly by the RTO into CCOS.

Where can RTOs find out more about AVETMISS?

RTOs should access the NCVET website at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/avetmiss/>.

Unique Student Identifier

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

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

APPENDIX 2

TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT

COMPETENCIES TO BE HELD BY

TRAINERS AND ASSESSORS

Determination of the National Quality Council 17 June 2010

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

The AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration specify the requirements to be met by RTOs throughout their period of registration. The National Quality Council is responsible for determining the training and assessment competencies to be held by trainers and assessors in accordance with Standard 1.4(a) as set out below.

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

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

- a) have the necessary training and assessment competencies determined by the National Quality Council or its successors; and
- b) have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and
- c) can demonstrate current industry skills directly relevant to the training/ assessment being undertaken, and
- d) continue to develop their Vocational Education and Training (VET) knowledge and skills as well as their industry currency and trainer/ assessor competence.

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

Trainers must:

- (i) hold the TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment from the TAE10 Training and Education Training Package; or
- (ii) be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies; or
- (iii) work under the direct supervision* of a person who has the competencies specified in (i) or (ii) above; and be able to demonstrate vocational competencies at least to the level of those being delivered.

Note: Direct supervision is achieved when a person delivering training on behalf of the RTO has regular guidance, support and direction from a person designated by the RTO who has the trainer competencies in (i) or (ii) above and who monitors and is accountable for the training delivery. It is not necessary for the supervising person to be present during all training delivery.

Assessors must:

- i) hold the following three competencies from the TAE10 Training and Education Training Package:
 - a) TAEASS401A Plan assessment activities and processes
 - b) TAEASS402A Assess competence
 - c) TAEASS403A Participate in assessment validation; or
- ii) be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies to all three units of competency listed in (i).

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

Vocational competency

Vocational competency is defined as broad industry knowledge and experience, usually combined with a relevant industry qualification. A person who has vocational competency will be familiar with the content of the vocation and will have relevant current experience in the industry. Vocational competency must be considered on an industry-by-industry basis and with reference to the guidance provided in the Assessment Guidelines of the relevant Training Package.

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

APPENDIX 3

TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT

COMPETENCIES TO BE HELD BY

TRAINERS AND ASSESSORS

Determination of the National Quality Council 18 December 2009

The AQTF Essential Standards for Registration specifies the requirements to be met by RTOs throughout their period of registration. The National Quality Council is responsible for determining the training and assessment competencies to be held by trainers and assessors in accordance with Standard 1.4(a) as set out below.

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

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

- a) have the training and assessment competencies determined by the National Quality Council or its successors
- b) have relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed
- c) continue to develop their vocational and training and assessment competencies to support continuous improvement in the delivery of RTO services.

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

Trainers must:

- i) hold the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104) from the Training and Assessment Training Package; or
- ii) be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies; or
- iii) hold the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training from the superseded Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98), or
- iv) be able to demonstrate that prior to 23 November 2005 they had been assessed as holding equivalent competencies to the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training from the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98); or
- v) work under the direct supervision* of a person who has the competencies specified in (i) or (ii) or (iii) or (iv) above; and

be able to demonstrate vocational competencies at least to the level of those being delivered.

Note: Direct supervision is achieved when a person delivering training on behalf of the RTO has regular guidance, support and direction from a person designated by the RTO who has the trainer competencies in (i), (ii), (iii) or (iv) above and who monitors and is accountable for the training delivery. It is not necessary for the supervising person to be present during all training delivery.

Assessors must:

i) hold the following three competencies from the Training and Assessment Training Package (TAA04):

(a) TAAASS401A Plan and organise assessment

(b) TAAASS402A Assess competence

(c) TAAASS404A Participate in assessment validation; or

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

iii) hold the following competencies from the superseded Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98):

BSZ401A Plan assessment,

BSZ402A Conduct assessment, and

BSZ403A Review assessment; or

iv) be able to demonstrate that prior to 23 November 2005 they had been assessed as holding equivalent competencies to all three units of competency listed in (iii) above.

Note: If a person does not have the assessment competencies as defined in (i) (ii), (iii) or (iv) above and the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed, one person with all the assessment competencies listed in (i) (ii), (iii) or (iv) above and one or more persons who have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed may work together to conduct the assessments.

Vocational competency

Vocational competency is defined as broad industry knowledge and experience, usually combined with a relevant industry qualification. A person who has vocational competency will be familiar with the content of the vocation and will have relevant current experience in the industry. Vocational competency must be considered on an industry-by-industry basis and with reference to the guidance provided in the Assessment Guidelines of the relevant Training Package.

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

AQTF NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Registered Training Organisations will use these documents	
<i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i>	<p>The <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i> applies to applicants seeking registration as an RTO. This publication lists AQTF requirements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions of Registration • Three Standards relating to training and assessment, client services and management systems
<i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i>	<p>The <i>AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i> applies to all RTOs. This publication lists AQTF requirements for RTOs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions of Registration • Three Standards relating to training and assessment, client services and management systems • A set of RTO Quality Indicators.
<i>AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration</i>	<p>This guide assists applicants seeking registration, registering bodies and auditors to interpret and apply the Standards.</p>
<i>AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration</i>	<p>This guide assists RTOs, registering bodies and auditors to interpret and apply the Standards.</p>
Registering Body will use these documents	
<i>AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies</i>	<p>This document lists the standards that apply to a registering body. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Standards • Quality Indicators for assessing registering body performance • A set of operational protocols to ensure national recognition of registration decisions.
<i>AQTF National Guidelines for a Registering Body</i>	<p>The <i>AQTF National Guidelines for a Registering Body</i> includes six guidelines that relate to various operations of a registering body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AQTF National Guideline for Audit Consistency • AQTF National Guideline for Conducting Audits of the Interjurisdiction Operations of an RTO • AQTF National Guideline for Managing Non-compliance • AQTF National Guideline for Responding to Complaints about Vocational Education and Training Quality • AQTF National Guideline for Risk Management • AQTF National Guideline for Industry Body Engagement

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

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

The Excellence Criteria focus on encouraging overall high performance in training providers.

The full suite of AQTF Excellence Criteria documents is also available from www.nssc.natese.gov.au