



Excellence Criteria
for Registered Training Organisations

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The Australian Quality Training Framework 2007

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, nationally recognised training to about one in nine working-age Australians. Each year over 1.5 million Australians from all ages, backgrounds and locations participate in vocational education and training (VET) through a national network of over 4,400 public and private registered training providers.

The Australian Quality Training Framework 2007 (AQTF 2007) is the framework which assures nationally consistent, outcomes-focused, streamlined and transparent high-quality training and assessment services for the clients of Australia's vocational education and training system. The National Quality Council (NQC) collaboratively developed AQTF 2007 and will continue to monitor it on behalf of all Ministers responsible for vocational and education training.

The three components of AQTF 2007

AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration – Training organisations must meet these standards in order to be registered to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and to issue nationally recognised qualifications.

AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies – These are standards for registering bodies to manage and quality assure the registration of training organisations in accordance with the AQTF 2007 and relevant legislation within each jurisdiction.

AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria – A set of criteria that registered training organisations may use voluntarily to continue improving the quality of their training and assessment and to gain formal recognition of their performance beyond the Essential Standards for Registration.

Key features of AQTF 2007

Outcomes focused

AQTF 2007 focuses on the quality of training services and outcomes for clients.

Nationally consistent

Registering bodies use national guidelines to ensure consistent management of the registration of quality training organisations, so that the skills individuals gain through nationally endorsed qualifications meet the needs of employers Australia-wide.

Streamlined

The simplified and streamlined standards for registered training organisations focus on outcomes in training and assessment, client services and management systems.

Transparent

National guidelines and handbooks for AQTF 2007 are readily accessible through the national training website: <http://www.training.com.au/aqtf2007>.

Quality driven

AQTF 2007 aims to continually improve the quality of training and assessment. It includes a voluntary component that provides a set of criteria based on globally recognised business excellence models which registered training organisations can use to evaluate the performance across their whole organisation for continuous improvement and marketing purposes.

Continuum of quality in AQTF 2007

The *Australian Quality Training Framework 2007* (AQTF 2007) is designed to encourage registered training organisations to focus on quality and continuous improvement throughout their operations. The AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria are designed to provide a further incentive, beyond the AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration, for registered training organisations to achieve the high levels of quality required by the Australian workforce and industry.



The AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria offer registered training organisations an opportunity to voluntarily evaluate and improve their performance through internally focused activities and to apply for formal recognition through an independent external evaluation.

The external evaluation is a panel review process using independent evaluators, who are drawn from professionals with extensive VET experience in both management and training roles, as well as external evaluation processes. Through this panel review process, high-performing registered training organisations can be recognised as **quality committed** or **outstanding**.

Quality committed training organisations would be expected to demonstrate an established, systematic and integrated approach to **all** five criteria of excellence throughout their organisation. They would be able to demonstrate a solid commitment to the pursuit of outstanding performance. They would still need to work on collecting extensive data to substantiate consistent and sustainable high-level performance outcomes against each of the criteria throughout their organisation.

Outstanding training organisations would be expected to demonstrate a systematic and integrated approach to **all** five criteria of excellence across **all areas of their organisation**. They would be able to demonstrate sustainable improvement trends against the performance measures and outstanding results when benchmarked nationally and internationally.

Key features of AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria

The AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria contain five inter-related criteria, identified to assist the evaluation process. The criteria are based on internationally recognised business excellence models and principles that have been customised to better reflect the unique characteristics and priorities of the VET sector in Australia, with a focus on quality training and assessment. Individual registered training organisations are expected to identify their own performance measures for monitoring their achievements against each of these criteria, reflecting their application of the underpinning principles. This approach acknowledges the variation in the size and scope of operations, organisational structures, markets, clients and the infrastructure of different registered training organisations. However, there is no expectation that the registered training organisation will arrange its organisation or its processes specifically around these five criteria.

The five criteria of excellence are:

1. Leadership
2. Learning and assessment
3. People development
4. Relationship management
5. Integrated information management

They are based on the following best-practice business excellence principles:

1. Effective leadership provides a clear direction for achieving desired outcomes.
2. Stakeholders and clients are the best judges of an organisation's quality and performance.
3. A training organisation's people can improve its performance and outcomes through their capability, creativity and innovation.
4. Training organisation performance is enhanced when learning and assessment strategies exhibit rigour, innovation and flexibility in meeting client needs.
5. Improving systems and processes will lead to improved organisational performance.
6. Decisions are enhanced when based on facts, data and knowledge.
7. A training organisation's success is affected by its ability to influence and respond to a rapidly changing environment.
8. Excellent training organisations exhibit innovation and a culture of continuous improvement.
9. Excellent training organisations meet their social, ethical and environmental responsibilities.

Benefits of AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria

There are many benefits for registered training organisations that choose to use the AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria for self-evaluation and/or formal recognition.

Organisations that choose to use the AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria for self-evaluation can benefit through:

- further developing their organisation's business plan
- increasing staff commitment to the organisation's visions and goals
- providing opportunities for professional development and team building
- improving management of assets and resources
- embedding continuous improvement processes to better meet client needs and building their organisation's longer-term sustainability.

Organisations that achieve formal recognition as quality committed or outstanding may benefit from:

- valuable feedback from external evaluators who identify their organisation's strengths and opportunities for improvement
- national and international recognition of their organisation's consistent high-quality performance, including as an employer of choice and a training provider of choice
- information exchange and benchmarking opportunities through a network of participating organisations.

