



## Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration



## Registering Bodies

### Australian Skills Quality Authority

Tel: 1300 701 801

[www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)

### Victoria

#### Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

Tel: (03) 9637 2806

[www.vrqa.vic.gov.au](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au)

### Western Australia

#### Training Accreditation Council WA

Tel: (08) 9441 1910

[www.tac.wa.gov.au](http://www.tac.wa.gov.au)



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This document must be attributed as the AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration.

[www.nssc.natese.gov.au](http://www.nssc.natese.gov.au)

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# 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. **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 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 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 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) or its successors: 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 and to gain recognition of their performance.

# KEY FEATURES OF THE AQTF

## Outcomes focused

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 Skills Standards Council website at [www.nssc.natese.gov.au](http://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.

# AQTF ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS AND STANDARDS FOR INITIAL REGISTRATION

## Conditions of registration

### 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.

### 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 co-operate 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.

### **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.

### **Condition 4 – Insurance**

The applicant must hold insurance for public liability.

### **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.

## **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 training.gov.au website
- 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 identify how it will provide returns of its client records of attainment of units of competence and qualifications to its registering body on a regular basis, as determined by the registering body.

The applicant must demonstrate the capacity to obtain and submit AVETMISS compliant data according to the requirements set out in the *National VET Provider Collection Data Requirements Policy*.

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

## **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.

## **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.

## **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 Register and the transition from superseded accredited courses so that it will deliver only currently endorsed Training Packages or currently accredited courses.

## Standards

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

- 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 have been 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.

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

- 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.

**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.**

- 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.

## 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"> <li>• Conditions of Registration</li> <li>• Three Standards relating to training and assessment, client services and management systems</li> </ul>
<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"> <li>• Conditions of Registration</li> <li>• Three Standards relating to training and assessment, client services and management systems</li> <li>• A set of RTO Quality Indicators.</li> </ul>
<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>