

Standards for NVR RTOs: Outcome Standards

Policy Guidance

*March 2025*

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# Context

## Purpose of this Guidance

This guidance describes the overarching policy intent of the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025* (the Standards), and how they contribute to quality VET, to support a consistent understanding and application of the Standards by RTOs and VET Regulators. This guidance comprises:

* contextual information about the Standards and the broader VET Quality Framework
* discussion on the Standards
* for each Quality Area, an overview of the standards and the overarching intent
* for each Focus Area, an overview of the intent of each standard.

Further guidance will be published by VET Regulators to provide the sector with a more detailed description of expectations, and the ways in which RTOs can demonstrate their compliance with the Standards, to support self-assurance against the Standards.

## The role of the Standards

High-quality VET is vital to Australia’s future: the knowledge and skills it produces positions Australia as an economically prosperous, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable nation. Further, the VET sector plays a critical role in helping Australians to get well paid and secure jobs, boosting living standards and creating opportunities for Australians to prosper.

While the quality of training is affected by many variables, RTOs have a critical role in ensuring training is high-quality and meets the diverse range of VET students and employer needs.

The Standards are a foundation for quality training – describing the key factors that contribute to quality VET. The Standards will help to foster a VET sector that is trusted, capable and equipped to deliver quality training and provide the skills we need for the future.

The purpose of the Standards is to:

* support RTOs to deliver nationally consistent, high-quality training that leads to quality outcomes for students, industry, employers and the Australian community
* ensure training and assessment delivered by RTOs meets industry requirements (as set out in training packages and accredited courses) and ensures students are well equipped for employment and further study, and
* ensure RTOs operate with integrity and consider the needs of both students and industry.

By meeting the outcomes set out in the Standards, RTOs can contribute to building increasing confidence in the sector, address risks to students and sector integrity, and design and deliver fit for purpose training that meets the needs of industry. In addition, the Standards help to cultivate a shared understanding of what constitutes quality training delivery for all users of the VET system and embeds a culture of quality within the sector.

The Standards for RTOs comprise of 3 documents:

* the Outcome Standards – found in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025)*,
* the Compliance Requirements (including the Fit and Proper Person Requirements and NRT Logo Conditions of Use Policy) – found in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025*, and
* the Credential Policy – found on [training.gov.au](https://training.gov.au).

**RTOs are required to comply with these documents to maintain registration and safeguard the integrity of VET.** See [The VET Quality Framework](#_The_VET_Quality) on *page 7* for more detail.

## Focus of the Standards

In essence, RTOs need to be able to deliver quality training and assessment that engages students and enables them to attain nationally recognised, industry relevant competencies.

To do this, RTOs need:

* to act with integrity
* a deep commitment to delivering quality training and assessment
* a qualified, skilled and supported workforce
* ongoing industry and community engagement
* to support people of all backgrounds and abilities to participate in training
* to treat students fairly, ensuring they are properly informed, supported and protected, and
* an ability to monitor progress on an ongoing basis and seize opportunities to continuously improve.

The Standards are designed to drive these outcomes.

## Application of the Standards across Australia

The Standards are used to ensure consistent high-quality training and assessment across the VET system.

The Standards apply to RTOs as set out in the table below.

**Table 1: Application of Standards for RTOs**

| **Type of RTO** | Do the Standards apply? | Relevant regulator |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **RTO registered on CRICOS for delivery to overseas VET students** | Yes | ASQA |
| **RTO delivering online training products** | Yes | ASQA |
| **Provider of training products nationally or in ACT, NSW, NT, SA, QLD, TAS** | Yes | ASQA |
| **Provider of training products in WA and not also in one of the above categories** | Yes | TAC WA |
| **Provider of training products in VIC and not also in one of the above categories** | No (see Victorian specific standards) | VRQA |

While the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national VET Regulator, both Victoria and Western Australia are ‘non-referring jurisdictions’. As such, the Training Accreditation Council Western Australia (TAC WA) and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) retain functions related to the regulation of certain RTOs within their jurisdictions.

Requirements for RTOs regulated by ASQA are set out in the [*National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2011A00012/latest/text) (the NVETR Act) and supporting instruments. Section 22 of the NVETR Act requires RTOs to comply with the [VET Quality Framework](#_The_VET_Quality), which includes the Standards.

Requirements for RTOs regulated by TAC WA are set out in the WA [*Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_1030_homepage.html) and the [*Vocational Education and Training (General) Regulations 2009*](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_47548.pdf/$FILE/Vocational%20Education%20and%20Training%20(General)%20Regulations%202009%20-%20%5B02-c0-00%5D.pdf?OpenElement)*.*

Requirements for RTOs regulated by VRQA are set out in the Victorian [*Education and Training Reform Act 2006*](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-training-reform-act-2006/103). Subsection 4.3.17(2) of this Act requires RTOs to meet the Victorian RTO Standards, which include the [AQTF 2010 Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration](https://www2.vrqa.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/AQTF-Essential-conditions-and-standards-for-initial-registration.pdf) and the [AQTF 2010 Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration](https://www2.vrqa.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-06/AQTF-Essential-conditions-and-standards-for-continuing-registration.pdf) and the [VRQA VET Provider [Guidelines](https://www2.vrqa.vic.gov.au/standards-and-guidelines-registered-training-organisations#vrqa-guidelines-for-vet-providers)](https://www2.vrqa.vic.gov.au/standards-and-guidelines-registered-training-organisations#vrqa-guidelines-for-vet-providers).

## The VET Quality Framework

The Standards form one part of the VET Quality Framework, which ensures the integrity of nationally recognised training in Australia.

The VET Quality Framework comprises of the following:

* the Standards for RTOs
* the Australian Qualifications Framework
* the Fit and Proper Person Requirements
* the Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements
* the Data Provision Requirements.

Each of these components of the framework are described in more detail in the table below.

Under the NVETR Act entities are required to demonstrate their ability to comply with the VET Quality Framework, including the Standards, as part of their application for registration as an RTO. Once registered, RTOs are required to comply with a range of regulatory frameworks and legislative instruments at all times, including the Standards for RTOs.

Compliance with the Standards is tested by VET Regulators through performance assessments (audits) and can be examined as part of assessment of applications and risk-based monitoring activities.

**Tables 2 & 3: Components of the VET Quality Framework**

| **Standards for Registered Training Organisations** | |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome Standards** | The Outcome Standards are set out in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025.*  The Outcome Standards are a foundation for quality training – describing the key factors that contribute to quality VET. They set out the key elements of quality training and assessment, which organisations must demonstrate to be registered, and maintain registration, as a training provider. |
| **Compliance Requirements** | The Compliance Requirements are set out in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025 (Compliance Requirements Instrument).*  The Compliance Requirements set out requirements relating to accountability, integrity of nationally recognised training products, and information and transparency that RTOs must meet at all times to protect VET students and support the integrity of Australia’s VET sector. |
| **Fit and Proper Person Requirements** |
| The Fit and Proper Person Requirements are set out in Schedule 1 of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025 (Compliance Requirements Instrument.*  The Fit and Proper Person Requirements set out the requirements that executive officers, governing persons and other persons exercising control or influence over the management or direction of an RTO must meet. This seeks to ensure that these people are suitable to direct or manage the RTO. |
| **Nationally Recognised Training Logo Conditions of Use Policy** |
| The Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) Logo Conditions of Use Policy is set out in Schedule 2 of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025 (Compliance Requirements Instrument.*  The NRT Logo is a distinguishable mark of quality for promoting and certifying national VET leading to Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) certification documentation. The Policy seeks to protect the integrity of VET qualifications by ensuring appropriate use of the NRT Logo. |
| **Credential Policy** | The Credential Policy is incorporated by reference within the Standards.  The Credential Policy outlines the credentials required for trainers and assessors undertaking particular training and assessment activities or roles. RTOs must comply with the Credential Policy (as referenced within the Standards) to ensure training is delivered by properly qualified and credentialled people. |

| **Other Regulatory Requirements as set out under the NVETR Act** | |
| --- | --- |
| **Australian Qualifications Framework** | The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) can be found at [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au).  The AQF sets out requirements for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system, setting out course levels, qualifications and associated learning outcomes to support flexible, nationally consistent and high-quality qualifications. |
| **Data Provisions Requirements** | The Data Provision Requirements are set out in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Data Provision Requirements) Instrument 2020*.  The Requirements set out the data that RTOs must provide. |
| **Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements** | The Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements are set out in the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements) Instrument 2021.  This sets out how financial viability risk assessments of RTOs (and those seeking to become an RTO) are undertaken by the VET Regulator to monitor the financial position of RTOs, including to mitigate risks to VET students. |

All of these elements contribute to high-quality VET by maintaining the reputation and integrity of the VET sector and mitigating risks to students.

