Review of the alignment between the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and Standards for Training Packages

Discussion Paper

September 2016
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Appendix A: Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012
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Executive Summary

The Australian Government is leading collaborative work with the states and territories to review the technical alignment between the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 (Attachment A) and Standards for Training Packages (Attachment B). As the scope of the project defined on page six explains, this work does not extend to reviewing the position of accredited courses within the VET sector.

This discussion paper is part of a targeted consultation process for the review.

Accredited courses are an important part of Australia’s national training system. They sit alongside and complement training packages. However, while there has been a great deal of reform in Australia’s vocational education and training (VET) system in recent years, alignment of the standards for these two training products has not yet occurred. This review focuses on alignment of the standards and does not revisit the purpose of accredited courses, which has been considered by other recent reviews and is also part of long term policy work by Australian governments.

It is expected that better alignment between the standards will provide a more consistent framework for the training system. A more consistent framework is anticipated to create a higher level of stakeholder confidence and promote the development of more effective training products.

The discussion paper identifies a number of specific areas where the two sets of standards are not aligned. These include: different approaches to establishing the need for a course; course outcomes; use of modules; specification of assessment requirements and delivery mode of training; and monitoring and evaluation. The discussion paper also explores the lack of transparency of the content in accredited courses and how this affects stakeholder confidence and understanding of accredited courses.

The discussion paper acknowledges that some non-alignment may be justified as the purpose of accredited courses and training packages are different. Feedback is sought on:

- where there is non-alignment, whether this is of concern and how it can be resolved
- whether duplication between training packages and accredited courses is a problem and how it can be addressed
- ways to make more content information about accredited courses public.

Responses to the discussion paper will be considered carefully in drafting the report to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Industry and Skills Council (CISC) on recommendations to align the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 with the Standards for Training Packages. The review findings will be considered by CISC.
Introduction to the review

Purpose

The purpose of this discussion paper is to seek feedback on the alignment of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 with the Standards for Training Packages.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Industry and Skills Council (CISC), which comprises ministers from the Australian Government and state and territory governments with portfolio responsibility for industry and skills in their jurisdiction, has asked for the alignment of these two sets of standards to be reviewed. CISC asked the Australian Government to lead this review process, working with the states and territories.

Feedback on the discussion paper will enable CISC to consider if, and how, the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 could be more closely aligned to the Standards for Training Packages to ensure these courses make the best possible contribution to our national skills needs.

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training will use the responses to this discussion paper to inform its advice for the Australian Government Minister for Vocational Education and Skills, and to make recommendations to CISC.

Scope of the review

The following terms of reference have been established for the review:

1. The review of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 will evaluate its alignment with the Standards for Training Packages.
2. The review will assess the regulatory impact of any proposed changes to the standards consistent with the Government’s regulatory reform agenda.
3. The review will identify ways to encourage publication of accredited courses on the national register.
4. The review will provide a report with recommendations to the COAG Industry Skills Council in November 2016.

The scope of the review is clearly focussed on the alignment of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 with the Standards for Training Packages. This focus is appropriate for two reasons. First, there has been considerable review activity in the VET sector over the last two decades, including consideration of the role of accredited courses. This includes a consultation process in 2013 that looked specifically at the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012¹ and a review in 2014 that considered the role of both training packages and accredited courses² (more detail on these reviews is below). As a result of these reviews, the views of stakeholders on accredited courses are well known. While these views vary, stakeholders support retention of accredited courses as part of the national training system.

Second, broader reform of the training system is on-going. In this context the longer term future of VET training products is being considered by the newly formed National Training Products Reform Group. This

group, comprised of representatives from all states and territories and the Australian Government, reports to CISC.

The review will not be canvassing changes to the Standards for Training Packages. The CISC decision clearly identifies that the review is to evaluate the alignment of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 with the Standards for Training Packages, rather than considering changes to both standards for greater alignment between them. However, this review will also not propose changes to the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 merely for the purposes of alignment with the Standards for Training Packages, particularly where it is more appropriate to retain requirements where they strengthen the robustness of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012.

In April 2016, COAG Industry Skills Council agreed to undertake longer term work to ensure that training packages remain relevant in the future, and support skills development as technology and industry changes. This work is being led by the Victorian Government, through the Training Product Reform Group, and is focused on high level research to better understand future needs and approaches to training and capability building. The Training Product Reform Group will report back to COAG Industry Skills Council in November 2016. The outcomes of this work will be considered to ensure ongoing alignment between the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and the Standards for Training Packages.

**Overview of accredited courses**

Training packages and accredited courses are the major training products in Australia’s national training system, with accredited courses pre-dating training packages.

Training packages are integrated sets of competency standards, assessment requirements and qualifications for a specific industry, sector or enterprise. Industry has direct responsibility for the quality and relevance of training packages.

The Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 define accredited courses as addressing skill requirements for industry, enterprises and the community where these are not covered in nationally endorsed training packages. This also includes courses that meet an education need, such as courses in spoken and written English. In particular, accredited courses are intended to cover emerging skill needs where a training package has not yet been developed or where the accredited course provides for an innovative approach to training. Over time a training package may be developed to cover these emerging skills. A course cannot be accredited if it aims to address outcomes in the same way as is already covered by a training package.

Both training packages and accredited courses must be delivered by a registered training organisation (RTO). Accreditation of courses is for a five year period, after which the course owner must reapply if they wish to retain accreditation.

Accredited courses can be developed by anyone. The course, if it meets the requirements of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012, is accredited by one of the three VET regulators: the Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA), the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) or the Training Accreditation Council of Western Australia (TACWA). The accredited course is then listed on the national register (training.gov.au).
There has been a steady decline in the number of accredited courses on the national register. Since 2011 the total number of courses has decreased from 1988 to 948\(^3\). The pattern is similar for courses accredited by all three VET regulators. The figure below shows the number of accredited courses on the national register by each accrediting body from 2011 to 2016.

**Figure 1 - Number of accredited courses by accrediting body from 2011 -16**

VET accredited courses either lead to a VET qualification and have course outcomes that are consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), or a ‘VET statement of attainment not identifiable by level’. A ‘VET statement of attainment not identifiable by level’ is a course that meets an identified industry/enterprise/community need but does not have the breadth and depth required for an AQF level qualification. The course is titled ‘Course in...’. This is different from a statement of attainment that is awarded to a learner who does not complete a full course (either a training package or accredited course) but does complete at least one unit of competency.

The graph below shows the number of accredited courses on the national register by qualification level for 2014-2016. The graph shows that in 2014 the highest number of accredited courses on the national register was at the Certificate IV level. Although total numbers of accredited courses has declined, by 2016 the highest number of courses was at the VET statement of attainments not identifiable by level.

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\(^3\) Department of Education and Training, TGA database, The accredited course count is taken as at 1 April for each year.
Enrolment key facts

Total VET activity is available for 2014. The following provides some contextual information about VET program enrolments in 2014.

- There were 441,100 program enrolments in nationally accredited courses and 2,776,100 program enrolments in training package qualifications.

- Almost half (49 per cent) of program enrolments in nationally accredited courses were in TAFE institutes (state/territory government VET providers) while a further 34 per cent were with private providers, 8 per cent with schools, 5 per cent with community education providers and 4 per cent with universities.

- Over 61 per cent of program enrolments in nationally accredited courses were in mixed field programs, which include developing basic literacy and numeracy as well as employability and job search skills.

- People enrolled in programs as part of nationally accredited courses were less likely to be in the labour force or to be employed than those undertaking training package qualifications. Only 31 per cent of program enrolments in nationally accredited courses were of people who were employed compared to 51 per cent in training packages. Twenty-one per cent of program enrolments in nationally accredited courses were of people who were not in the labour force (neither employed nor seeking employment) compared to only 7 per cent of those enrolled in training packages.

- Approximately 16 per cent of program enrolments for nationally accredited courses were made by individuals still attending school.
Accredited courses standards

The reform of VET in Australia over the last 25 years has included a move towards greater national consistency, including establishing national standards for VET training products. National standards aim to achieve consistent training outcomes to enable graduates to work anywhere in Australia, while giving RTOs flexibility in how they deliver training to meet the individual needs of students.

As part of on-going VET reform the ASQA was established in 2011. ASQA is responsible for the registration of RTOs under the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (NVETR Act) and monitoring RTO compliance with national VET standards. ASQA is also a designated authority under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act). The Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 came into effect as part of the NVETR Act.

Separate regulators in Victoria (VRQA) and Western Australia (TACWA) continue to register and regulate RTOs which deliver training to domestic students only in those states. VRQA and TACWA use the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012; however, these standards are effectively identical to those in the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012.

The Standards for Training Packages were endorsed by the COAG Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment in November 2012. These standards were the culmination of a number of years of national collaborative work on training packages and all training packages were required to comply with these new standards by the end of 2015.

Recent reviews

In 2009 VET ministers endorsed the recommendations of the VET Products for the 21st Century report, including a single organising framework for VET products that included both training packages and accredited courses. Consistent with this framework and following the release of the Standards for Training Packages, the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC) released a consultation paper on the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 in March 2013. The consultation paper included a draft set of Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 under which standards for units of competency within courses, assessment requirements and compliance with the AQF would be exactly the same for accredited courses as for training packages. The draft standards also strengthened restricting duplication between accredited courses and training packages. The proposed revisions were not presented to the Ministerial Council before the NSSC was disbanded in late 2014.