Using the AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria


All registered training organisations are encouraged to use the AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria as a self-evaluation tool for their organisation and a valuable business development and improvement tool.

Some registered training organisations will use the process of self-evaluation to support their application for national recognition through an external evaluation. Others may decide that the benefits their organisation has gained through the self-evaluation process are sufficient for their current improvement needs.

Self-evaluation against an excellence framework is widely recognised as a valuable business improvement process. It provides an opportunity for an organisation to consider and review its operations and its outcomes against a set of criteria designed specifically for excellence in its industry. The AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria are designed to evaluate the quality of the operations of registered training organisations in VET.

High-performing registered training organisations typically:

- provide high-quality effective training outcomes for learners, employers, industry and the community
- commit to an ongoing drive for excellence throughout the organisation that is reflected in strategic directions, policies, structures and culture
- invest in sound governance, effective leadership, successful marketing, strategic positioning, workforce development, established information management systems, coordinated client management strategies and evidence-based reviews
- demonstrate agility in responding to national, state, territory and regional industry requirements and government policy directions
- act on outcomes from regular benchmarking with other VET organisations
- strategically use their alliances and networks.



High-performing registered training organisations seeking national recognition and marketing opportunities as either **quality committed** or **outstanding** will take part in an external evaluation process. This process includes confirming eligibility through using an evidence guide, completing an application form, formally submitting a self-evaluation and hosting a site visit of an evaluation panel to one or more of its locations to verify the quality of their operations.

Evaluators will consider the **approach** adopted by the registered training organisation to address each of the criteria and associated elements, the **deployment** of the approach across the whole organisation, the **results** demonstrated by actual outcomes and outputs against each of the criteria and the organisation's strategies for continuous **improvement**. In doing this, they will also consider how well the five criteria have been integrate throughout the organisation. While the evaluation will occur at a point in time, the organisation will be able to demonstrate a cyclical process in building their overall capacity and capability across all five criteria.

AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria for Registered Training Organisations

Criterion 1 Leadership

This criterion relates to the establishment and implementation of the registered training organisation's purpose, values, directions and performance expectations to achieve a sustainable and reputable registered training organisation.

Element 1 Governance

Defined management roles and responsibilities, ethical and responsible decision making, financial reporting with integrity, and effective recognition and management of risk.

Element 2 Strategy development and implementation

Established strategic direction and purpose, relevant and effective policy development, and effective implementation of appropriate strategic plan.

Element 3 Supportive work environment

A culture of excellence, a set of values to support creativity, collaboration and innovation, and social and environmental responsibility.

Criterion 2 Learning and assessment

This criterion relates to the registered training organisation's achievement of high-quality learning and assessment outcomes that meet or exceed client, industry and community expectations.

Element 1 Planning and design

Industry and community involvement, teaching/training expertise, and learning pathways.

Element 2 Development and delivery of learning and assessment programs, strategies and resources

Innovation and flexibility, technology support, and responsiveness to clients.

Element 3 Review and evaluation of learning and assessment

Well-designed and well-understood processes for proactively engaging with clients, stakeholders and other best-practice organisations locally, nationally, and beyond to continuously improve training and assessment services.

Criterion 3 People development

This criterion relates to the registered training organisation's management of its workforce to ensure that it is motivated, skilled and capable of delivering its planned high-quality learning and assessment outcomes.

Element 1 Management of the workforce

Future-directed workforce planning, best practice recruitment strategies and a high-performance culture.

Element 2 Staff motivation and learning

Targeted and sustainable staff development, leadership opportunities and training.

Element 3 Staff participation

Collaborative decision making for building high-performing teams.

Criterion 4 Relationship management

This criterion relates to the registered training organisation's management and development of its relationships with clients and other stakeholders to add value for clients and the wider community.

Element 1 Client relationships

Internal and external client relationships, targeted market research, and communication and marketing strategies.

Element 2 Industry and community capacity building

Productive and mutually beneficial relationships with industry, other registered training organisations and local communities and building learning communities in workplaces.

Element 3 Alliances and partnerships

Fostering, creating, and managing strategic alliances.

Criterion 5 Integrated information management

This criterion relates to the registered training organisation's management of its resources, assets, and knowledge base to improve its overall performance.

Element 1 Management and protection of resources and assets

Use of sustainability indicators, effective infrastructure and equipment management, and protection of intellectual property.

Element 2 Information and knowledge management

Systematic management and dissemination of core policies and procedures, using evidence-based research, and ensuring knowledge sharing and dissemination.

Element 3 Management and improvement of processes

Setting and realising targets, strategic collection and use of data for continuous improvement, review of organisational performance and benchmarking.

Element 4 Measurement, analysis and review of organisational performance

Management reviews, data and information availability and benchmarking.

AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria Publications

All AQTF 2007 national publications are published on <http://www.training.com.au/aqtf2007>

The following documents will be available for Registered Training Organisations to use:

AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria for Registered Training Organisations

This document contains the AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria, developed for the Australian vocational education and training (VET) sector and are based on internationally recognised business excellence models.

AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria Overview

This document provides an overview of the AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria and the use of excellence frameworks as an approach to quality and business improvement.

AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria Guide for Registered Training Organisations

This document is designed to support registered training organisations in understanding and using the AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria.

AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria Guide for Administration

This document outlines the administration processes to be followed in managing the implementation of the Excellence Criteria as part of AQTF 2007.

AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria Guide for Evaluators

This document is a reference tool designed to guide the work of evaluators operating as part of evaluation panels in assessing the AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria.