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The
AQTF 2007
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*Manager Curriculum Development and Assessment,
Australian Institute of Management*

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*Head of Human Resources
Territory Insurance Office*

“Regulator confidence in training outcomes will be enhanced by developing and implementing outcomes based audit models.”

Ken Gardner

*Director
Energy Safe Victoria*

Welcome to AQTF 2007

Our vocational education and training sector has had quality assurance frameworks in place for over 10 years, starting with the Australian Recognition Framework and then the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

Last year the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to revise the AQTF to ensure a stronger focus on quality skills outcomes and to provide the necessary skills demanded by Australian industry.

After more than 12 months of collaboration with stakeholders from the whole of the VET sector, AQTF 2007 is here.

So what's new in AQTF 2007?

The AQTF 2007 provides a more logical and robust framework and encourages greater flexibility, national consistency, innovation and excellence. It contains Essential Standards for Registration - three standards that directly relate to the core business of registered training organisations:

- Providing quality training and assessment
- Giving clients services to help them get the most out of their training experience
- Effectively managing the organisational side of training and assessment.

AQTF 2007 also contains new standards for the organisations that register and monitor RTOs – the Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies which will ensure much greater national consistency.

Finally, in keeping with global good business practices, we are introducing Excellence Criteria. Commencing in 2008, this is a voluntary component providing recognition for commitment to quality and outstanding achievement in VET.

The National Quality Council will be closely monitoring the implementation of the revised quality arrangements to ensure its success. We encourage your involvement and welcome your feedback.

Patrick McKendry
Chair - National Quality Council



States & Territories

A NATIONAL Approach



“AQTF 2007 has been developed through a high level of collaboration across state, territory and Commonwealth governments and refined to reflect contemporary quality assurance practices.”

In keeping with the national character of our vocational education and training system, AQTF 2007 has been developed through a high level of collaboration across state, territory and Commonwealth governments and refined to reflect contemporary quality assurance practices.

AQTF 2007 is focused on the outcomes of the core business of RTOs. That is the outcomes from training and assessment services provided to meet the needs of industry and learners. Audit will verify the achievement of these outcomes and how each RTO is sustaining and continuously improving services throughout its registration period.

AQTF 2007 is supported by revised Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies and a range of national guidelines and documents to support higher levels of national consistency and transparency in the work of each State and Territory Registering Body.

The AQTF 2007 *National Guidelines for Risk Management* describes how the scheduling and scope of audits will be determined. AQTF 2007 will streamline regulatory approvals for low-risk RTOs and ensure that state and territory resources are focused on high-risk providers and delivery environments.

Each registering body will establish working arrangements with industry regulatory bodies to ensure they are confident in the quality of outcomes. Attention is initially focussed on six priority industry areas and will then expand to cover all licensed occupations.

The audit handbook guides the planning, conduct and reporting of audits. If an RTO is not compliant, then a guideline documents how the registering body will respond to ensure the RTO rectifies this within agreed timeframes. If a person wishes to make a complaint about an RTO or a registering body, these will be handled using the AQTF 2007 *National Guideline for Responding to Complaints about VET Quality*.

As registering bodies we are delighted that the AQTF 2007 will enhance our operations and services to consumers of VET by streamlining regulation, encouraging greater engagement with industry, and providing a framework that will enable RTOs to demonstrate innovation and flexibility.

State and Territory Registering Bodies

An RTO Perspective

AUSTRALIAN Institute of Management

One of the challenges for any RTO is how they measure the value of their training to satisfy the RTO, the Client, and the AQTF Standards. With the new AQTF 2007 Standards, this has become a lot easier, because it is centred around identifiable outcomes.

While the application of AQTF 2007 might raise many questions, they are actually exciting to work with. This has been the verdict of the Australian Institute of Management (AIM) in WA, who have been applying the new Standards to see how 'workable' they really are.

Gene Howell is the Manager for Curriculum Development and Assessment, and in charge of AIM's RTO status. He has been working with WA's Training Accreditation Council to identify how RTOs apply the new Standards, and his reaction has been extremely positive.

"When I told someone that I was actually excited about the new Standards as I conducted an internal audit for our Renewal of Registration, they said I needed to 'get a life!'" Gene commented. "But it is really true! I decided that we would apply a holistic approach to the Standards – take several clients and track through from request of training to completion and associated outcomes, and then meld the Standards around them. I became excited as I saw how much easier it was to clarify what actual outcomes were achieved for and by the organisation AND the individuals attending training – much easier, and much more valuable than simply checking to ensure that processes were in place. Holistically approaching the Standards provided a very measurable and realistic outcome which added value to our training – and the client was extremely happy!"

AIM has found the Standards to be more flexible in application, enabling them to demonstrate outcomes in a way that suits their business model.

"We have had challenges in the past where RTOs were locked into a 'one size fits all' model, forcing RTOs to align against the standards in roughly the same way" Gene commented. "Given the diversity of RTOs, the current model makes a lot more sense."

Gene Howell
Australian Institute of Management



Big Business & Small Business

An INVESTMENT in our Future



“If we want to develop our employees so they have the desired skills to take our company forward, then we need to be providing them with quality learning and development opportunities.”

Territory Insurance Office (TIO) has been operating for nearly 28 years and our vision is to be the number one provider of insurance and banking for Territorians.

As the Northern Territory has a very transient population combined with increasing skills shortages, finding suitably qualified and experienced employees is a big challenge.

TIO has built strong relationships with Territory RTOs and connects with these RTOs in two main ways.

Firstly, it pays for its employees to attend a range of courses.

Secondly, it partners with several RTOs to provide internal training. Employees are supported by both its T&D team and the RTO. TIO coordinates the training program where the RTO provides the training, the assessments and finally the certification.

“Today it is all about quality training and we strongly support the concept of quality training and assessment systems in order to provide quality outcomes. We do not believe in a ‘tick and flick’ approach to compliance or training. When we send our employees to training courses it is because we want them to learn and grow and walk away having learnt something that will help them improve their work performance,” Leanne said.

“We value courses that encourage participants to apply the learning to their own work either through the classroom activities or through tasks or assessments back on the job. The opportunity to apply the learning back on the job is most important: but it also means other employees can learn from those who went to the course.

While some businesses might prefer the ‘easy’ route when it comes to training, the more savvy organisations are quickly realising that this is a poor investment. Today we are realising that if we want to succeed and flourish as an organisation, if we want to develop our employees so they have the desired skills to take our company forward, then we need to be providing them with quality learning and development opportunities. We depend on RTOs to provide this quality.”

Leanne Coburn
Head of Human Resources
Territory Insurance Office

Industry Licensing Bodies

Demanding QUALITY Assurance

On 1 July 2007 new quality assurance arrangements for nationally recognised training began. The new arrangements take into account a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) decision made in February 2006 about mutual recognition and the need for national consistency in licensing in regulated occupations.

Industry and Regulators want to be assured that any person issued a qualification (or Statement of Attainment) will demonstrably possess the skills and knowledge specified in the units of competence for that qualification. This is particularly true when a licence is issued based on the qualification

AQTF 2007 has an underlying assumption that regulator confidence in training outcomes will be enhanced by developing and implementing outcomes based audit models, in consultation with regulators and other key parties.

The new arrangements give licensing authorities:

- direct involvement in RTO registration processes
- direct involvement in RTO audit processes
- a formal role in complaints handling processes relating to RTO performance.

The success of the new arrangements will depend on regulators and/or industry taking an active role in key processes for registration and audit of RTOs. This is provided for through industry engagement strategies agreed between State and Territory Registering Bodies and Industry Licensing Authorities. A new *National Guideline for Industry Regulator Engagement* sets out the principles and protocols for this involvement.

The type of engagement agreed upon can then be formalised in a Memorandum of Agreement.

The new arrangements explicitly provide for greater involvement by industry regulators in ensuring the quality of training.

Ken Gardner
Energy Safe Victoria



Auditors and Registering Bodies

Welcoming a NEW Challenge

“We welcome the professional development program for auditors that is being implemented collaboratively across the nation.”



The Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (TQA) provides registration and accreditation in three sectors – senior secondary, VET and higher education.

We see the importance of the service that regulation of education and training provides to learners, to employers, to the sector as a whole and to the Australian community. We know how critical auditors are to providing this service effectively and efficiently and we welcome the revision of the AQTF to increase the emphasis of standards and audits in the VET sector on quality skills outcomes.

The Authority believes the key outcomes of training should be seen as increasing the skills of learners. The key outcomes of assessment should be that a learner who is assessed as competent has in fact demonstrated the competency required by the particular units of competence against which the assessment has been made. Strategic industry audits report on the importance of quality assessment.

AQTF 2007 provides the setting within which we will implement this enhanced focus on quality skills outcomes in the VET sector.

Taking advantage of the opportunities presented by AQTF 2007 will need the high levels of knowledge, experience, skills and commitment to quality that we so often see auditors demonstrate.

We welcome the professional development for auditors that is being implemented collaboratively across the nation.

Tim Doe
Chairman of TQA

Frequently Asked QUESTIONS



Q. What's new for RTOs under AQTF 2007?

A. As part of the streamlined approach adopted for AQTF 2007, there are now only three standards for training organisations to meet to be registered to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications. These standards set out the quality requirements for training and assessment, client services and management systems. RTOs have the flexibility to determine how they manage their operations to achieve these quality outcomes.

Q. So how is the monitoring process different?

A. Under AQTF 2007 the focus of the registering body shifts from inputs (show me your organisational chart) to outcomes (are your clients happy with the training and assessment they receive?). It is up to the RTO to determine what evidence they will provide to demonstrate that the required outcomes are being met. The auditor's role is to verify that the evidence is appropriate and sufficient and to confirm that the RTO is meeting the requirements of our national VET system.

Q. What does a risk based approach mean?

A. AQTF 2007 uses a nationally consistent risk-management approach to help registering bodies monitor the quality of training provided by RTOs and direct their attention where it is needed most. RTOs with a low risk rating and high-quality outcomes against AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* will receive little monitoring from registering bodies.

Q. Why is there an increased role for industry?

A. Increasing opportunities for industry involvement will help RTOs tailor their training and assessment to meet client needs. Employers, industry groups and regulators can be more confident that the training and assessment being provided meets their requirements.

Q. Where do I get hold of the resources supporting AQTF 2007?

A. Log on to www.training.com.au/aqtf2007.

AQTF 2007 at work OUT and ABOUT

From February this year a series of AQTF 2007 information sessions and workshops were held around Australia with great success. A panel format allowed those attending an opportunity to ask questions from a variety of panel members representing a diverse array of educational and industry backgrounds with a wealth of experience.



The AQTF 2007 information sessions across Australia have been well attended.



The panel at The Pavilion on the Park in Adelaide.



Front row: Jan Febey (DEST), Julie Moss (ACPET), Susan Young (TAFE SA), Anne Doolette (DFEEST SA), Wendy Morrow (ACPET SA)

Second row: Andrew Boorman (DFEEST SA) Andrew Foster-Johnson (ICHM)

Want to know **MORE?**

Visit

www.training.com.au/aqtf2007

or call

your State or Territory Registering Body

NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board
NSW Department of Education and Training

Ph: (02) 9244 5335
www.vetab.nsw.gov.au

VICTORIA

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

Ph: (03) 9637 2806
www.vrqa.vic.gov.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Department of Further Education, Employment,
Science and Technology

Ph: (08) 8226 3065
www.training.sa.gov.au

QUEENSLAND

Department of Education, Training and the Arts

Ph: 1300 369 935
www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ACT Accreditation and Registration Council
Department of Education and Training

Ph: (02) 6205 7091
www.arc.act.gov.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Training Accreditation Council

Ph: (08) 9441 1910
www.tac.wa.gov.au

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Employment and Training Division
Department of Employment, Education and Training

Ph: (08) 8901 1340
www.deet.nt.gov.au

TASMANIA

Tasmanian Qualifications Authority

Ph: (03) 6233 7708
www.tqa.tas.gov.au

If you would like to contribute a story to the AQTF 2007 Magazine please email AQTF2007@dest.gov.au