In October 2014 the Department of Industry, which was responsible for VET policy at that time, released the Review of Accredited Courses and Training Packages Discussion Paper. This discussion paper noted the large number of accredited courses and questioned whether they all required national recognition. The paper asked whether accredited courses should focus exclusively on gaps in training for new and emerging industries and if they were meeting industry needs.

As a result of consultation on the paper around 100 submissions were received from a range of stakeholders including industry peak bodies and RTOs. While most of the focus of the 2014 review was on training packages, there was a significant response on accredited courses. There was strong support from stakeholders to retain accredited courses and concerns were raised that the loss of nationally accredited courses would potentially reduce outcomes for students.

courses would have a significant impact on the not-for-profit community education sector and disadvantaged people assisted through courses that provide a pathway to further study in VET. There were also concerns about the impact on Australia’s international education market if accredited courses were removed.

Employer confidence in accredited courses, particularly those that provided VET in schools\(^5\) was a concern for some stakeholders. Other feedback included that there was a need for greater rigour to determine genuine need for courses and to ensure that they do not duplicate training package qualifications.

CISC considered the outcomes of the review in November 2015 and agreed that accredited courses should be retained to complement training packages. Given the role accredited courses play within the national training system, it is also important that the development, design and quality of accredited courses align with the Standard for Training Packages. This is important for ensuring consistency across training products. In light of this CISC agreed to the review of accredited courses, currently being undertaken.

\(^5\) Also in 2014, and following stakeholder consultations, the COAG Education Council released *Preparing Secondary Students for Work*, an updated framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students. This framework distinguishes between vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students, although it acknowledges this distinction is a challenge with some accredited courses.
Alignment between the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and the Standards for Training Packages

As mentioned above, the need for alignment between the standards has been an objective of governments since the revised Standards for Training Packages were introduced. It is expected that greater alignment will support a more consistent training system which will lead to a higher level of stakeholder confidence. It is particularly important that the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 are as robust as the Standards for Training Packages, leading to greater confidence in the integrity of accredited courses and their outcomes.

The Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 set out the purpose of the standards, course design standards and obligations of persons in respect of whom a course is accredited. They contain eight standards. In the appendices there are two templates (section A and section B) which give guidance on the information to be provided to the regulator by the applicant. The templates must be completed as part of the accreditation process. Section C of the appendices details what information needs to be provided for each unit of competency or module in the course. Regulators also provide guidance on-line to assist applicants for course accreditation. For example, guidance in relation to the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 is provided by ASQA in the user guide and for Victoria and Western Australia in the AQTF Users’ Guide to Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012.

The Standards for Training Packages contain 12 standards and five templates to provide details of each unit of competency, assessment requirements, qualifications and credit arrangements (if applicable). These standards are supported by a companion volume implementation guide, the Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy and the Training Package Products Policy. These arrangements have arisen post the 2009 VET products for the 21st Century which recommended simplifying and streamlining the content of training packages by separating the performance standards from guidance and supporting information for RTOs (recommendation 16)\(^6\).

This section of the discussion paper steps through the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and identifies the relevant standards in the Standards for Training Packages for the issues being addressed. The paper then analyses any differences, and the potential impact of the non-alignment, and where relevant poses questions for feedback in the consultation process.

\(^6\) National Quality Council/Council of Australian Governments Joint Steering Committee, ibid.
**Introductory statements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VET Accredited Courses (VAC) Standards 1-5</th>
<th>Standards for Training Packages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory purpose statements, definitions and administrative arrangements.</td>
<td>Standards 1-3 list the product and policy components of training packages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issues**

Both sets of standards begin with introductory and purpose statements which outline administrative issues. These are standards 1-5 for the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and standards 1-3 for the Standards for Training Packages.

The Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 include naming, commencement and definition standards. Standard VAC 4 provides information about the purpose of accredited courses and VAC 5 the role of the standards and what it means to have a course accredited. It includes information about what information must be completed and the broad objectives of an accredited course.

As the Standards for Training Packages is not a legislative instrument their introductory standards are slightly differently framed. The purpose of the standards is set out in a preamble. Standard 1 lists the separate components of a training package. Standard 2 and 3 include the names of the other relevant policies that are required to be complied with in the development of training packages.

**Options for alignment**

Given there are different purposes and processes for approving accredited courses and training packages there are good reasons for the differences in the format of the standards documentation. It is therefore not thought to be critical to consider alignment issues between the introductory parts of the standards documents.

**Consultation Question – VAC 1-5**

1. Are there any alignment concerns in relation to the introductory standards that need to be addressed?
Duplication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAC 6.1</th>
<th>Standards for Training Packages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The course must not duplicate, by title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed Training Package qualification.</td>
<td>No comparable standard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issues**
This standard requires that there is no duplication between the outcomes of an endorsed training package qualification and an accredited course. This does not prevent training package units of competency from being incorporated into the development of an accredited course as long as the outcomes of the entire qualification are not the same. This may possibly include an accredited course combining components in an innovative or new way, prior to a training package being revised.

CISC agreed that accredited courses are an important part of the national training system. However stakeholders have suggested there is some duplication between training packages and accredited courses. As accredited courses are accredited for five years, there is potential for duplication if a new training package qualification is developed in that period, and its course outcomes covers those of the accredited course. However it is unclear where else duplication with training packages might be occurring.

**Options for alignment**
There is no standard preventing duplication in the Standards for Training Packages. This seems logical as it is expected that as a new skill need is identified by industry and demand for it grows, a new training package will be developed or an existing one revised to include training in this skill.

Standard VAC 6.1 could be strengthened to reinforce the intended complementary purpose of accredited courses to fill a short term need where a gap in skill requirements for emerging or niche sectors is identified. It could also be made clearer that these ‘new’ skills should be considered for inclusion within the relevant training package at the earliest opportunity.

One way of minimising duplication is to include additional wording in VAC 6.1 that an accredited course: must not duplicate, by code, title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed Training Package qualification, skill set or unit of competency. This explicitly recognises that training packages comprise qualifications, skills set and units of competency and that wherever possible existing endorsed training package components should be used.

Another potential issue is duplication between accredited courses. The scope of this problem is difficult to identify. Options to avoid duplication are limited because course content is not publicly available and copyright of accredited courses resides with the course developers. This copyright ownership results in course developers making decisions in relation to whether they share their product and under what conditions.
Consultation Questions – VAC 6.1

2. To what extent is there evidence of duplication between training packages and accredited courses?

3. To what extent does the role of an accredited course include addressing not only new technical material, but innovative ways of combining existing qualifications that may not be currently reflected in training packages?

4. Should VAC 6.1 be strengthened to ensure duplication is minimised? How could a revised standard be worded?
Course design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAC 7.1</th>
<th>Standards for Training Packages – Standard 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET accredited courses are based on an established industry, enterprise, education, legislative or community need.</td>
<td>Training Package developers comply with the NSSC Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issues**

The Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 allow for courses to be developed that meet an established industry, enterprise, education, legislative or community need. Allowing courses to meet a range of needs provides flexibility in the system and recognises that accredited courses fulfil a different purpose to training packages. Training packages are required to have a distinct occupational outcome.

It has been suggested by some stakeholders that accredited courses should require a unique vocational outcome. This could strengthen current requirements that accredited courses not duplicate training package qualifications and facilitate their role as providing a ‘quick trigger’ response to emerging skill needs.

However, placing a limit on the type of accredited courses that can be accredited could result in restricting training in future emerging skills areas. It is important for the training system to have a mechanism which can respond quickly to industry demands.

Taking this approach is also likely to have a significant negative impact on courses that address broader educational and preparatory needs. It is not clear at this stage whether the ongoing uptake and effectiveness of the Foundation Skills Training Package will meet the ongoing needs in relation to these types of courses or whether their continues to be a need to provide flexibility to enable a broader range of courses to be developed if needed.

In relation to the evidence requirements component of this standard, the standard requires an accredited course developer to provide sufficient evidence that there is an established need for the course. To meet this standard a course developer needs to conduct research and consult with key stakeholders at various stages throughout the course development process. The application template requires course developers to:

- provide evidence of industry/ enterprise/ community need and support for the course and describe the consultation and validation process
- identify the major client and/or industry groups
- confirm the proposed award is not covered by a qualification within a training package.

The regulators provide guidance to course developers on the level of evidence required for this standard. For example, the ASQA users’ guide to the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 provides guidance on when key consultation should take place and suggestions of evidence that they might find satisfactory. The amount of consultation required to establish a need depends on the nature of the skills the course is teaching. For example, courses training people in niche skills have fewer stakeholders to consult with than a course with wide industry applicability (that is not covered by a training package).
For training packages there must be strong evidence of industry support of the need for the training product and that graduates will achieve genuine work outcomes. CISC endorsement of training packages is supported by Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) approval. Prior to being approved by the AISC, the training package is developed through the relevant Industry Reference Committees with the support of Skills Service Organisations. Under these arrangements industry has clear responsibility and accountability for the content and quality of training packages.

The Training Package Development and Endorsement Policy requires consultation to occur to establish the need for the change to the training package and for the final stakeholder validation to be rigorous, transparent and national in nature (commensurate with the scope of the work).