While this document highlights linkages to, and intersections with, the broader VET Quality Framework as relevant, it is not intended to provide guidance on the broader VET regulatory framework.

## Roles in quality training and assessment

Australia’s tertiary education sector has a strong reputation for quality, both within Australia and internationally. However, poor performing, unethical or non-genuine RTOs damage the reputation of the sector, reduce student and employer confidence in VET, discourage government investment (or otherwise drive governments to attach more conditions to their investment to mitigate risk) and pose risks to the community (particularly where training is safety critical or for a licensed profession).

Ensuring the delivery of high-quality training and assessment:

* equips students with invaluable skills for work and life
* supports a diverse array of students to gain skills and participate in employment
* builds a strong and capable workforce to meet emerging and growing demand across industries
* grows the economy
* supports RTOs to thrive because their service is respected and valued in the marketplace.

Different stakeholders play different roles in supporting a sustainable and thriving VET sector.

Table 4: VET stakeholder roles

| **Stakeholder** | Roles |
| --- | --- |
| **RTOs** | RTOs play a critical role, including:   * governing persons – set the direction and culture of RTOs and are responsible for overseeing and monitoring performance and guiding continuous improvement * trainers and assessors – deliver training (imparting knowledge and skills) to students and assess whether students have demonstrated their competency * other staff – it takes many different people to support quality training and assessment; this includes admin staff, support staff, wellbeing staff and others * third parties – RTOs rely on a wide range of third parties, including to market courses, attract students, and provide facilities and resources. |
| **VET Students** | VET students often rely on VET outcomes to gain employment, career advancement or life skills. VET students need to be able to make informed choices about training that best meets their needs and have confidence that, no matter which provider they choose, they will receive quality training and assessment that is both responsive to industry or community needs and meets their needs. Students can contribute to the quality of VET by acting with integrity, and by providing feedback and making complaints to RTOs, where issues arise, to help them improve. |
| **Industry and employers** | Employers rely on RTOs to provide essential skills and knowledge to both potential new employees and existing workers. By actively engaging with RTOs, industry groups and employers can help ensure that the training and assessment delivered by RTOs is relevant to their needs and that graduates are competent. VET professional associations also play a role supporting quality training delivery and support of RTO governance and trainers and assessors. |
| **Governments** | Governments are significant purchasers of VET through public funding of some RTOs (such as TAFEs) and also by subsidising ‘in demand’ courses. Governments also invest in the infrastructure that supports the VET sector including Jobs and Skills Councils, the National Careers Institute, and training.gov.au. Ongoing investment depends on government having confidence in the sector’s ability to deliver quality training and assessment to students. Governments contribute to the overall quality of VET by maintaining oversight of the sector, directing finite resources to areas of greatest need, and driving robust policy including developing Standards for the sector which are effective in delivering quality. |
| **VET Regulators** | ASQA (as the national regulator), TAC WA and VRQA contribute to the overall quality of VET by controlling market entry, monitoring the performance of providers in the market and taking action where providers are not meeting the community’s expectations and are non-compliant with the legislation. |

# About the Outcome Standards

## The Outcome Standards for RTOs

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1. Training and assessment** | **Quality training and assessment engages VET students and enables them to attain nationally recognised, industry relevant competencies.** |
| **Training** | 1.1 Training is engaging, well-structured and enables VET students to attain skills and knowledge consistent with the training product. |
| 1.2 Engagement with industry, employer and community representatives effectively informs the industry relevance of training offered by the NVR registered training organisation. |
| **Assessment** | 1.3 The assessment system is fit-for-purpose and consistent with the training product. |
| 1.4 The assessment system ensures assessment is conducted in a way that is fair and appropriate and enables accurate assessment judgement of VET student competency. |
| 1.5 Assessment system is quality assured by appropriately skilled and credentialled persons through a regular process of validating assessment practices and judgements. |
| **Recognition of prior learning and credit transfer** | 1.6 VET students with prior skills, knowledge and competencies are supported to seek recognition of prior learning to progress through the relevant training product. |
| 1.7 VET students who have completed an equivalent training product are supported to obtain a credit transfer. |
| **Facilities, equipment, and resources** | 1.8 Facilities, resources and equipment for each training product are fit-for-purpose, safe, accessible and sufficient. |
| **2. VET student support** | **VET students are treated fairly and properly informed, supported and protected.** |
| **Information** | 2.1 VET students have access to clear and accurate information concerning the organisation, the relevant training product, and students are made aware of any changes that may affect them. |
| 2.2 VET students are advised, prior to enrolment, about the suitability of the training product for them, taking into account the student’s skills and competencies. |
| **Training support** | 2.3 VET students have access to support services, trainers and assessors and other staff to support their progress throughout the training product. |
| 2.4 Reasonable adjustments are made to support VET students with disability to access and participate in training and assessment on an equal basis. |
| **Diversity and inclusion** | 2.5 The learning environment promotes and supports the diversity of VET students. |
| **Wellbeing** | 2.6 The wellbeing needs of the VET student cohort are identified and strategies are put in place to support these needs. |
| **Feedback, complaints, and appeals** | 2.7 Feedback and complaints management addresses concerns and informs continuous improvement of the NVR registered training organisation. |
| 2.8 Effective appeal processes are available to VET students where decisions of the NVR registered training organisation or a third party adversely affect the student. |
| **3. VET Workforce** | **VET students are trained, assessed and supported by people who are qualified, skilled and committed to professional development.** |
| **VET workforce management** | 3.1 The workforce is effectively managed to ensure appropriate staffing to deliver services. |
| **Trainer and assessor competencies** | 3.2 Training and assessment is delivered to VET students by credentialled people with current skills and knowledge in training and assessment. |
| 3.3 Training and assessment is delivered by people with current industry skills and knowledge relevant to the training product. |
| **4. Governance** | **Effective governance and a commitment to continuous improvement supports the quality and integrity of VET delivery.** |
| **Leadership and accountability** | 4.1 An NVR registered training organisation operates with integrity and maintains accountability for the delivery of quality services. |
| 4.2 Roles and responsibilities of NVR registered training organisation staff and third parties are clearly defined and understood. |
| **Risk management** | 4.3 Any risks to VET students, staff and the organisation itself are identified and managed. |
| **Continuous improvement** | 4.4 An NVR registered training organisation undertakes systematic monitoring and evaluation of the organisation to support quality delivery and continuous improvement of services. |

## Structure of the Outcome Standards

The Outcome Standards are structured against 4 overarching Quality Areas, each with an Outcome Statement which describes the overarching outcome.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Quality Areas** | **Quality Area Outcome Statements** |
| **1. Training and assessment** | **Quality training and assessment engages VET students and enables them to attain nationally recognised, industry relevant competencies.** |
| **2. VET student support** | **VET students are treated fairly and properly informed, supported and protected.** |
| **3. VET Workforce** | **VET students are trained, assessed and supported by people who are qualified, skilled and committed to professional development.** |
| **4. Governance** | **Effective governance and a commitment to continuous improvement supports the quality and integrity of VET delivery.** |

For each Quality Area, there are a number of focus areas, comprising one or more outcomes-focused standards. Each standard comprises a set of performance indicators, which set out the things an RTO must demonstrate to meet the standard. See Figure 1.

