



Building Training Excellence

*Standards for
State and Territory
Registering Bodies*

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Introduction to AQTF 2007

The national training system is a key driver of Australia's economic and social growth. For more than a decade, Australian and state and territory governments have worked with industry to develop a national training system that now provides the basis for high-quality, industry developed and nationally recognised training to about one in nine working-age Australians. Through a national network of over 4,200 public and private registered training providers, over 1.5 million Australians from all ages, backgrounds and locations participate in vocational education and training each year.

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 system. AQTF 2007 is the current version of the framework, effective from 1 July 2007.

The National Quality Council (NQC) collaboratively developed AQTF 2007 and will continue to monitor it. The NQC includes all state and territory governments, the Australian Government, peak industry bodies, peak training organisations and a representative on equity issues. The Ministerial Council of Vocational and Technical Education, which includes all Ministers for Training in Australia, has approved these quality arrangements.

The three components of AQTF 2007

The three components of AQTF 2007 are:

The Essential Standards for Registration – Training organisations must meet these standards in order to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications. They include three standards, a requirement for registered training organisations to gather information on their performance against three quality indicators, and nine conditions of registration.

Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies – State and territory registering bodies are responsible for registering training organisations and for quality assuring the training and assessment services they provide, in accordance with the AQTF 2007 and relevant legislation within each jurisdiction. The standards and supporting guidelines provide a national operating framework.

Excellence Criteria – These are criteria that registered training organisations may use voluntarily to continue improving the quality of their training and assessment and to gain recognition of their performance.

The key features of AQTF 2007

Outcomes focused

AQTF 2007 focuses on the quality of services and outcomes being achieved for clients rather than the inputs used to get there. This means that registered training organisations 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. State and Territory registering bodies have worked together to develop and publish national guidelines to ensure consistent interpretation and implementation of AQTF 2007.

Streamlined

The standards for registered training organisations have been simplified and streamlined to focus on outcomes. AQTF 2007 places the focus of quality assurance squarely on training and assessment, client services and management systems.

Transparent

National guidelines and handbooks to be used by registering bodies in all states and territories are readily accessible on the national training website at <http://www.training.com.au/aqtf2007>.

The commitment by registering bodies to work together on continuous improvement in implementation of AQTF 2007 is one of the measures to build confidence of industry, clients, regulators and registered training organisations in the quality assurance arrangements of the training system.

The beneficiaries of AQTF 2007

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 registered training organisations are delivering training and assessment services that 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, they can also seek recognition of excellence.

Registering bodies (the bodies which register training organisations in each state and territory) work as part of a national system of registration and audit that is outcomes-focused and risk-managed to streamline quality assurance processes.

Purpose of the standards

These standards apply to the state and territory registering bodies responsible for registering training organisations in accordance with the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* and the relevant legislation of their particular state or territory.

These standards support the operation of the national vocational education and training (VET) system by specifying:

- standards
- quality indicators, and
- operating protocols

for undertaking registration and auditing functions.

Each registering body will report annually on its performance against the quality indicators, using qualitative and quantitative data agreed by the National Quality Council. These reports will form the basis for a national report on quality issues for the VET sector and for managing risks to sustainable quality outcomes.

All registering bodies are also subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic independent audit of their performance against these standards as determined by the National Quality Council.

The standards are underpinned by a number of national guidelines and resources that are listed on the inside back cover. These are available from www.training.com.au/aqtf2007.

Standards

Standard 1 Regulatory activities ensure nationally consistent registration outcomes.

Elements

- 1.1 Registering bodies continuously improve national consistency in registration functions by acting on relevant data and by benchmarking with registering bodies in other jurisdictions.
- 1.2 Communication strategies that support state and territory registration functions are based on nationally agreed resources and are consistent with national decisions.
- 1.3 Regulatory activities are guided by a nationally consistent risk-management approach. They are based on RTOs' performance against nationally agreed quality indicators and assessment of the risk level attributed to their operations.
- 1.4 Consistency in auditors' judgements is maintained through national and jurisdictional moderation of audits.
- 1.5 Sanctions and conditions applied to RTOs are in accordance with national guidelines.

Standard 2 Regulatory services meet the needs of industry and clients.

Elements

- 2.1 Regulatory services are continuously improved by acting on data from:
 - learners and other clients of RTOs
 - enterprises and representatives of industry and commerce and unions
 - Industry Skills Councils and Training Package developers
 - RTOs
 - occupational licensing bodies and regulatory authorities.
- 2.2 Regulatory responses are proportionate to each RTO's performance against nationally agreed outcomes and the risk level attributed to its operations.
- 2.3 Industry regulators and occupational licensing bodies that use certification from the VET sector are appropriately engaged in regulatory arrangements for the sector.
- 2.4 Complaints and appeals about RTOs and regulatory services are resolved efficiently and effectively, and in accordance with National Quality Council policy.

Standard 3 Management systems are responsive to the needs of the VET sector.

Elements

- 3.1 Registering bodies continuously improve their management of registration functions by acting on relevant data and benchmarking with registering bodies in other jurisdictions.
- 3.2 Registration functions are managed through a defined and documented quality system that is regularly reviewed to ensure its continuing suitability and effectiveness.
- 3.3 Where registration functions are delegated, the registering body ensures compliance with all relevant standards and procedures so that decisions by delegates are nationally consistent.

Each state and territory registering body will report annually to the National Quality Council on its performance in relation to these standards and on quality issues arising from the regulation of the VET sector in its jurisdiction.