It has been suggested by some stakeholders that the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 could be strengthened to specify the evidence required to prove an established need. Associated with this is identifying which stakeholders should be consulted to establish need.

**Options for alignment**

Regulators have raised concerns that the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 do not provide enough clarity about how to identify 'industry' or to establish a need for a course. In contrast, the Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy contains detail on the consultation, development and validation process.

Any requirements relating to the consultation process need to take into account the commercial nature of accredited courses. If the requirements mean that a course developer is required to consult with a direct competitor, the commercial viability of the course could be adversely affected. There also needs to be flexibility for the consultation and evidence requirements to be adapted commensurate with the scale of the course given the variation in the scope and scale of accredited courses.

To align the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 with the Standards for Training Packages there could be additional requirements for VAC 7.1 set out in a schedule to the standards which provides the evidence required to prove an established need and other stakeholder validation of content that is to occur in line with the relevant parts of the Training Package Development and Endorsement Policy. Alternatively the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 could require course developers to comply with the regulators guidance material or policy which could specify evidence and stakeholder validation requirements.

### Consultation Questions - VAC 7.1

5. Should accredited courses be required to have a unique vocational outcome? Why/why not? Are there some accredited courses which should just have a general educational outcome?

6. If accredited courses are required to have a unique vocational outcome will this assist this with duplication?

7. Should the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 specify the evidence requirements in relation to the need for the course and validation of the content? If so, should this be in a schedule or through compliance with regulator guidance?
VAC 7.2
VET accredited courses are based on nationally endorsed units of competency where these are available and where these are not available the course is based on:
(a) units of competency developed as part of the course; or
(b) modules.

These units of competency or modules are developed in consultation with, and validated by, industry, enterprise, community and/or professional groups and documented in accordance with nationally agreed specifications, consistent with the requirements of the Training Package Development Handbook⁷.

Consultation with Industry Skills Council⁸ must take place to ensure that the course does not duplicate, by title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed Training Package qualification.

Standards for Training Packages – Standard 4
Units of competency specify the standards of performance required in the workplace.

Standards for Training Packages – Standard 5
The structure of units of competency complies with the unit of competency template.

Validation by industry is covered in the Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy and Companion volume template.

Issues
While training packages are comprised of units of competency, under standard VAC 7.2 accredited courses may also include ‘modules’. Modules are groups of learning outcomes and can only be used where it can be established to the satisfaction of the regulator that it is not possible to develop appropriate competency standards for these outcomes. Modules are generally used for curriculum based knowledge. For example, the Certificate III in Science (22219VIC) contains modules which provide students with both knowledge and skills relevant to the course. The learning outcomes for these modules include being able to describe aspects of science, such as cell biology. Some modules also include task level activities such as preparing specimens and performing dissections.

ASQA does not currently accept modules for accredited courses. ASQA requires applicants for course accreditation to submit courses in line with the unit of competency template in the Standards for Training Packages instead of in line with Section C of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012. The Standards for Training Packages only contain units of competency and not modules. TACWA and VRQA accept modules as part of accredited courses, however TACWA discourages their use.

For units of competency, ASQA requires applicants to use the Standards for Training Packages unit of competency template and assessment requirements template, whereas TACWA and VRQA have developed templates based on the requirements set out in the Training Package Development Handbook.

The unit of competency requirements in the handbook differ slightly from the requirements in the Standards for Training Packages. The main areas of difference are:

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⁷ Note the Training Package Development Handbook has been superseded by the Standards for Training Packages.
⁸ As Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) no longer exist, the reference to ISCs in the standards will be updated.
the Standards for Training Packages require identification of foundation skills;
• the handbook includes a requirement for ‘evidence guides’ for assessment, whereas the Standards for Training Packages have a template for assessment requirements which is more detailed;
• the handbook includes a requirement for a ‘unit descriptor’ which is to include licensing requirements, whereas this is specified in the ‘application field’ of the unit of competency template in the Standards for Training Packages;
• a general statement about employability skills is required in the handbook;
• the handbook accommodates entry requirements to be set out under ‘required skills and knowledge’, which is captured in the qualifications template in the Standards for Training Packages.

All other requirements contained in the handbook are aligned to the Standards for Training Packages.

**Options for alignment**

There is a question about whether modules should remain an option under the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012. It can be argued that units of competency are more consistent with the competency-based philosophy of the training system. However, if modules were excluded it would limit the flexibility currently available in accredited courses, which some stakeholders view as important, particularly for pathway courses or foundation courses.

While differences between the unit of competency template in the Standards for Training Packages and the requirements set out in the handbook are relatively minor, there could be value in aligning the development of units of competency in accredited courses with the Standards for Training Packages requirements. This could be achieved through using the unit of competency template as well as the assessment requirements template. There may also be value in considering the use of the qualification template to provide further consistency. However, the qualification template does not include a requirement for nominal duration of the course, as the course information template for the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 does.

**Consultation Questions – VAC 7.2**

8. Should modules continue to be able to be included as an option in accredited courses? If not, what arrangements should be in place for courses that currently contain modules?

9. Should the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 use the Standards for Training Packages templates for units of competency and assessment requirements?

10. Should the qualification template also be used?
Course outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAC 7.3</th>
<th>Standards for Training Packages – Standard 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET accredited courses either:</td>
<td>Qualifications comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework specification for that qualification type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) lead to a VET qualification and have course outcomes that are consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework qualification descriptor identified for the course; or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) lead only to a VET statement of attainment when course outcomes meet an identified industry/enterprise/community need but do not have the breadth and depth required for a VET qualification as stated in the guidelines for qualifications in the Australian Qualifications Framework. The course title will read ‘Course in…’.</td>
<td>Standards for Training Packages – Standard 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The structure of the information for the Australian Qualifications Framework qualification complies with the qualification template.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Issues
Both sets of standards refer to the AQF for determining qualification levels. The AQF describes knowledge, skills and their application for each level underpinned by volume of learning requirements. Volume of learning identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type.

Under the accredited courses template (section B, part 1) a course developer must identify a nominal duration of the course in hours. ASQA users’ guide indicates that the course documents should also specify amounts of in-class and out-of-class learning. This is also relevant to VAC standard 7.3 as duration needs to be considered as part of determining the qualification AQF level. The Standards for Training Packages do not have a specific requirement for course duration however training package qualification levels are determined through considering the AQF criteria, including volume of learning.

In 2016-17 ASQA is undertaking a national strategic review into the duration of training across the Australian vocational education and training sector, following considerable concerns being raised about very short courses.

Options for alignment
In terms of alignment between accredited courses and training packages, both standards refer to the AQF which includes a volume of learning descriptor for consideration. The inclusion of nominal hours in the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 course information template (section B) is more specific than the requirements in the Standards for Training Packages templates. Feedback from regulators indicates that having the duration specified in the course information template means they can more effectively audit the requirement and view this as effective for ensuring quality.

There is no clear indication in a competency based system that specifying duration addresses concerns about the quality of very short courses. However, inclusion of nominal hours in the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 provides useful indicative information for the delivery of the course, in particular for courses that are not aligned to an AQF level.

Consultation Question – VAC 7.3
11. Should the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 be amended to remove references to course duration? Why/why not?
VAC 7.4
VET accredited courses identify employability skills relevant to the course outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards for Training Packages - Unit of Competency template</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundation skills field.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards for Training Package- Companion Volume template</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• List of AQF qualifications, Skill Sets and units of competency in the Training Package, includes foundation skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Industry sectors and occupational outcomes of qualifications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issues**

The Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 require identification of employability skills, whereas the Standards for Training Packages require identification of foundation skills.

Employability skills are sometimes referred to as generic skills, capabilities or key competencies. Having a broad range of skills is a key requirement for the workforce. Employers see employability skills as important because jobs require flexibility, initiative and the ability to undertake different tasks.

In the Standards for Training Packages the term foundation skills includes the combination of:

- English language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) – listening, speaking, reading, writing, digital literacy and use of mathematical ideas and
- employability skills such as collaboration, problem solving, self-management, learning and information and communication technology (ICT) skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life. 9

The unit of competency template in the Standards for Training Packages requires inclusion of foundation skills that are essential to the performance, including employability skills.

**Options for alignment**

Given that foundation skills can cover employability skills, VAC 7.4 could be updated to align with training packages by replacing the term employability with foundation.

**Consultation Question – VAC 7.4**

12. Should the reference to ‘employability skills’ in the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 be replaced with ‘foundation skills’? Why/why not?

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Review of the alignment between the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and Standards for Training Packages 16
VAC 7.5
VET accredited courses confirm recognition to be given to the course by licensing, regulatory, professional or industry bodies where applicable.

Qualifications template
A description of the qualification outcomes including any licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification considerations.

Standards for Training Package - Companion Volume template
Regulation and licensing implications for implementation.

Issues
In order to meet the requirements of VAC 7.5 course developers must provide evidence from the relevant industry body/regulator that the outcomes of the course satisfies licensing, professional or regulatory requirements. Similarly the Standards for Training Packages require a description of licensing, legislative regulatory or certification considerations relevant to the qualification. The Standards for Training Packages companion volume template also requires information on regulation and licensing implications for implementation. The Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy identifies that licensing bodies and regulators are required to validate the content and structure of the training package components prior to the training package being endorsed. This is evidenced in the case for endorsement submitted to the AISC.