**Regulators will consider RTO compliance at the standard level.**

**Figure 1. Structure of the Outcome Standards**

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A close-up of a document

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# Meeting the Standards

## RTO responsibilities

**RTOs regulated by ASQA and TAC WA are responsible for ensuring they meet the Standards at all times**.

While performance against the Standards is tested at market entry and regular intervals following this, an RTO needs to be able to demonstrate that it meets the Standards at all times.

This includes where some, or all, of the services are subcontracted to other RTOs, organisations or individuals. RTOs need to have effective mechanisms in place for overseeing and monitoring any subcontracted services to ensure compliance with the Standards across its operations.

**RTOs are responsible for determining how they meet the Standards.**

RTOs are diverse and the way each RTO meets the Standards will differ based on its context, including its organisational structure and size, geographic location, service offering and focus, student cohort, etc. In establishing systems and processes to meet the Standards, RTOs should ensure these are proportionate to risk, and tailored to their context.

**RTOs are responsible for demonstrating their compliance with each standard.**

The performance indicators set out the things RTOs are expected to do to help achieve the outcome set out in the standard. The considerations and actions that need to be taken to achieve the outcome will necessarily differ between RTOs.

## Other requirements

#### Requirements for CRICOS providers

Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) providers (i.e. RTOs that offer courses to people studying in Australia on student visas) registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) have a range of additional requirements under the ESOS Framework, including:

* [*Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A00757/latest/text)(the ESOS Act)
* [*Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2019L00571/latest/text)(the ESOS Regulations)
* [*National Code of Practice for Providers of Education to Overseas Students 2018*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2017L01182/latest/text) (the National Code)
* [*ELICOS Standards 2018*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2017L01349/latest/text) *–* for RTOs delivering English language courses to overseas students, which apply in addition to the National Code.

Many of the requirements in the Standards overlap or relate to requirements in the ESOS Framework. These links are noted as relevant. However, separate guidance is published for ESOS providers registered on the CRICOS regarding the requirements of the ESOS Framework.

#### Broader requirements

**RTOs also have a range of broader regulatory requirements to comply with.**

Some of these are specifically referenced in the Standards (including the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2005L00767/asmade/text), the [Student Identifiers Act 2014](https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2014A00036/latest/text) and the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National_Principles_for_Child_Safe_Organisations2019.pdf)). However, most are not.

The legislative requirements applicable to RTOs differ based on organisational type, structure and size, location, student cohort and the scope of services provided.

**RTOs are responsible for ensuring they understand and comply with all applicable legislative requirements.**

# Quality Area 1: Training and Assessment

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| --- |
| **Outcome: Quality training and assessment engages VET students and enables them to attain nationally recognised, industry relevant competencies.** |

## Overview of Quality Area 1

**Quality Area 1 comprises 4 focus areas and 8 standards that go to the quality of training and assessment delivered by RTOs.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Focus areas** | **Standards** |
| **Training** | * 1. Training is engaging, well-structured and enables VET students to attain skills and knowledge consistent with the training product. |
| * 1. Engagement with industry, employer and community representatives effectively informs the industry relevance of training offered by the NVR registered training organisation. |
| **Assessment** | * 1. The assessment system is fit-for-purpose and consistent with the training product. |
| * 1. The assessment system ensures assessment is conducted in a way that is fair and appropriate and enables accurate assessment judgement of VET student competency. |
| * 1. Assessment system is quality assured by appropriately skilled and credentialled persons through a regular process of validating assessment practices and judgements. |
| **Recognition of prior learning and credit transfer** | * 1. VET students with prior skills, knowledge and competencies are supported to seek recognition of prior learning to progress through the relevant training product. |
| * 1. VET students who have completed an equivalent training product are supported to obtain a credit transfer. |
| **Facilities, resources and equipment** | * 1. Facilities, resources and equipment for each training product are fit-for-purpose, safe, accessible and sufficient. |

## 

## Intent of Quality Area 1

|  |
| --- |
| Quality Area 1 focuses on training and assessment.  **High-quality training and assessment means students are well equipped for employment or further study; and they are judged by employers as holding the skills and competencies specified in their qualification/training product.**  In turn, high-quality training and assessment provides confidence to employers that VET graduates in the workplace will safely and competently apply the skills described by their qualification.  RTOs are required to develop and implement approaches—including by providing access to suitable resources, facilities and trainers—that ensure students gain all the relevant skills and knowledge, as described by their qualification/training product.  Where third parties are delivering training (or where training occurs in the workplace), it is particularly important that RTOs have systems for ensuring the quality of the training delivered, including the techniques, resources and facilities used.  The approach to training must be informed by industry engagement and should be designed alongside the approach to assessment. This ensures the assessment occurs at the suitable time in the student journey and assesses the right skills and knowledge to satisfy the requirements of the training product.  **Reliable and fair assessment is fundamental for ensuring students have the necessary competencies before being awarded qualifications and for ensuring that their qualification holds value.**  To achieve this, RTOs must have a comprehensive system of assessment based around the principles of assessment (fairness, flexibility, validity and reliability) and the rules of evidence (validity, sufficiency, authenticity and currency). The system must be quality assured through a risk-informed process of validating assessment practices and judgements, and also needs to ensure that assessors are appropriately applying the assessment tools and related guides and that consistency of assessment is being achieved in practice. This ensures that the system (including the assessment tools and marking guides) is delivering the necessary outcomes in line with training product requirements.  To ensure integration of training and assessment approaches and systems, many RTOs may choose to develop detailed training and assessment strategies that holistically describe the training (including how it has been developed and informed) and the assessment (including how it is conducted and quality assured) in line with the training product.  **A key pillar of the national VET system is that nationally endorsed training products are recognised and portable regardless of where they were issued.** This means that RTOs must have systems to support students who provide suitable evidence that they have successfully completed an equivalent training product through another RTO to have their training recognised (credit transfer).  RTOs are also expected to have systems to enable students to seek recognition of prior skills, knowledge and competencies, as appropriate and relevant to the training product. While different RTOs will have different approaches to recognition of prior learning (RPL), based on a wide range of factors, RTO’s must ensure that their RPL processes, like all assessment processes, are fair, flexible, valid and reliable.  RTOs are expected to be transparent about their approach to training, assessment (including RPL) and credit transfer to enable students to make informed decisions about the training product and the RTO. This is a requirement of [Standard 2.1](#_Standard_2.1). |

# Training

**Standards 1.1 and 1.2 relate to the focus area of training.**

## Standard 1.1

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| **Training is engaging, well-structured and enables VET students to attain skills and knowledge consistent with the training product.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. training is consistent with the requirements of the training product; 2. the modes of delivery enable VET students to attain skills and knowledge consistent with the training product; 3. training is structured and paced to support VET students to progress, providing sufficient time for instruction, practice, feedback and assessment; 4. training techniques, activities and resources engage VET students and support their understanding; and 5. where the training product requires work placements or other community-based learning, necessary skills and knowledge are able to be attained in that environment. |

#### Intent of Standard 1.1

The design and delivery of training is critical to ensure students are engaged, recognising the diversity of students needs and learning styles, and enables students to build practical skills and competencies. Designing well-structured and engaging training is key to supporting students to progress through the training product.