Quality indicators

Quality indicators will be used for assessing performance against the standards. For each quality indicator, the registering body will provide qualitative and quantitative data that will be specified annually by the National Quality Council. The quality indicators will be based on the five principles listed below.

1 Consistency

The extent to which the regulatory processes and outcomes from each registering body are consistent with:

- national standards and guidelines, and
- the processes and outcomes of other registering bodies.

2 Effectiveness

The extent to which registering bodies ensure that:

- only those organisations meeting the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* are registered, and
- RTOs continue to operate in accordance with these Standards.

3 Proportionality

The extent to which regulatory processes and decisions are guided by:

- the performance of an RTO in relation to the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*, and
- the assessed risk in relation to the context of the RTO's operations.

4 Responsiveness

The extent to which regulatory services are responsive to clients' needs and the changing needs of the national VET system.

5 Transparency

The extent to which registering bodies ensure that:

- RTOs are informed of their obligations as set out in the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*, and
- the basis for a decision affecting an RTO is clearly documented and communicated to the RTO.

Operating protocols for undertaking registration functions

Registration and audit activities are conducted under the authority of state and territory legislation for the regulation of vocational education and training. Each registering body will apply the operating protocols set out below, in accordance with their governing legislation.

1 National recognition

Each registering body accepts the registration decisions made by any other registering body.

2 Assessing applications and monitoring audits

2.1 The registering body will not grant an application for registration if it considers that the applicant's principal place of business, or all or most of its operations, will be in another state or territory.

2.2 Audits of RTOs and the assessment of applications for registration are against the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.

2.3 Audits of RTOs that operate in more than one jurisdiction are managed by the RTO's registering body.

2.4 Auditors, technical advisers and audit teams meet national competency requirements agreed by the National Quality Council.

2.5 The decision on whether or not to

- register a training organisation (including decisions for applications from RTOs to amend their scope of registration or renew registration), or
- impose sanctions on an RTO, or
- cancel or suspend an RTO's registration,

is made by a person or people who have not participated in the audit of that training organisation or RTO.

2.6 Registration or extension to scope of registration is not granted until the training organisation or RTO has addressed to the satisfaction of the registering body any significant non-compliance with the AQTF *Essential Standards for Registration*.

2.7 The registering body enters all registration decisions and changes to RTO details on the National Training Information Service (NTIS) in accordance with nationally agreed standards.

- 2.8 Where registration is granted, the registering body provides the RTO with a registration document such as a letter or a certificate that includes:
- the full name of the legal entity that is the RTO, the registered business name(s) under which it trades, its head office address and national provider number
 - the scope of the registration granted
 - the effective date of registration and the term for which the registration is valid
 - the nationally recognised training (NRT) logo.
- 2.9 Where an extension to scope of registration is granted, the registering body issues the RTO with an extract of their revised registration details as entered on the NTIS. Any extension granted to an RTO's scope of registration does not extend the term of its registration.

3 Reporting

- 3.1 The performance of registration functions, including those conducted under delegation, is reported in accordance with nationally agreed performance outcomes and reporting protocols.
- 3.2 Information on the performance of regulatory functions in accordance with the AQTF 2007 *Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies* is published at least annually.

AQTF 2007 National Publications

Registered Training Organisations will use these documents

<i>AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration</i>	The Essential Standards apply to all RTOs from 1 July 2007. This publication lists AQTF 2007 requirements for RTOs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• three standards relating to training and assessment, client services and management systems• a set of RTO quality indicators• Conditions of Registration.
<i>AQTF 2007 Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration</i>	This guide assists RTOs, registering bodies and auditors to interpret and apply the standards.

State and Territory Registering Bodies will use these documents

<i>AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies</i>	This document lists the standards that apply to the Registering Bodies in each state and territory. It includes: <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 2007 National Guideline for Risk Management</i>	This guideline describes the nationally consistent risk management approach to be used by all state and territory registering bodies in decisions about scheduling and scope of audits.
<i>AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Audit Moderation</i>	This guideline provides a framework for capacity building and for the development and continuous improvement of auditor performance. It describes the moderation processes used to ensure that auditors have a consistent approach to audit.
<i>AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Managing Non-Compliance</i>	This guideline describes the nationally consistent approach each registering body uses to responds to the outcomes of audit that highlight any non-compliance with the <i>AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration</i> .
<i>AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Industry Regulator Engagement</i>	This guideline describes how industry regulators can be engaged in the quality assurance arrangements. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of the registering bodies and regulators and includes a set of principles, protocols and options for industry engagement.
<i>AQTF 2007 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 responses for investigating and resolving complaints and learning from the outcomes.

Auditors will use this document

<i>AQTF 2007 Audit Handbook</i>	This handbook is a key tools for auditors in applying the outcomes-focused audit model. The handbook describes the principles that underpin a nationally consistent, risk-managed approach to AQTF 2007 audits.
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Auditors will also use the *AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration* and the *AQTF 2007 Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration*

AQTF 2007 is underpinned by the principle of transparency. All stakeholders in the VET system should have access to documents detailing the different components of AQTF 2007. All national documents are available for download from the national website www.training.com.au/aqtf2007.

Excellence Criteria are effective from 1 January 2008. The Excellence Criteria focus on encouraging and recognising overall high performance in training providers. Application for assessment against the Excellence Criteria is voluntary. The full suite of Excellence Criteria documents is also available from www.training.com.au/aqtf2007.