Options for alignment
As the standards align in this provision we consider that no changes are necessary.

Consultation Question – VAC 7.5
13. Are there any alignment concerns in relation to VAC 7.5 that need to be addressed?
Course rules and structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAC 7.6</th>
<th>Standards for Training Packages - Qualification template</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| VET accredited courses specify rules for the structure of the course. | • Specifies the total number of units of competency required to achieve the qualification.  
• Specifies the number of core and elective units.  
• Lists all core and elective unit codes and titles, including prerequisite units where they apply. |

**Issues**
The Standards for Training Packages qualification template requires identification of how the units are packaged including core, elective units and prerequisite units where they apply. Standard VAC 7.6 of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 requires course developers to specify rules and structure of the course. The course information template (section B) contains further detail on the information to be included such as whether there are core, specialised or elective units/modules, sequencing, prerequisites where a relationship exists and nominal hours.

**Options for alignment**
With the exception of nominal hours, the requirements under the standards align. The additional requirement in the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 course information template (section B) to indicate nominal hours is viewed by some stakeholders as useful in light of the considerable variation in the purpose and outcomes of accredited courses. States and territories use nominal hours to calculate funding for training subsidy programmes. However as all other requirements in the template relating to structure align, this is not considered a significant issue that requires a change to the standards.

**Consultation Question – VAC 7.6**
14. Are there any alignment concerns in relation to VAC 7.6 that need to be addressed?
VAC 7.7  
VET accredited courses identify exit points from the course which provide for vocational or educational outcomes where applicable.

VAC 7.8  
VET accredited courses provide information on educational pathways and articulation where applicable.

Standards for Training Packages – Standard 10  
Credit arrangements existing between Training Package qualifications and Higher Education qualifications are listed in a format that complies with the credit arrangements template.

Companion volume template  
Pathways advice, particularly in line with requirements of the AQF Pathways Policy.

Issues  
For the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012, VAC 7.7 requires identification of exit points from the course and VAC 7.8 requires information on educational pathways and articulation. In addition section B, part 8.1 of the course information template requires details of any formalised pathways, articulation and credit transfer arrangements.

Credit arrangements which are in place between training package qualifications and higher education qualifications are specified in the Standards for Training Packages template. The Standards for Training Packages companion volume requires pathways advice in line with the requirements of the AQF pathways policy.

The AQF pathways policy states that accrediting authorities and organisations developing qualifications are to have policies and processes that facilitate and promote qualification pathways between qualifications and from diploma, advanced diploma and associate degree to degrees in the same discipline to provide pathways and create integrated qualifications at different AQF levels. The policy includes suggested arrangements for negotiating credit transfer between different AQF levels.

Options for alignment  
Although VAC 7.8 does not explicitly refer to credit arrangements, the template requires pathways and articulation details including formal credit transfer arrangements. The wording could be amended to explicitly refer to credit transfer arrangements and/or the AQF pathways policy which could align it more closely to the Standards for Training Packages. Given the diverse nature of accredited courses, there may be value in continuing to identify pathways, articulation and credit arrangements so that learners understand potential access into other VET courses, including training package qualifications as well as formalised credit transfer arrangements.

Consultation Question – VAC 7.8  
15. Should VAC 7.8 be amended to explicitly refer to credit arrangements and/or the AQF pathways policy? Why/why not?
Review of the alignment between the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and Standards for Training Packages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAC 7.9</th>
<th>Standards for Training Packages - Qualification template</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET accredited courses specify any entry requirements to the course and justify any explicit limitations to access.</td>
<td>Specifies any mandatory entry requirements (optional).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Companion volume template</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explanation of any mandatory entry requirements for qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access and equity considerations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issues**

The Standards for Training Packages state that mandatory requirements for entry into the qualification, if they exist, are required to be identified in the qualification template. Whereas VAC 7.9 allows for both mandatory and recommended entry requirements to be outlined. Both standards require justification in relation to limitations placed on access to the course.

**Options for alignment**

Standard VAC 7.9 allows for additional information about entry requirements whereas the Standards for Training Packages is limited to mandatory requirements. Although not a significant issue of non-alignment the standards could be aligned by only allowing mandatory entry requirements to be identified. Inclusion of recommended requirements may assist students in their course selection.

**Consultation Question – VAC 7.9**

16. Are there any alignment concerns in relation to VAC 7.9 that need to be addressed?
Assessment

VAC 7.10
VET accredited courses specify course assessment strategies, which:

a) are valid, reliable, flexible and fair;
b) support the collection of evidence that is sufficient, valid, authentic and current;
c) are consistent with the assessment requirements in the relevant Training Package(s) where nationally endorsed units of competency are used;
d) ensure that workplace and regulatory requirements, where relevant, are met;
e) identify and justify any requirements for workplace and/or simulated assessment.

Standards for Training Packages – Standard 6
Assessment requirements specify the evidence and required conditions for assessment.

Standards for Training Packages – Standard 7
Every unit of competency has associated assessment requirements. The structure of assessment requirements complies with the assessment requirements template.

Assessment Requirements Template
Performance evidence, knowledge evidence and assessment conditions are specified.

Issues
The Standards for Training Packages assessment template requires detailed information covering performance evidence criteria, knowledge evidence and assessment conditions. This includes information about volume, frequency, performance criteria, depth of knowledge, assessor qualifications and assessment on the job.

Assessment requirements for accredited courses are found at both the course level and unit of competency level. Standard VAC 7.10 specifies requirements at the course level for assessment strategies and is general in nature. Requirements at the unit of competency level are found in the Training Package Development Handbook (2.1.9 Evidence Guides). The handbook requires evidence of assessment to demonstrate competency in the unit, assessment variables such as environment, conditions and equipment, methods of assessment.

For accredited courses ASQA advises that the course documentation provides a general overview of the assessment strategy to guide RTOs when they develop their assessment strategy. The RTOs assessment strategy must be conducted in accordance with the RTO standards.

Options for alignment
In a competency based system assessment is an important tool for ensuring the quality of training. Given that the Standards for Training Packages provide for more detailed assessment requirements there is an argument for strengthening VAC 7.10 to align with the Standards for Training Packages requirements as detailed in the assessment template.

Alignment with the Standards for Training Packages assessment requirements template could take the form of either:

- adding sub points under 6.1 of the course information template (section B of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012) covering performance evidence, knowledge evidence and assessment conditions from the training packages assessment template or
- including a separate detailed assessment requirements template under the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 section B.
In order to preserve the flexibility of accredited courses, some of these requirements could be optional rather than mandatory. This would enable course developers to determine which ones apply in relation to their particular course. Alternatively, all requirements could be made mandatory, which will provide greater alignment.

Consultation Question – VAC 7.10

17. Should VAC 7.10 be strengthened to align with the training packages assessment requirements template? If so, how should this be done? Should the assessment requirements be mandatory or optional? If not, why not?
Delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAC 7.11</th>
<th>Standards for Training Packages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET accredited courses provide guidance on appropriate delivery modes, together with advice on limitations on course delivery modes and any requirements for on-the-job training.</td>
<td>No specific relevant standard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issues**

VET accredited courses must provide guidance on delivery modes for the course, justifying why a specific mode is or is not appropriate. For example, a course may determine that delivery must take place in a simulated environment. The ASQA user’s guide states that the justification for any limitations to the delivery modes should be based on regulatory requirements and/or feedback from key stakeholders.

The Standards for Training Packages do not have a specific standard that relates to mode of delivery for the course. Currently requirements for workplace assessment can be specified in the assessment conditions section as part of the assessment requirements for each unit of competency. More broadly general statements about mode of delivery can sometimes be found in the companion volume implementation guide; however this is for the entire training package.

**Options for alignment**

Regulators have indicated a strong preference for retaining the mode of delivery requirements in accredited courses, viewing it as an important factor for auditing the quality of the course. Given there is no specific requirement for mode of delivery in the Standards for Training Packages, regulators are unable to audit against this specifically for training package qualifications. In order to align with the Standards for Training Packages, this requirement could be removed.

**Consultation Question – VAC 7.11**

18. Should the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 retain the requirement for course developers to provide guidance on appropriate delivery modes? Why/why not?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAC 7.12</th>
<th>Standards for Training Packages assessment requirements template</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET accredited courses specify specialist facilities and resources and the vocational competency requirements of trainers and assessors essential for the delivery of the course.</td>
<td>Specifies performance and knowledge evidence and assessment conditions, which includes assessor requirements and allows for equipment and material to be specified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issues**

The Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and the requirements in the Standards for Training Packages assessment template appear to have a similar intent in relation to specifying facilities, resources and trainer and assessor requirements essential for the delivery of the course. However, the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 set the requirements for the entire course, while the Standards for Training Packages set the requirements at a unit of competency level.

**Options for alignment**

If the Standards for Training Packages assessment requirements template is incorporated into the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 as proposed above under VAC 7.10, the standards will be more aligned. If VAC 7.12 remains, this may result in specification about facilities and resources identified at both a unit of competency level and a course level, which will be unnecessary duplication.