In designing and delivering training, RTOs are responsible for:

* **ensuring the training aligns with the requirements of the training product and the AQF**
* While training products set out requirements in relation to core competencies, assessment, methods, etc they do not prescribe how an individual should be trained.RTOs must be able to demonstrate how their training design and delivery enables students to build the specified skills, knowledge and competencies.
* **adopting a suitable mode of delivery**
* Mode of delivery refers to methods for delivering training and/or assessment – for example, face-to-face, online, distance or blended methods.
* The mode of delivery must be appropriate for the skills and competencies being delivered through the training. For example, where the course requires students to build practical skills, the mode of delivery must enable practical application of the skills.
* **identifying an appropriate training structure and pacing to support VET students to progress**
* To do this, RTOs need to understand the student journey, including how long it should take students to develop competencies and how much time students will be required to commit to the training.
* The time required to achieve a qualification or unit can depend on a range of factors, including:
* the student cohort
* the mode of delivery and the resources, technology platforms and facilities available
* the expectations of industry, employers and/or the community
* the depth and breadth and complexity of the skills and knowledge to be acquired.
* **training techniques engage VET students**
* Students are diverse and have varied learning needs, styles and preferences. Using a range of training techniques, activities and resources to deliver training enables RTOs to cater to these diverse needs and improves outcomes for students.
* Training should consider an array of training techniques and activities that seek to engage, interest, energise and involve students and enable them to build skills and knowledge in multiple different ways.
* **ensure opportunities for work placements are fit-for-purpose**
* Work placements enable students to gain skills and experience by working directly in or with an industry or community organisation as part of their training. By enabling students to develop and test their skills under realistic conditions, and in real‑world environments, RTOs can ensure that students’ competency reflects contemporary, industry-appropriate practice.
* If delivering training fully in a workplace, the RTO must ensure the student has access to the time, resources, facilities and relevant experiences to safely learn and practice all requirements in a unit of competency.

***Considerations specific to certain types of RTOs***

**Assessment only RTOs** will not generally be required to demonstrate compliance with this standard, as they do not design or deliver training. However, they must have an understanding of training strategies. This will help to ensure that the assessment system is fit-for-purpose and that students have an integrated end-to-end training and assessment experience.

## Standard 1.2

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| **Engagement with industry, employer and community representatives effectively informs the industry relevance of training offered by the NVR registered training organisation.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. how it identifies relevant industry, employer and community representatives and seeks meaningful advice and feedback from those representatives; 2. it uses relevant advice and feedback to inform changes to training and assessment strategies and practices; and 3. training reflects current industry practice. |

#### Intent of Standard 1.2

VET is about skilling people for industry and for the workplace with the expectation that, at the completion of the training, the student is competent. This means that the training and assessment delivered by the RTO should reflect workplace requirements and meet the expectations of industry.

Industry expectations are reflected in training packages and accredited courses. These products are informed by industry representatives who help define the current skills and knowledge required for safe and productive employment. However, some training products include only high-level industry requirements, which ensures RTOs have flexibility to design training and assessment around their student cohorts and local industry need, provided this is in line with the high-level requirements in the training product. This also enables RTOs to adapt their practices as new evidence and technologies emerge in different sectors.

As such, it is critical that RTOs have mechanisms for ongoing industry engagement to ensure training remains relevant, fit-for-purpose and reflective of current industry practice. This helps to:

* ensure training aligns with current industry need, practice and expectations
* enable graduates to enter the workplace ‘job ready’, with the skills and knowledge required to succeed
* maximise students’ opportunities for employment, advancement or further education
* instil confidence (from employers, industry and students) in the integrity, currency and value of the qualifications issued by RTOs.

# Assessment

**Standards 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 relate to the focus area of assessment.**

## Standard 1.3

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| **The assessment system is fit-for-purpose and consistent with the training product.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. the assessment is consistent with the requirements of the training product; 2. assessment tools are reviewed prior to use to ensure assessment can be conducted in a way that is consistent with the principles of assessment and rules of evidence as set out under Standard 1.4; and 3. the outcomes of any such reviews inform any necessary changes to assessment tools. |

#### Intent of Standard 1.3

Training products include performance criteria to reflect industry needs. These are specified in units of competency, and all requirements of the unit must be demonstrated for a student to be considered competent. While RTOs may deliver training and build student competency in a variety of ways, it is important that students can demonstrate competency in a consistent, reliable and verifiable way.

RTOs are responsible for certifying the competence of individuals – ensuring that certification is only issued to a student whom the RTO has assessed as meeting the requirements of the training product (as specified in the relevant training package or accredited course). Competence may have been achieved through training delivered by the RTO or skills acquired elsewhere.

RTOs must have fit-for-purpose assessment systems (consistent with the requirements of the training product) to enable valid judgements regarding a student’s competency. It’s important for RTOs to review assessment tools, prior to their use by VET students, to ensure they enable valid, consistent and reliable assessment of student competency, without affecting VET student outcomes.

RTOs can do this in different ways – for example by testing them with industry experts or employers, other trainers and assessors with current industry knowledge, or with a group of people with similar levels of knowledge to the target VET student cohort. Based on the outcomes of this review, RTOs should revise the tools to incorporate feedback and ensure they are fit-for-purpose.

## Standard 1.4

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| **The assessment system ensures assessment is conducted in a way that is fair and appropriate and enables accurate assessment judgement of VET student competency.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. the assessment system facilitates assessment which must be conducted in accordance with the following principles:    1. fairness – assessment accommodates the needs of the VET student, including implementing reasonable adjustments where appropriate and enabling reassessment where necessary;    2. flexibility – assessment is appropriate to the context, training product and VET student, and assesses the VET student’s skills and knowledge that are relevant to the training product, regardless of how or where the VET student has acquired those skills or that knowledge;    3. validity – assessment includes practical application components that enable the VET student to demonstrate the relevant skills and knowledge in a practical setting; and    4. reliability – assessment evidence is interpreted consistently by assessors and the outcomes of assessment are comparable irrespective of which assessor is conducting the assessment. 2. assessors make individual assessment judgements that are justified based on the following rules of evidence: 3. validity –assessment evidence is adequate, such that the assessor can be reasonably assured that the VET student possesses the skills and knowledge described in the training product; 4. sufficiency – the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence enables the assessor to make an informed judgement of the VET student’s competency in the skills and knowledge described in the training product; 5. authenticity – the assessor is assured that a VET student’s assessment evidence is the original and genuine work of that VET student; and 6. currency – the assessment evidence presented to the assessor documents and demonstrates the VET student’s current skills and knowledge. |

#### Intent of Standard 1.4

The intent of Standard 1.4 is to ensure VET students’ skills and knowledge are assessed in a way that is fair and appropriate, and assessment outcomes are reliable. Robust assessment systems that enable assessment in line with the principles of assessment and rules of evidence are critical to upholding the defensibility of an RTO’s assessment decisions and qualifications. This underpins the integrity of VET.

Two of the ways that this is commonly achieved is by ensuring that:

* assessment is conducted consistent with the principles of assessment
* assessors make individual assessment judgements that are justified based on the rules of evidence.

RTOs trainers and assessors are expected to have a strong understanding of the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence and to be able to apply these in a practical way, guided by the RTOs systems and processes.

## Standard 1.5

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| **Assessment system is quality assured by appropriately skilled and credentialled persons through a regular process of validating assessment practices and judgements.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. validation of assessment practices and judgements ensure the assessment system produces assessment judgements that are consistent with the training product and the requirements set out in this instrument [these Standards]; 2. every training product on the organisation’s scope of registration is validated at least once every five years and on a more frequent basis where the organisation becomes aware of risks to training outcomes, any changes to the training product or receives relevant feedback from VET students, trainers, assessors, and industry; 3. it utilises a risk-based approach – informed by any risks to training outcomes, any changes to the training product or any feedback from VET students, trainers, assessors, and industry – to determine: 4. the components of the assessment system for a training product which are to be validated; and 5. the sample size of assessments that are to be validated in respect of a particular training product. 6. in addition to the requirements in paragraph (b), the assessment system for an AQF qualification or skill set from the Training and Education Training Package that enables individuals to make assessment judgements (as specified in the Credential Policy) has been or will be validated: 7. once the first cohort of VET students with the organisation have completed their training and assessment; and 8. by a person who is independent, not employed or subcontracted by the organisation to provide training and assessment, and has no other involvement or interest in the organisation’s operations. 9. validation is undertaken by one or more people who collectively have:    1. industry competencies, skills and knowledge relevant to the training product;    2. a practical understanding of current industry practices relevant to the training product; and    3. one of the credentials for validation specified in the Credential Policy. 10. the outcome of an assessment validation is not solely determined by a person who has designed or delivered the training or assessment; and 11. how outcomes of an assessment validation are used to inform changes to the assessment system. |

#### Intent of Standard 1.5

Regular validation of an RTO’s assessment system is critical to ensure students have been accurately assessed against the skills and knowledge required by the training product through the assessment system. An RTO’s assessment practices and judgements need to be reviewed to understand where the RTO can make changes to improve the accuracy and strength of its assessment system.

While [Standard 1.3](#_Standard_1.3) requires that assessment tools are reviewed prior to use to ensure they are fit-for-purpose, this standard requires that a sample of completed assessments within a training product is evaluated after the use of the assessment system to see if it has achieved consistent and valid assessment outcomes, regardless of who has made the assessment judgements.

RTOs should be undertaking validation of all training products on their scope of registration at least once every 5 years to assure themselves of the quality of the assessment system in place for each product, and to identify opportunities for improvement. The standard strikes a balance between setting a maximum validation cycle of at least every 5 years and allowing flexibility for RTOs to self-determine validation frequency and sequencing that is informed by risk, changes to training products and feedback. Recognising more frequent validation is expected to be undertaken where risks have been identified.

Given the important role validation has in assuring the quality of an RTO’s assessment system, this standard describes specific requirements about who can be involved in validation and the risk-based approach to validation. Engaging the right people to conduct validation and identify required changes to an RTO’s assessment system ensures the assessment system is informed by deep understanding of VET and current industry practice, and ensures objective opportunities for improvements are identified.

Qualifications and skill sets from the TAE Training Package impact the quality of training and assessment throughout the VET sector. It is vital these training products are effectively delivered by trainers and assessors with the right skills and competencies in training and assessment. As such, there are specific requirements associated with delivering training and assessment and undertaking validation of assessment tools for any AQF qualification or skill set from the TAE Training Package.

RTOs should refer to Section 3 of the Credential Policy regarding the credentials required for people undertaking validation of assessment.

The requirement to undertake validation of assessment judgements in accordance with the Standards should not limit an RTO from undertaking a wide range of monitoring activities (including moderation), or any other process aimed at increasing the quality of assessment outside of the validation cycle.

***Considerations for different RTOs***

**RTOs that purchase ‘off the shelf’ assessment systems and tools** – RTOs that purchase assessment systems and tools are still required to ensure these tools remain relevant and fit-for-purpose in their context as part of a validation program. They must demonstrate how they quality assure their assessment system and validate assessment judgements in line with this standard.

# Recognition of prior learning and credit transfer

**Standards 1.6 and 1.7 relates to the focus area of recognition of prior learning and credit transfer.**

## Standard 1.6

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| **VET students with prior skills, knowledge and competencies are supported to seek recognition of prior learning to progress through the relevant training product.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. VET students are offered opportunities to seek recognition of prior learning and are made aware of the organisation’s policies for seeking recognition of prior learning; 2. decisions relating to recognition of prior learning are based on evidence of prior skills, learning and experience, and are undertaken in accordance with the organisation’s assessment system; and 3. decisions relating to recognition of prior learning are documented and decided in a way that is fair, transparent, consistent amongst VET students, and maintains the integrity of the training product. |

#### Intent of Standard 1.6

An important outcome of a competency-based VET system is that students who can demonstrate certain competencies described in a training product (to the level of rigour required by these Standards) can have such competencies recognised without undertaking further unnecessary formal training.

RTOs play a role in supporting students to efficiently progress through a training product where they have the relevant pre-existing skills, learning and/or experience. Students, including prospective students, who consider that their prior learning reflects what is required under the training product can be assessed and may have their training product abridged to reflect their proven competencies. RTOs are to determine the extent to which an individual meets the training product requirements through an assessment process that complies with the requirements in the Standards.

It is recognised that enabling recognition of prior learning might not be appropriate or practical in all circumstances. For example, it may not be an efficient use of a student’s time or RTO resources to undertake assessment of prior competencies for short, low-cost courses. However, in this case RTOs must be transparent with students about their policies for recognition of prior learning and must be able to justify why recognition of prior learning is not appropriate where it is not made available.

RTOs are required to act fairly, consistently and transparently when making decisions about recognition of prior learning.

***Considerations for different RTOs***

**RTOs delivering short courses** – For some particularly short, low cost courses, a recognition of prior learning process may have limited value to students. In such cases, RTOs must still be able to demonstrate how they have formed this view and how this is transparently communicated to students prior to their enrolment.

## Standard 1.7

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| **VET students who have completed an equivalent training product are supported to obtain a credit transfer.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. VET students are offered opportunities to seek credit transfer and are made aware of the organisation’s policies for seeking credit transfer; 2. decisions relating to credit transfer are based on evidence of prior completion of an equivalent training product demonstrated by AQF certification documentation or an authenticated VET transcript (unless prevented by licensing or regulatory requirements of the training product); and 3. decisions relating to credit transfer are documented and decided in a way that is fair, transparent, consistent amongst VET students, and maintains the integrity of the training product. |

#### Intent of Standard 1.7

A key pillar of the national VET system is that nationally endorsed training products are recognised and portable. Students who have already been assessed as competent through equivalent training products should have those competencies upheld and have the benefit of reduced time and expense in the VET sector, unless a regulatory requirement or licence condition (including an industry licensing scheme) requires this.

If a student provides suitable evidence that they have successfully completed an equivalent training product through another RTO, RTOs are required to support the student to seek and attain appropriate credit. In ensuring this occurs, students are to be informed about their opportunity to seek credit transfer and be given access to an RTO’s policies about how credit can be applied. RTOs are required to act fairly, consistently and transparently as part of the credit transfer process, and document all decisions.

# Facilities, resources and equipment

**Standard 1.8 relates to the focus area of facilities, resources and equipment.**

## Standard 1.8

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| **Facilities, resources and equipment for each training product are fit-for-purpose, safe, accessible and sufficient.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. how it identifies the facilities, resources and equipment required to deliver the training product, including how it identifies which facilities, resources and equipment will be provided by third parties, instead of the organisation; 2. where facilities, resources and equipment are provided by the organisation or third parties - how the organisation ensures:    1. that the facilities, resources and equipment are, and will continue to be suitable and safe for use by VET students; and    2. that VET students have access to the facilities, resources and equipment they need to participate in the training and assessment relevant to the training product; and 3. it has documented strategies and procedures in place to identify and manage risks associated with VET students using facilities, resources and equipment when undertaking work-integrated learning, work placements, or other community-based learning, as part of their training. |

#### Intent of Standard 1.8

The intent of this standard is to ensure that facilities, resources, and equipment are fit-for-purpose and safe to use, and that resourcing is sufficient and appropriate to ensure students can effectively complete their training.