**Consultation Question – VAC 7.12**

19. If the Standards for Training Packages assessment requirements are incorporated into the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 should VAC 7.12 remain or be removed?
## Monitoring and evaluation

### VAC 7.13

VET accredited courses identify course monitoring and evaluation processes which will ensure that the course content and outcomes are reviewed and remain current and relevant throughout the period of accreditation.

### VAC 8.1

The following obligations apply throughout the course accreditation period:

- The person in respect of whom a course is accredited will:
  - a) monitor and evaluate the VET accredited course in accordance with the processes outlined in the VET accredited course document;
  - b) inform the National VET Regulator of any proposed significant changes to the VET accredited course and, if required, provide any relevant material to enable the National VET Regulator to confirm that the course remains current and relevant and that it continues to comply with the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 during the period of accreditation.
  - c) advise RTOs licensed/franchised to deliver the course of changes made as the result of course monitoring and evaluation;
  - d) not make any misleading statement regarding its VET accredited course; and
  - e) if required, participate in strategic evaluations initiated by the National VET Regulator, the Ministerial council, or a delegate of the Ministerial council.

### Standards for Training Packages – Standard 3

Training Package developers must comply with Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy.

This policy identifies that:

- A continuous improvement plan will be updated annually by an ISC and sets out the work to be undertaken on the endorsed components of Training Packages to meet the existing and emerging skill needs of industry.

## Issues

Under the new model for training package development, the AISC approves a national schedule, which is a rolling plan that sets out the timing for the review of training packages.\(^{10}\)

There is no longer a requirement for an annual continuous improvement plan, with emerging needs addressed by industry raising issues with the relevant Industry Reference Committee (IRC), or through IRC consultation with industry. Industry is also able to raise issues directly with the AISC.

For accredited courses the approach is to require a monitoring plan at the time of application. This plan describes arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the course to maintain its relevancy and currency. There is also an obligation to monitor the course and ensure the course remains current and relevant during the accreditation period.

\(^{10}\) https://www.aisc.net.au/content/national-schedule
It has been suggested by stakeholders that as part of the monitoring process a course developer should monitor RTOs who deliver their course and take into account any feedback during this process to improve the course. In addition, a course developer could also be required to review other qualifications in similar fields to determine whether any new training package qualifications now cover the same content.

**Options for alignment**

Given that a continuous improvement plan for training packages is no longer required it appears that both sets of standards rely on ongoing monitoring to ensure relevancy and currency.

It could be argued that in a period of rapid structural change it is appropriate to review training regularly and that a regular review period could be specified in the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012. However, this could potentially increase regulatory burden and therefore would need to be supported by evidence that specified review is necessary.

**Consultation Question - VAC 7.13 and VAC 8.1**

20. Should the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 specify regular monitoring and evaluation for accredited courses within the accreditation period? If so, how?
Transparency

The terms of reference for this review specified that the review would identify ways to encourage publication of accredited courses on the national register (training.gov.au).

Issues

Once a training package has been endorsed, details of the training package are published on the national register. All accredited courses are also published on the national register, however the level of information made available differs depending on which regulator accredits the course. Courses accredited by the VRQA listed on the national register include the titles and unit codes of the units of competency and/or modules for the course. ASQA offers course developers the option to include this information on the national register if they wish. TACWA only records the title of the accredited course on the national register and does not include the unit of competency titles due to existing IT system constraints. The information on the national register also includes course developer contact information.

Significantly more information is publicly provided about training package qualifications. The information provided on training packages on the national register is comprehensive. The training package is available to download, if required. Alternatively users can work their way through the information presented on a qualification, to a page that provides details of the elements in a particular unit of competency and what performance criteria are involved with it. This information means that prospective employers and students can find out precisely what the qualification and unit of competency covers.

Some accredited course designers choose to make additional information available on other platforms such as their website. For example the accredited courses developed by the Victorian Department of Education and Training are made publicly available, which provides the same level of detail made available for training packages.

Options for alignment

Stakeholders have noted that the amount of information available on the register is not sufficient for them to understand what skills an accredited course covers. Prospective students and employers of graduates from accredited courses must contact the course owner for information on the course content unless the owner has voluntarily published this information on a website.

To address the transparency issue in accredited course content, course owners could be required to publish more information on the national register. One option is to require course owners to match the level of detail on training packages and publish all details of the accredited course on the national register. However this might increase the risk of a competitor using this information to construct their own accredited course. Alternatively, course owners could be required to include a summary of their course along with a list of the unit of competency and module titles. This option would provide additional information for both prospective students and employers.

Consultation Question – Terms of Reference

21. Should the owners of accredited courses be required to publish additional information about their course? If so, how much information should be published?
Regulatory impacts

Under the terms of reference it is identified that any changes to the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 that are proposed as a result of this review will consider the need to balance regulatory burden with adequate protections for the quality of Australia’s education system. The proposed changes will be assessed against the principles of the government’s regulatory reform agenda, in particular that:

- education regulations are well designed, avoid duplication and provide an effective compliance regime
- regulatory impact is commensurate with the nature of the activity and regulation is seen as one of a number of possible interventions for meeting the government’s responsibilities.

Responses to the discussion paper will be used to inform the regulatory impact of any proposed regulatory reform for the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012.
Consultation Questions

This paper outlines areas of non-alignment between the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and the Standards for Training Packages.

The overarching questions are:

a. Is the non-alignment between the standards an issue?
b. Should the non-alignment be addressed?
c. How should it be addressed while minimising regulatory burden?

Specific questions

Introductory standards

1. Are there any alignment concerns in relation to the introductory standards that need to be addressed? (VAC 1-5)

Duplication

2. To what extent is there evidence of duplication between training packages and accredited courses? (VAC 6.1)

3. To what extent does the role of an accredited course include addressing not only new technical material, but innovative ways of combining existing qualifications that may not be currently reflected in training packages?

4. Should VAC 6.1 be strengthened to ensure duplication is minimised? How could a revised standard be worded? (VAC 6.1)

Course design

5. Should accredited courses be required to have a unique vocational outcome? Why/why not? Are there some accredited courses which should just have a general educational outcome? (VAC 7.1)

6. If accredited courses are required to have a unique vocational outcome will this assist with duplication? (VAC 7.1)

7. Should the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 specify the evidence requirements in relation to the need for the course and validation of the content? If so, should this be in a schedule or through compliance with regulator guidance?

8. Should modules continue to be able to be included as an option in accredited courses? If not, what arrangements should be in place for courses that currently contain modules? (VAC 7.2)

9. Should the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 use the Standards for Training Packages templates for units of competency and assessment requirements? (VAC 7.2)

10. Should the qualification template also be used? (VAC 7.2)

Course outcomes

11. Should the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 be amended to remove references to course duration? Why/why not? (VAC 7.3)

12. Should the reference to ‘employability skills’ in the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 be
replaced with ‘foundation skills’? Why/why not? (VAC 7.4)

13. Are there any alignment concerns in relation to VAC 7.5 that need to be addressed? (VAC 7.5)

Course rules and structure

14. Are there any alignment concerns in relation to VAC 7.6 that need to be addressed? (VAC 7.6)

15. Should VAC 7.8 be amended to explicitly refer to credit arrangements and/or the AQF pathways policy? Why/why not? (VAC 7.8)

16. Are there any alignment concerns in relation to VAC 7.9 that need to be addressed? (VAC 7.9)

Assessment

17. Should VAC 7.10 be strengthened to align with the training packages assessment requirements template? If so, how should this be done? Should the assessment requirements be mandatory or optional? If not, why not? (VAC 7.10)

Delivery

18. Should the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 retain the requirement for course developers to provide guidance on appropriate delivery modes? Why/why not? (VAC 7.11)

19. If the Standards for Training Packages assessment requirements are incorporated into the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 should VAC 7.12 remain or be removed? (VAC 7.12)

Monitoring and evaluation

20. Should the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 specify regular monitoring and evaluation for accredited courses within the accreditation period? If so, how? (VAC 7.13 and VAC 8.1)

Transparency

21. Should the owners of accredited courses be required to publish additional information about their course? If so, how much information should be published? (Terms of Reference)
How to have your say

The Department of Education welcomes written submissions on the questions posed in this paper by 14 October 2016 by emailing VETquality@education.gov.au.

Format for Submissions

Submissions should be in Word format. While there is no word limit we ask that submissions be kept brief and structured as responses to the consultation questions outlined in the paper. Where you wish to raise points not covered directly in this discussion paper these can be done under a separate heading.

Publication

Submissions will not be made publicly available as a matter of course. However, the Department of Education (‘the department’) may choose to make your submission, or parts of your submission, public at its discretion. This may be, for example, on the department’s website, in reports or other materials published by the department. If you do not wish the department to make your submission, or any aspect of your submission, public, you must state in writing that your submission is ‘confidential’. Please note that automatically generated confidentiality statements in emails attaching the submissions will not suffice for this purpose. If you request parts of your submission to remain confidential, you will need to provide this information marked clearly in a separate attachment.

Privacy

Personal information collected from submission authors is managed under the Privacy Act 1988 (‘Privacy Act’). The department will collect personal information from submission authors for the purposes of undertaking the Review of the alignment between the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and Standards for Training Packages. Any personal information collected will only be used by the department for this purpose. By making a submission in response to the discussion paper you are consenting to the disclosure of your personal information by the department through the possible publication of your submission or parts of your submission. Personal information within your submission may also be disclosed by the department in related reports or material published by the department, which can be accessed by overseas recipients. The personal information collected will not otherwise be disclosed without your consent unless the disclosure is permitted under the Privacy Act, for example where disclosure would be authorised or required by law. Information about access, correction and complaints handling process of personal information is outlined in the Privacy Policy located on the department’s website at: https://www.education.gov.au/privacy-policy.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (‘FOI Act’) applies to documents in the possession of the department. The FOI Act provides a person with a right of access to documents held by the Government. This extends to any submissions provided to the department in response to the Review of the alignment between the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and Standards for Training Packages, including any submissions which have been provided on a confidential basis. A decision regarding access to documents under the FOI Act will be made by an authorised FOI decision-maker in accordance with the requirements of the FOI Act.
Submissions which are requested under the FOI Act may also be published on the department’s disclosure log, in accordance with the publications requirements of the FOI Act.

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Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012

I, Chris Evans, Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, make these Standards under subsection 188(1) of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011.

Dated 29th January 2013

CHRIS EVANS
Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research
Commonwealth of Australia

*National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*

**STANDARDS FOR VET ACCREDITED COURSES 2012**

(i) **CITATION**

This legislative instrument may be cited as the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012*.

(ii) **AUTHORITY**

This legislative instrument is made under section 188(1) of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

(iii) **COMMENCEMENT**

This legislative instrument will come into effect on the day after registration on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.

(iv) **REVOCATION**

The *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2011* (F2011L01330) are revoked.
# Contents

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## Part 3  Course design standards

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## Part 4  Obligations of persons in respect of whom the course is accredited.

<table>
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## Appendix 1

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Part 1 Preliminary

Division 1 Arrangements on commencement

VAC 1 Name of Standards

These Standards are the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012.

VAC 2 Commencement

These Standards commence on the day after registration on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.

VAC 3 Definitions

In these Standards, unless the contrary intention appears:

*Act* means the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011.

*Articulation* means 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* means 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 a VET accredited course.

*Assessment requirements* means the endorsed component of a Training Package. Assessment requirements set out the industry’s approach to valid, reliable, flexible and fair assessment.

*Australian Qualifications Framework* (AQF) has the meaning given by section 3 of the Act.

*Competency* means 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.

*Industry* means bodies that have a stake in the training, assessment and client services provided by RTOs. These can include but are not limited to:

(a) industry skills councils;

(b) industry organisations;

(c) industry training advisory bodies;

(d) unions;
(e) specific enterprise/industry clients;
(f) occupational licensing bodies; and
(g) group training organisations

**Learning** means the process followed by a learner. There are three types:

(a) Formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of a formal qualification or award (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree).

(b) Non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instructions, but does not lead to the attainment of a formal qualification or award (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business).

(c) Informal learning refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example, the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative).

**Modules** means a group of learning outcomes in a VET accredited course where it can be established that it is not possible to develop an appropriate unit of competency.

**National Register** has the meaning given by section 3 of the Act.

**National VET Regulator** has the meaning given by section 3 of the Act.

**Pathways** are generally defined as a path or sequence of learning or experiences that can be followed to attain competency. The course accreditation submission must indicate whether specific pathways are mandated or whether they may vary to reflect the needs of the individual.

**Qualification** means 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.

**Recognition of Prior Learning** means an assessment process that assesses an individual’s formal, 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 VET qualification.

**RTO** means a registered training organisation, defined at section 3 of the Act.

**Training Package** is a nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment requirements, Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications, and credit arrangements for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

**Training Package Development Handbook** provides National Skills Standards Council (previously National Quality Council) policy for the
development of Training Packages. This policy applies to all Training Packages developed and endorsed through the National Skills Standards Council development and endorsement processes.

Units of competency means the specification of industry knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance expected in the workplace.

VET accredited course has the meaning given at section 3 of the Act.

VET qualification has the meaning given at section 3 of the Act.

VET statement of attainment has the meaning given at section 3 of the Act.

Vocational competency means 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 requirements of the relevant Training Package.

3.2 These Standards may be referred to by the abbreviation ‘VAC’. For example, this is VAC 3.2
Part 2  Introduction and purpose

VAC 4  Introduction

Accredited courses address skill requirements for industry, enterprises and the community where these are not covered in nationally endorsed Training Packages. They also have the capacity to address changes in skill needs, and the needs of emerging and converging industries and industry sectors, in a responsive manner. A collaborative approach between national bodies concerned with the development and endorsement of national Training Packages and VET Regulators provides an effective and timely response to the changing needs of industry.

Accreditation means the formal recognition of a course by the National VET Regulator under the Act.

VAC 5  Purpose of the Standards

The Standards for VET Accredited Courses apply to the course design for VET accredited courses.

Accreditation of a course is confirmation by the National VET Regulator that the course meets the Standards for VET Accredited Courses and the Australian Qualifications Framework in deciding whether to accredit the course, including whether the course:

• meets industry, enterprise or community needs;
• provides appropriate competency outcomes and a satisfactory basis for assessment;
• meets national quality assurance requirements; and
• is aligned to the appropriate level of the Australian Qualifications Framework where it leads to a VET qualification.

Accreditation means the course is nationally recognised and that an RTO can issue a nationally recognised VET qualification or VET statement of attainment following its full or partial completion. Once a course has been accredited, it is listed on the National Register.

Development of VET accredited courses should be consistent with the requirements of the Training Package Development Handbook.

A national template for course accreditation at Appendix 1 describes essential course information and provides the legal specification for the course. The VET accredited course document provides the basis for the development of strategies for training and assessment by each RTO and describes essential course information including the packaging rules, outcomes to be achieved, standards for assessment and required resources.
Applications for course accreditation that are accepted by the National VET Regulator will be accredited if they are assessed as meeting the following design standards. These are the course design standards that must be met for accreditation.

The accreditation of a VET accredited course may be cancelled under section 52 of the Act if these standards cease to be met.

VAC 6 Duplication
6.1 The course must not duplicate, by title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed Training Package qualification.

VAC 7 Course design standards
7.1 VET accredited courses are based on an established industry, enterprise, education, legislative or community need.

7.2 VET accredited courses are based on nationally endorsed units of competency where these are available and where these are not available the course is based on:
   (a) units of competency developed as part of the course; or
   (b) modules.

These units of competency or modules are developed in consultation with, and validated by, industry, enterprise, community and/or professional groups and documented in accordance with nationally agreed specifications, consistent with the requirements of the Training Package Development Handbook.

Consultation with Industry Skills Council must take place to ensure that the course does not duplicate, by title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed Training Package qualification.

(Note: Modules may be included where the person in respect of whom the course is accredited can establish to the satisfaction of the National VET Regulator, prior to development, that it is not possible to develop appropriate competency standards.)

7.3 VET accredited courses either:
   (a) lead to a VET qualification and have course outcomes that are consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework qualification descriptor identified for the course; or
   (b) lead only to a VET statement of attainment when course outcomes meet an identified industry/enterprise/ community need but do not
have the breadth and depth required for a VET qualification as stated in the guidelines for qualifications in the Australian Qualifications Framework. The course title will read 'Course in...'.

7.4 VET accredited courses identify employability skills relevant to the course outcomes.

7.5 VET accredited courses confirm recognition to be given to the course by licensing, regulatory, professional or industry bodies where applicable.

7.6 VET accredited courses specify rules for the structure of the course.

7.7 VET accredited courses identify exit points from the course which provide for vocational or educational outcomes where applicable.

7.8 VET accredited courses provide information on educational pathways and articulation where applicable.

7.9 VET accredited courses specify any entry requirements to the course and justify any explicit limitations to access.

7.10 VET accredited courses specify course assessment strategies, which:
   (a) are valid, reliable, flexible and fair;
   (b) support the collection of evidence that is sufficient, valid, authentic and current;
   (c) are consistent with the assessment requirements in the relevant Training Package(s) where nationally endorsed units of competency are used;
   (d) ensure that workplace and regulatory requirements, where relevant, are met; and
   (e) identify and justify any requirements for workplace and/or simulated assessment.

7.11 VET accredited courses provide guidance on appropriate delivery modes, together with advice on limitations on course delivery modes and any requirements for on-the-job training.

7.12 VET accredited courses specify specialist facilities and resources and the vocational competency requirements of trainers and assessors essential for the delivery of the course.

7.13 VET accredited courses identify course monitoring and evaluation processes which will ensure that the course content and outcomes are reviewed and remain current and relevant throughout the period of accreditation.
Part 4  
Obligations of persons in respect of whom a course is accredited

(Note: VET accredited courses must be delivered by an RTO. It is an offence under the Act to deliver a VET accredited course without being an RTO. A person who is not an RTO, and does not intend to become an RTO, is required to develop an agreement with an RTO for the delivery of the course under the conditions they have determined.)