The adequacy and appropriateness of facilities, resources and equipment cannot be considered in isolation. It will be influenced by a wide range of factors, including:

* the training product requirements
* feedback from industry, employers, community, staff and students
* the student cohort, including diversity of the cohort and needs
* the number of students enrolled
* the mode of training delivery.

RTOs will be expected to demonstrate how they identify the necessary facilities, resources and equipment to deliver the training, taking all of these matters into account.

Work placements and work integrated learning present different challenges because RTOs will not always control the setting or the risk to the student. RTOs are however expected to work with employers to assess the risks and to identify how these risks will be managed. In some case the risk could be managed by informing the student of the risk so that they can take the necessary risk mitigation steps. In some cases, the workplace may assume responsibility for management of the risk. In all cases it is expected that the RTO would have policies in place for identifying and managing the risk, a risk escalation pathway such that the students and employers / placement coordinators could report risk to the RTO and risk registers to record risk.

***Considerations for different RTOs***

This standard applies to all RTOs, including those that deliver training and assessment purely through online delivery modes or by distance. While there may not be physical facilities – RTOs are still responsible for ensuring the safety, suitability and accessibility of the online learning environment and resources.

# Quality Area 2: VET Student Support

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| **Outcome: VET students are treated fairly and are properly informed, supported and protected.** |

## Overview of Quality Area 2

**Quality Area 2 comprises 5 focus areas and 8 standards that go to the supports provided by RTOs to enable VET students to succeed in their training.**

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| **Focus areas** | **Standards** |
| **Information** | **2.1** VET students have access to clear and accurate information concerning the organisation, the relevant training product, and studentsare made aware of any changes that may affect them. |
| **2.2** VET students are advised, prior to enrolment, about the suitability of the training product for them, taking into account the student’s skills and competencies. |
| **Training support** | **2.3** VET students have access to support services, trainers and assessors and other staff to support their progress throughout the training product. |
| **2.4** Reasonable adjustments are made to support VET students with disability to access and participate in training and assessment on an equal basis. |
| **Diversity and inclusion** | **2.5** The learning environment promotes and supports the diversity of VET students. |
| **Wellbeing** | **2.6** The wellbeing needs of the VET student cohort are identified and strategies are put in place to support these needs. |
| **Feedback, complaints and appeals** | **2.7** Feedback and complaints management addresses concerns and informs continuous improvement of the NVR registered training organisation. |
| **2.8** Effective appeal processes are available to VET students where decisions of the NVR registered training organisation or a third party adversely affect the student. |

## Intent of Quality Area 2

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| Quality Area 2 focuses on the support RTOs provide to VET students to enable them to make informed decisions and safely participate (and succeed) in VET.  **Prospective students need access to information to make choices about the RTO and the training product that is right for them.** This requires RTOs to ensure all information provided to prospective students (e.g. through their website, brochures, advertisements, social media, etc.) is current, accurate and sufficiently detailed. RTOs must take care that any information does not inadvertently mislead students, for example as to the requirements of the training product or the outcomes they can expect from completing the training.  RTOs must have mechanisms for advising students including prospective students, on whether a training product is suitable for them (based on their learning needs and circumstances, and existing skills and competencies) prior to their enrolment in the training product. RTOs can do this in different ways – for example, by providing information on any course requirements and requiring prospective students to confirm they understand and meet these as part of the pre-enrolment process.  **Students have different learning needs and styles, and their differing abilities and circumstances may impact on their learning.** It is important that RTOs identify where additional support may be required and provide students with access to training support services. This will differ based on the context but may include one-to-one time with trainers and assessors, timely responses to queries, supplementary learning resources, or adjustments to the pace of training and timing of assessment.  RTOs have obligations under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in training on the same basis as students without disability. As part of this, RTOs are required to engage with students to support them to disclose their disability (if they wish) and make reasonable adjustments to enable them to equitably participate in training and assessment.  **By supporting students from all cultures, backgrounds and abilities to participate in VET, RTOs can increase levels of participation and attainment and contribute to Australia’s strong labour market outcomes.**  Everyone should feel welcome, safe and supported to participate in VET. To enable this, RTOs are expected to create a safe learning environment that is inclusive. RTOs are also expected to direct particular attention to delivering services in a manner that respects and acknowledges the unique cultural identities, values, and practices of First Nations peoples. A focus on cultural safety aims to create an environment where First Nations peoples feel understood, respected, and valued, which helps to build trust and engagement. This approach addresses power imbalances and systemic barriers, promoting equity and accessibility in VET.  While many factors affecting student wellbeing will be outside of the RTO’s control, it is important that RTOs have strategies to support student wellbeing. RTOs can do this in many different ways, as suited to their delivery context and needs of their student cohort. For example, by identifying wellbeing needs prior to enrolment, being sensitive to the challenges that may be associated with certain industries or work placements, offering flexibility or support to students who are going through a difficult time, fostering an environment where students feel safe to ask for help, or providing students with information about what they can do if they are experiencing difficulties. By supporting students to prioritise their wellbeing. This not only improves individual student outcomes (and retention rates) but also contributes to a positive RTO reputation.  **RTOs are responsible for ensuring they have effective complaints management systems to enable students, staff and others to provide feedback and make complaints.**  It is recognised that errors and mistakes occur within all RTOs. An effective complaints management system will help to fix problems before they escalate, better understand student cohorts and other stakeholders, provide an opportunity to improve student satisfaction and produce data and insights that help RTOs continuously improve.  **Appeals mechanisms should also be available where the decision of an RTO or a third party may adversely impact the student.**  Enrolment and assessment decisions, in particular, can have a significant impact on students. It is important that students have avenues to appeal such decisions and that the processes that support appeal are fair and timely. Where appeals are managed internally within the RTO, this should be undertaken at no cost to the student. The RTO should also ensure that the student is able to access a review by an independent party at no or low cost to them. Robust appeals processes give students confidence in appeal outcomes and help maintain the integrity of the VET sector. |

# Information

**Standards 2.1 and 2.2 relate to the focus area of information.**

## Standard 2.1

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| **VET students have access to clear and accurate information concerning the organisation, the relevant training product, and students are made aware of any changes that may affect them.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. all information provided to VET students by the organisation or any third parties is clear, accurate and current; 2. how it identifies which information VET students require prior to their enrolment and how that information is communicated to VET students prior to their enrolment; 3. the following information is easily accessible to VET students: 4. the training product code and title, duration, modes of delivery, training delivery, location, training commencement dates, scheduling, any requirements to commence or complete the training product including assessment requirements, whether any licencing or occupational licence requirements apply, and details of any third party arrangements that apply to the delivery of the training; 5. the training support services and wellbeing support services that are available to the VET student, and how the student can access those services; 6. all fees, costs and charges associated with the provision of the training product which VET students may incur, including payment terms and conditions, any applicable refund policies and the availability of any relevant government training entitlements and subsidies; 7. any obligations or liabilities which may be imposed on VET students undertaking the training product, including any obligations requiring VET students to acquire any materials, equipment or IT, any costs and processes associated with withdrawing from training, and costs and processes associated with obtaining a Student Identifier, and any requirements for VET students to undertake work placements; 8. the organisation provides all VET students with documentation prior to enrolment or before any fees are required to be paid which sets out: 9. the training which the organisation or third parties will provide the VET student; 10. all fees, costs and charges which the VET student will be required to pay; and 11. any obligations or liabilities which may be imposed by the organisation or third parties on the VET student; and 12. that it informs VET students, as soon as practicable, of any changes to training products or the organisation’s operations that may affect VET students, including any changes relating to the transition of superseded, deleted, or expired training products. |

#### Intent of Standard 2.1

The intent of Standard 2.1 is to ensure information provided to students is up to date, accurate, clear and easy to understand, and that students receive relevant and timely information that enables them to make informed decisions. RTOs are expected to provide prospective students with information prior to enrolment, including in relation to the training product, support services available, fees and costs, and student rights, obligations and requirements.

RTOs should ensure the information provided is sufficient to enable students to make informed decisions about whether the RTO and training product is right for them. It is critical that information does not misrepresent training or mislead students as to what they can expect in participating in training and assessment (for example, by understating the amount of hours involved in training, overstating the support services available to students or guaranteeing job outcomes, etc.)

Students must also be informed where there are any service changes that may affect them – for example, changes to course details, cost or duration, changes to third-party agreements, changes to support services available, transition arrangements where training products are superseded, etc.

RTOs are responsible for ensuring all marketing conducted on its behalf, including through a third-party arrangement, complies with the Standards, no matter who actually creates or publishes the material.

## Standard 2.2

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| **VET students are advised, prior to enrolment, about the suitability of the training product for them, taking into account the student’s skills and competencies.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. taking into account the requirements of the training product – it has procedures in place to review, prior to enrolment, the skills and competencies of prospective VET students, including their language, literacy and numeracy proficiency and digital literacy; and 2. based on the outcome of the review – it provides advice to each prospective VET student about whether the training product is suitable for them. |

#### Intent of Standard 2.2

The intent of this standard is to ensure that students are able to make informed decisions about whether a training product is right for them, based on their skills, competencies and learning needs. This seeks to protect student wellbeing by minimising the risk of students unknowingly participating in training that is unsuitable for them, recognising the challenges faced by students who do not have the necessary foundation or other skills or attributes to successfully complete the training.

To enable this, RTOs are expected to, *prior to enrolment*:

* provide accurate and accessible information to prospective students about the foundation skills and competencies (or other attributes) needed to successfully participate in a training product
* review a prospective student’s skills, ensure they have the necessary language, literacy, numeracy and digital proficiency to undertake the intended training
* inform prospective students about the extent of support services available (including the limits of an RTO’s ability to respond to individual needs) to provide prospective students with the opportunity to decide if the RTO is able to meet their needs
* where a prospective student does not have the required skills and competencies needed to successfully participate in a training product, RTOs should advise the person on the suitability of the training products for them.

The intention of this standard is that a prospective student cannot be committed to a training product, or incur any financial burden in relation to that training product, until the student’s language, literacy, numeracy needs and digital proficiency have been identified and advice has been provided to the student on whether the training product is right for them. RTOs may do this in different ways, as suited to their delivery context and needs of their student cohort.

The system that is needed to review skills and competencies (and provide necessary advice to prospective students) will depend on the nature of the training product, the RTO’s context and the student cohort. For example, different strategies will be required by an RTO seeking to enrol a student in a one-year, full-time program compared to an RTO seeking to enrol a student in a low cost, short duration, online course. In each case, the strategies for reviewing skills and competencies (and providing relevant advice) should be adapted and proportionate to the context.

# Training support

**Standards 2.3 and 2.4 relate to the focus area of training support.**

## Standard 2.3

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| **VET students have access to support services, trainers and assessors and other staff to support their progress throughout the training product.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. how it determines the training support services to be provided to each VET student and makes these training support services available to each VET student; 2. VET students have access to trainers and assessors and other staff who are responsible for supporting the VET student; 3. VET students are informed by the organisation about how and when they can access trainers, assessors and other staff who are responsible for supporting the VET student; and 4. queries from VET students are responded to in a timely manner. |

#### Intent of Standard 2.3

Standard 2.3 recognises that people learn in different ways and may need varying levels and types of support to enable them to successfully participate in training. Poor communication and limited access to trainers and assessors (and other support) can negatively impact on student engagement and slow or impede student progress through the training product.

RTOs are responsible for identifying the training support services required by individual students to enable them to meet the training product requirements and progress through / complete the training product in which they are enrolled.

Training support services may include, for example:

* resources, including readings, exercises, practice tests, etc.
* language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) and digital literacy support
* assistive technology
* additional tutorials, including online tutorial support
* one on one time with trainers and assessors
* specialised IT / technical support.

RTOs are expected to provide students with reasonable access to identified training support services, including trainers, assessors and other staff (for example, administrative or IT support). This does not mean staff must be available to students at all times, but RTOs should consider what is reasonable in the context of the student cohort, the training product, the delivery method / training mode and the level of support likely to be required.

## Standard 2.4

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| **Reasonable adjustments are made to support VET students with disability to access and participate in training and assessment on an equal basis.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. VET students are supported to disclose their disability, if the VET student wishes to do so; 2. reasonable adjustments are made for VET students with disability where appropriate; and 3. where reasonable adjustments are not appropriate or possible, the reasons why are communicated to the VET student as soon as reasonably practicable. |

#### Intent of Standard 2.4

RTOs are expected to foster a culture where students from all backgrounds and of all abilities are encouraged and supported to participate in training and assessment. This is key to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment, ensuring students feel valued and have support to increase participation in VET.

RTOs have obligations under the [*Disability Standards for Education 2005*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2005L00767) and the [*Disability Discrimination Act 1992*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A04426/latest/text) to support students with disability to access and participate in training and assessment on the same basis as students without disability. As part of this, RTOs are required to make reasonable adjustments to support students with disability, consistent with Part 3 of the [*Disability Standards for Education 2005*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2005L00767).

Reasonable adjustment refers to any modification made to the learning environment, training delivery or assessment method to ensure students with disability or ongoing ill health can access and participate in training and assessment. This could include, for example:

* ensuring that course activities are sufficiently flexible
* providing additional support where necessary
* customising resources, activities or presentation mediums
* offering a reasonable substitute within the context of the course where a student cannot participate.

In identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments, RTOs should engage with the student, appropriate stakeholders (for example, parents, carers, partners and associates) and the student’s trainers and assessors to understand the student’s individual needs and collaboratively identify potential adjustments.

Disclosure of disability or ongoing ill health, including mental ill health, is the student’s choice and is not a requirement for participation in a training product. However, encouraging students to share information about the impact of their disability early in their engagement with the RTO helps put reasonable adjustments in place in a timely way.

In responding to a student’s needs, RTOs must balance the interests of all parties affected and consider the extent to which adjustments can be made without adversely impacting the integrity of the industry standard and the certification that follows. This means that the adjustments that are made must be applicable in the workplace.

RTOs should refer to Part 3 of the [*Disability Standards for Education 2005*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2005L00767) for a more detailed description of their obligations in relation to reasonable adjustments

# Diversity and Inclusion

**Standard 2.5 relates to the focus area of diversity and inclusion.**

## Standard 2.5

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| **The learning environment promotes and supports the diversity of VET students.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. it fosters a safe and inclusive learning environment for VET students; and 2. it fosters a culturally safe learning environment for First Nations people. |

#### Intent of Standard 2.5

RTOs are expected to create a safe and inclusive environment for students. This includes ensuring the learning environment is free from racism, discrimination or any other form of harassment, but it also goes beyond this. RTOs need to actively consider how their training environment, activities and materials, assessment processes and wellbeing support services are accessible and inclusive. This includes, for example, young people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse background, people of different genders, people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, neurodivergent people, and people who may identify as LGBTIQ+. Standard 2.5 does not alter, impair or detract from the operation of sections 37 and 38 of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984.*

RTOs may also consider how their recruitment policies and practices contribute to creating a safe and inclusive environment.

While RTOs are expected to create a safe and inclusive environment, it is also expected that particular attention be given to ensuring that the learning environment is culturally safe for First Nations people. This recognises the need for affirmative measures to support First Nations people to enrol, participate in and complete training and is about:

* acknowledging the unique experience of First Nations people in Australia
* recognising that First Nations peoples do not always have the same level of access to VET as non-Indigenous Australians, nor the same positive experiences
* actively addressing unconscious bias, racism and discrimination, and supporting self-determination for First Nations people.