VAC 8  
Obligations of persons in respect of whom a course is accredited

8.1 The following obligations apply throughout the course accreditation period:

The person in respect of whom a course is accredited will:

(a) monitor and evaluate the VET accredited course in accordance with the processes outlined in the VET accredited course document;

(b) inform the National VET Regulator of any proposed significant changes to the VET accredited course and, if required, provide any relevant material to enable the National VET Regulator to confirm that the course remains current and relevant and that it continues to comply with the Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2011 during the period of accreditation;

(c) advise RTOs licensed/franchised to deliver the course of changes made as the result of course monitoring and evaluation;

(d) not make any misleading statement regarding its VET accredited course; and

(e) if required, participate in strategic evaluations initiated by the National VET Regulator, the Ministerial council, or a delegate of the Ministerial council.

Note

Appendix 1

Template for course documentation for accreditation

This national template is designed to assist in the development of courses for accreditation and re-accreditation under the Act that lead to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or to a VET statement of attainment. The template is divided into three sections (A, B and C) which together form the course documentation.

The course document (Sections A, B and C) is the specification for the VET accredited course. It provides the basis for the development of strategies for training and assessment by each RTO and describes essential course information.

- Section A provides information about persons in respect to whom a course is accredited and course classification
- Section B contains details of industry need, and the rules under which the course may be accessed, delivered and assessed
- Section C includes the units of competency or modules that are contained in the course.
Appendix 1 to Standards for VET Accredited Courses

Section A: Applicant and course classification information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Person in respect of whom the course is being accredited</th>
<th>Provide the name of the legal entity or individual who is applying for accreditation of a course as a VET accredited course. Provide both the ongoing organisation contact details and the day to day contact details where these are different.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Address</td>
<td>Provide street, postal and email address of the legal entity or individual in respect of whom the course is being accredited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Type of submission</td>
<td>State whether the submission is for accreditation or re-accreditation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Copyright acknowledgement</td>
<td>Provide evidence that applicant has copyright approval for any units of competency or modules not owned by the person applying for accreditation. Include the name of the legal entity or individuals who own the copyright. Provide both the ongoing organisation contact details and the day to day contact details where these are different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commonwealth materials such as Training Packages are licenced under the Free Education licence. Details are available at <a href="http://www.aesharenet.com.au/FfE2">www.aesharenet.com.au/FfE2</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Licencing and franchise</td>
<td>Indicate if this course may be used under licence or franchise and if relevant state requirements for use by other providers. Provide contact details for these arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Course accrediting body</td>
<td>Provide the name of the National VET Regulator, or where relevant, the state or territory course accrediting body responsible under legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. AVETMISS information</td>
<td>Provide AVETMISS classification codes that describe the industry, occupational group and field of education for which the course is intended.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **ASCO code**
  - (Australian Standard Classification of Occupations – occupational type
  - To be replaced by ANZSCO
  - [Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations])
  - Insert code and description

- **ASCED Code – 4 digit**
  - (Field of education)
  - Insert code and description

- **National course code**
  - To be provided by the National VET Regulator once the course is accredited

[Classification codes for AVETMISS data may be found on the...
| 8. Period of accreditation | Include details of the requested period of accreditation. Accreditation dates will be confirmed by the National VET Regulator once the course is accredited. |
### Section B: Course information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Nomenclature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1 Name of the qualification</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Standard 7.1 for VET Accredited Courses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State the name(s) of the qualification(s) that will be awarded on successful completion of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2 Nominal duration of the course</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State the nominal duration of the course(s) in hours.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Vocational or education outcomes of the course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1 Purpose of the course</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Standard 7.1 for VET Accredited Courses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State the intended purpose of the course.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Development of the course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.1 Industry/ enterprise/ community needs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Standards 7.1 and 7.2 for VET Accredited Courses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide evidence of industry/ enterprise/ community need and support for the course and describe the consultation and validation process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the major client and/or industry groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm the proposed award is not covered by a qualification within a Training Package.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.2 Review for re-accreditation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Standards 7.1 and 7.2 for VET Accredited Courses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If applying for re-accreditation, provide details of how monitoring and evaluation have been taken into account in the revised course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail any transition arrangements from the existing course to the new course for learners currently enrolled in the existing course.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Course outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.1 Qualification level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Standards 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 for VET Accredited Courses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe how the intended course outcomes are consistent with the proposed AQF qualification proposed for the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2 Employability skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Standard 7.4 for VET Accredited Courses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a summary of the employability skills to be achieved in the course. If the course only leads to a VET statement of attainment (e.g. Course in), this is optional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.3 Recognition given to the course (if applicable)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Standard 7.5 for VET Accredited Courses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State the recognition given to the course(s) by professional or industry bodies, if applicable, for example by granting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4.4 Licensing / regulatory requirements (if applicable) | **Standard 7.5 for VET Accredited Courses**  
State the extent to which the course satisfies licensing/ regulatory requirements, if applicable. |
|---|---|
| **5. Course rules** | **Standards 7.2, 7.6, 7.7 and 7.9 for VET Accredited Courses**  
All qualifications identified in the structure must be accredited in their own right and assigned a National Register course code.  
Course structure may be presented in table format or as a combination of text and table, including guidance on sequencing, pre-requisites and nominal hours.  
1. Outline the structure of the course and the rules for completion. Course structure will reflect the intended skill and knowledge outcomes of the course and may be:  
   - core only  
   - core and electives  
   - core and specialisations  
   - core, specialisations and electives  
   - electives only  
2. Any exit points from the course that provide for vocational or educational outcomes should be identified.  
3. Include a statement that a VET statement of attainment will be issued for any unit of competency/module completed if the full VET qualification is not completed. |
| **5.2 Entry requirements** | **Standard 7.9 for VET Accredited Courses**  
Describe entry requirements essential to the course. Wherever possible, these should be expressed in terms of competencies.  
Limitations to entry should be justified.  
Recommended entry requirements (including language, literacy and numeracy skills) that are likely to facilitate successful completion of the course by the intending participant may also be helpful. |
| **6. Assessment** | **Standards 7.10 and 7.12 for VET Accredited Courses**  
1. Describe the course assessment strategy in terms of how it effectively judges participants’ achievement of outcomes. The strategy should outline the approach to assessment and evidence gathering to be followed by the RTO, including any mandated and/or recommended modes of assessment.  
1. Describe how assessment of the course will be consistent with... |
the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and identify course assessment strategies which:

- are consistent with the assessment guidelines in the relevant Training Package(s) where nationally endorsed units of competency are used
- ensure that workplace and regulatory requirements, where relevant, are met
- justify mandatory workplace assessment, or assessment through simulation if these are to be used and include advice on how they may be achieved
- identify any special arrangements that may facilitate Recognition of Prior Learning.

### 6.2 Assessor competencies

**Standard 7.12 for VET Accredited Courses**

1. Confirm compliance with the requirements for the competence of staff involved in assessment in the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and provide guidance of the vocational competency requirements for assessors.

2. Justify any requirements above the requirements in the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisation for the competencies of assessors.

### 7. Delivery

#### 7.1 Delivery modes

**Standards 7.11 and 7.12 for VET Accredited Courses**

1. Identify and justify any delivery modes essential to the delivery of this course, particularly on-the-job training.

2. Identify and justify any limitations to the delivery modes that may be chosen for this course.

3. Identify any educational support mechanisms for maximising participants’ completion of the course.

4. Indicate how the course may be varied to reflect the needs of learner groups through the contextualisation of units or other means where appropriate.

#### 7.2 Resources

**Standard 7.12 for VET Accredited Courses**

1. Provide details of specialised facilities and equipment essential for the delivery of the course.

2. Provide advice on the vocational competency requirements for trainers. Any requirements above the requirements of the Standard for NVR Registered Training Organisations must be justified.

3. Units of competency that have been imported from Training Packages must reflect the requirements for trainers specified in that Training Package.

### 8. Pathways and articulation
| 8.1 Pathways and articulation | **Standard 7.8 for VET Accredited Courses**  
1. Provide details of potential pathways for course participants, both into the course and into other VET and higher education courses on completion, including details of any formalised articulation and/or credit transfer arrangements.  
2. If this course contains nationally endorsed units of competency, indentify any connections with other Training Package qualifications that are relevant to vocational pathways for course graduates. |
| 9. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation | **Standard 7.13 for VET Accredited Courses**  
1. Describe arrangements that the person to whom the course is accredited proposes to use for monitoring and evaluating the course to maintain its relevancy and currency.  
2. Confirm that significant changes to the course resulting from course monitoring and evaluation procedures will be notified to the National VET Regulator or, where relevant, state or territory course accrediting body. |
Section C: Units of competency

Section C of the course documentation consists of the units of competency making up the course (or modules, where relevant).

The following must be included:

1. A list of the units of competency imported from the Training Package/s;

   (Note: the title and code of the units must be current and the same as the title and code used in the Training Package.)

   And/or

2. The units of competency for the course which comply with the relevant requirements for the Training Package Development Handbook;

   Or

3. Modules for the course.

   (Note: modules may be included where the person to whom the course is accredited can establish to the satisfaction of the National VET Regulator, prior to development, that it is not possible to develop appropriate competency standards. A module template is available from the National VET Regulator, or where relevant, state and territory course accrediting body).
Standards for Training Packages

The following publication was endorsed by the former Standing Council for Tertiary Education Skills and Employment (SCOTese). On 13 December 2013, COAG agreed that its council system should be streamlined and refocused. As a result the COAG Industry and Skills Council has been established to replace the former SCOTese.

In addition, the National Skills Standard Council (NSSC) referred to in this document has been dissolved and its ongoing functions will be delegated to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee which is to be established.

This publication remains current and applicable to the VET sector.
This document is one of three products that form the organising framework of standards that support the development of industry Training Packages.

The Standards for Training Packages were endorsed by the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment on 16 November 2012.

The Standards for Training Packages and their underpinning policies can be found on the NSSC website: www.nssc.natese.gov.au/training_packages

The organising framework of standards includes:

- NSSC - Standards for Training Packages
- NSSC - Training Package Products Policy
- NSSC - Training Packages Development and Endorsement Process Policy

Version: 1.0

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The details of the relevant license conditions are available on the Creative Commons website as is the full legal code for the CC BY 3.0 AU license: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/legalcode

The document must be attributed as the NSSC - Standards for Training Packages.
Standards for Training Packages

Purpose of the Standards

The purpose of the Standards for Training Packages is to ensure Training Packages are of high quality and meet the workforce development needs of industry, enterprises and individuals.

The Standards for Training Packages apply to the design and development of Training Packages for endorsement consideration by the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC).

Training Packages - products

**Standard 1:** Training Packages consist of the following:

1. NSSC endorsed components:
   - units of competency;
   - assessment requirements (associated with each unit of competency);
   - qualifications; and
   - credit arrangements.
2. One or more quality assured companion volumes.

Training Packages - policy

**Standard 2:** Training Package developers comply with the NSSC Training Package Products Policy.

**Standard 3:** Training Package developers comply with the NSSC Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy.

Training Packages - components

Units of Competency

**Standard 4:** Units of competency specify the standards of performance required in the workplace.

**Standard 5:** The structure of units of competency complies with the unit of competency template.

Assessment Requirements

**Standard 6:** Assessment requirements specify the evidence and required conditions for assessment.

**Standard 7:** Every unit of competency has associated assessment requirements. The structure of assessment requirements complies with the assessment requirements template.

Qualifications

**Standard 8:** Qualifications comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework specification for that qualification type.

**Standard 9:** The structure of the information for the Australian Qualifications Framework qualification complies with the qualification template.

Credit Arrangements

**Standard 10:** Credit arrangements existing between Training Package qualifications and Higher Education qualifications are listed in a format that complies with the credit arrangements template.

Companion Volumes

**Standard 11:** A quality assured companion volume implementation guide produced by the Training Package developer is available at the time of endorsement and complies with the companion volume implementation guide template.

**Standard 12:** Training Package developers produce other quality assured companion volumes to meet the needs of their stakeholders as required.
# Unit of Competency Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>UNIT CODE</strong></th>
<th><strong>MANDATORY FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The unit code contains the three alpha characters identifying the Training Package, followed by alpha and/or numeric characters. It must comply with the length specified in the AVETMIS Standard (no more than 12 characters).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>UNIT TITLE</strong></th>
<th><strong>MANDATORY FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The title concisely describes the unit outcome. It must comply with the length specified in the AVETMIS Standard (no more than 100 characters)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>APPLICATION</strong></th>
<th><strong>MANDATORY FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The application section briefly describes how the unit is practically applied in the industry and in what context(s) the unit may be applied. It Includes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ a summary statement of unit content;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ focused, useful information on how and where the unit of competency could be practically applied and who might use it; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ the unit of competency's relationship to any licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements. Where no requirements exist, insert:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No licensing, legislative or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PREREQUISITE UNIT</strong></th>
<th><strong>OPTIONAL FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List any unit(s) in which the candidate must be deemed competent prior to the determination of competency in this unit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COMPETENCY FIELD</strong></th>
<th><strong>OPTIONAL FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used only when the Training Package developer wishes to categorise a set of units within a Training Package in relation to a type of work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>UNIT SECTOR</strong></th>
<th><strong>OPTIONAL FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used only when the Training Package developer wishes to categorise a set of units within a Training Package in relation to an industry sector.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ELEMENTS</strong></th>
<th><strong>MANDATORY FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elements describe the essential outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PERFORMANCE CRITERIA</strong></th>
<th><strong>MANDATORY FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Elements describe actions or outcomes that are demonstrable and assessable.

   1.1 Performance criteria clearly relate to the element.

   1.2 They are expressed as a standard.

   1.3 They specify the required performance in relevant tasks, roles, and skills.

   1.4 They reflect the applied knowledge that enables competent performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FOUNDATION SKILLS</strong></th>
<th><strong>MANDATORY FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This section describes those language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills that are essential to performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation skills essential to performance in this unit, but not explicit in the performance criteria are listed here, along with a brief context statement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where all foundation skills essential to performance in this unit are explicit in the performance criteria insert:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation skills essential to performance are explicit in the performance criteria of this unit of competency.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>RANGE OF CONDITIONS</strong></th>
<th><strong>OPTIONAL FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specifies different work environments and conditions that may affect performance. Essential operating conditions that may be present (depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts) are included.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range is restricted to essential operating conditions and any other variables essential to the work environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>UNIT MAPPING INFORMATION</strong></th>
<th><strong>MANDATORY FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specifies code and title of any equivalent unit of competency.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If no equivalent insert:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No equivalent unit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>LINKS</strong></th>
<th><strong>MANDATORY FIELD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Link to Companion Volume Implementation Guide.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Assessment Requirements for [insert Unit of Competency Code and Title]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE | ■ specifies the required product and process evidence.  
■ specifies the frequency and/or volume of product/process evidence.  
■ specifies the relationship between the product and process evidence and the performance criteria. |
| KNOWLEDGE EVIDENCE | ■ specifies what the individual must know in order to safely and effectively perform the work task described in the unit of competency.  
■ relates directly to the performance criteria and/or range of conditions.  
■ indicates the type and depth of knowledge required to meet the demands of the unit of competency. |
| ASSESSMENT CONDITIONS | ■ stipulates any mandatory conditions for assessment.  
■ specifies the conditions under which evidence for assessment must be gathered, including any details of equipment and materials, contingencies, specifications, physical conditions, relationships with team members and supervisor, relationship with client/customer, and timeframe.  
■ specifies assessor requirements, including any details related to qualifications, experience and industry currency. |
| LINKS | Link to Companion Volume Implementation Guide. |
Qualification Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUALIFICATION CODE</th>
<th>MANDATORY FIELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The qualification code contains the three alpha characters identifying the Training Package, a numeric character identifying the AQF level, a two numeric character sequence identifier, and two numeric characters identifying the year the qualification was endorsed. It must comply with the length specified in the AVETMIS Standard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUALIFICATION TITLE</th>
<th>MANDATORY FIELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A unique title that reflects the qualification outcome. It must comply with the length specified in the AVETMIS Standard (no more than 100 characters).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUALIFICATION DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>MANDATORY FIELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A description of the qualification outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification considerations. Where none exist insert:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No licensing, legislative or certification requirements apply to this qualification at the time of publication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENTRY REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>OPTIONAL FIELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specifies any mandatory entry requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PACKAGING RULES</th>
<th>MANDATORY FIELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specifies the total number of units of competency required to achieve the qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specifies the number of core and elective units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lists all core and elective unit codes and titles, including prerequisite units where they apply.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUALIFICATION MAPPING INFORMATION</th>
<th>MANDATORY FIELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specifies code and title of any equivalent qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If no equivalent insert:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No equivalent qualification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINKS</th>
<th>MANDATORY FIELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Link to Companion Volume Implementation Guide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mandatory Fields are Highlighted ☑
## CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS TEMPLATE

**CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS FOR [insert Training Package Code and Title]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUALIFICATION CODE</th>
<th>QUALIFICATION TITLE</th>
<th>CREDIT ARRANGEMENT DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MANDATORY FIELD</td>
<td>MANDATORY FIELD</td>
<td>MANDATORY FIELD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specifies existing credit arrangements between Training Package qualifications and Higher Education qualifications in accordance with the AQF.

Where there are no direct credit arrangements in place the following statement is inserted here:

*At the time of endorsement of this Training Package no national credit arrangements exist.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MANDATORY FIELD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Link to Companion Volume Implementation Guide.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVERVIEW INFORMATION</th>
<th>MANDATORY FIELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Version control and modification history.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of AQF qualifications, Skill Sets and units of competency in the Training Package.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit mapping information, including equivalence table linking old to new units of competency.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification mapping information, including equivalence table linking old to new qualification.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of imported and prerequisite units in the Training Package.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key work and training requirements in the industry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation and licensing implications for implementation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION</th>
<th>MANDATORY FIELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information on the key features of the Training Package and the industry that will impact on the selection of training pathways.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry sectors and occupational outcomes of qualifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation of any mandatory entry requirements for qualifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways advice, particularly in line with requirements of the AQF Pathways Policy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access and equity considerations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice on any health and safety implications in the industry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource and equipment lists relevant to the Training Package.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal considerations for learners in the workplace/on placements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other information relevant to implementation of the Training Package.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINKS</th>
<th>OPTIONAL FIELD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources supporting the companion volume implementation guide.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other companion volumes as required including:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning strategies guidance, describing the diversity of learners and learning strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge guidance, identifying contextual information such as knowledge requirements and resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment strategies, providing guidance on implementation of assessment requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Package developer’s quality assurance process for companion volumes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>