This standard applies to all RTOs, even if there are no students who have identified as First Nations.

Cultural safety is about creating an environment that is safe for First Nations people. This means there is no challenge or denial of their identity and experience. A culturally safe learning environment has benefits for all students and staff alike. It creates a positive setting where people are respected and feel comfortable being themselves.

Steps RTOs can take towards this may include engaging with local First Nations groups and communities to help identify ways they can improve, engaging staff or industry experts from First Nations communities to deliver or review training and assessment, ensuring all staff are culturally competent, and revising learning materials and activities to ensure these are culturally safe and trauma aware.

By taking action to increase participation in VET from under-represented groups (including people with disability and First Nations people), RTOs can set themselves apart as exemplars and open themselves up to a broader student market.

RTOs should have mechanisms in place to measure and review how their learning environment promotes and supports diversity and to identify opportunities to continuously improve.

# Wellbeing

**Standard 2.6 relates to the focus area of wellbeing.**

## Standard 2.6

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| **The wellbeing needs of the VET student cohort are identified and strategies are put in place to support these needs.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. it identifies, by reference to the training product content, the wellbeing needs of the VET student cohort and appropriate wellbeing support services; and 2. it advises the VET student cohort of the availability of wellbeing support services, and any organisation students can contact, or additional action students can take to support their wellbeing. |

#### Intent of Standard 2.6

Wellbeing can be a significant contributing factor to a student’s ability to engage in, and progress through, VET. Poor physical, mental, emotional or financial wellbeing can act as a barrier to learning and prevent students from participating in training or completing a training product. By putting strategies in place to uphold student wellbeing, RTOs can help enhance student engagement and satisfaction, support progression and completion and create a safe learning environment, contributing to a positive reputation for the RTO and VET more broadly.

The intent of Standard 2.6 is to support the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of the student cohort, ensuring they are able to access appropriate supports. RTOs are expected to be aware of risks to students’ wellbeing and put strategies in place to protect and uphold the safety and wellbeing of the student cohort.

While RTOs are not required to deliver all wellbeing support services directly, they must advise students of available supports and help them to access these supports as appropriate (for example, by providing information about, or referring students to, external support services and resources).

For example, depending on the wellbeing needs of the cohort of students the RTO may organise or advertise the availability of:

* external counselling services providing vocational, emotional and psychological support
* services to assist in accessing financial support for students at risk of discontinuing their training on financial grounds.

The Standards do not limit the range of wellbeing support services that an RTO can provide or refer students to, and it is a matter for the RTO to consider the wellbeing needs of its student cohort. Whatever is offered, the RTO should ensure that staff are made aware of the supports and have a system for informing students of available supports.

It is recognised that individual wellbeing is influenced by a number of factors, many of which may not be in the control of the RTO. RTOs are not responsible for ensuring wellbeing support services are taken up by students. However, RTOs may seek to understand student uptake and satisfaction with support services including through feedback from students. This should also inform continuous improvement.

***Considerations specific to certain types of RTOs***

The extent of wellbeing support services expected to be identified for students will depend on context, including the size of the RTO, the student cohort and the nature and duration of the training. RTOs will be expected to demonstrate how they have considered these factors in determining the most appropriate strategies for their RTO.

Where **enterprise RTOs** form part of a larger organisation with existing employee support systems, it is expected that the RTO is aware of and able to coordinate access to these supports with the consent of the employee/ student.

# Feedback, complaints and appeals

**Standards 2.7 and 2.8 relate to the focus area of feedback, complaints and appeals.**

## Standard 2.7

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| **Feedback and complaints management addresses concerns and informs continuous improvement of the NVR registered training organisation.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. it operates a complaints management system that: 2. allows feedback and complaints about the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation; 3. ensures all parties are afforded procedural fairness; 4. identifies reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints; and 5. provides avenues for further action where complaints are not resolved; 6. information about how to provide feedback and make complaints through the complaints management system is publicly available and easily accessible by VET students; 7. VET students are supported to provide feedback and make complaints; 8. outcomes of complaints are documented by the organisation and communicated to all parties to the complaint; and 9. feedback and complaints are used by the organisation to inform continuous improvement. |

#### Intent of Standard 2.7

An effective feedback and complaints management system enhances the overall quality of VET services and strengthens stakeholder confidence and trust in the RTO. It also helps the RTO identify and rectify systemic issues, to continuously improve and meet the outcomes described in the Standards.

RTOs are expected to be open to receiving feedback and complaints. Feedback can be gained through many avenues and from various stakeholders, including students, employers, staff and third parties.

Effective processes for handling feedback and complaints can help RTOs:

* improve the quality of training and assessment
* improve the experience and satisfaction of students (and staff)
* build positive relationships with students, staff and others
* identify opportunities for continuous improvement (see [Standard 4.4](#_Standard_4.4)).

Key elements of best practice feedback and complaints management systems include:

* **fostering a receptive, blame-free culture that is open to feedback and improvement**
* **ensuring there is no detriment to people who complain**
* **making it easy and accessible for people to provide feedback and make complaints**
* RTOs are expected to have a range of avenues through which people may make complaints. This may be via email or a website but should also include opportunities for complaints to be made directly to relevant staff of the RTO.
* **providing transparency regarding how complaints and feedback are handled and what complainants can expect**
* This includes transparency about complaints processes, expected timeframes for resolution of complaints and any opportunities for review of complaints outcomes.
* **addressing complaints within a reasonable timeframe**
* Complaints should be resolved without unnecessary delay. While RTOs are expected to respond to all complaints in a timely manner, it is recognised that some complaints may require more urgent attention than others. It is also recognised that some complaints may take longer to resolve than others. RTOs are expected to have a system for triaging complaints.
* RTOs are also expected to communicate transparently with students and others about the expected timeframes for acknowledging, resolving and communicating the outcomes of complaints. Where timeframes are not being met (because the complaint is taking longer to resolve than anticipated) the RTO should maintain regular contact with the complainant including to explain any delays. This helps ensure confidence in the complaints process and the ultimate outcome.
* **ensuring procedural fairness**
* RTOs are expected to have a system for ensuring:
* the complaint is handled by an unbiased person
* processes for assessing and resolving the complaint are clear and accessible to all parties
* both the complainant and the subject of the complaint are given an opportunity to be heard and to provide relevant information
* similar complaints are treated in a consistent manner to ensure fairness and reliability in the resolution process
* the privacy of complainants and the confidentiality of information included in a complaint.

## Standard 2.8

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| **Effective appeal processes are available to VET students where decisions of the NVR registered training organisation or a third party adversely affect the student.** |
| An NVR registered training organisationdemonstrates:   1. it operates an appeals management system that: 2. allows VET students to appeal decisions of the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation, where those decisions adversely affect the student; 3. ensures all parties to the appeal are afforded procedural fairness; 4. specifies reasonable timeframes for actioning appeals; and 5. provides avenues for review by an independent party if requested by the appellant (at no or low cost to the appellant); 6. information about how to appeal an adverse decision through the appeals management system is publicly available and easily accessible by VET students; 7. outcomes of appeals documented by the organisation and communicated to the appellant; and 8. the outcomes of appeals are used by the organisation to inform continuous improvement. |

#### Intent of Standard 2.8

Decisions made by RTOs can have significant impacts on students. This includes, for example, decisions relating to enrolment, RPL, credit transfer, assessment and other matters that affect a student’s progression through a training product.

RTOs are expected to have a system (supported by policies and procedures) for managing appeals to decisions at no or low cost to the student.

As for the complaints management system, it is expected that the appeals management system should:

* **be made known to those who may be adversely affected by a decision of the RTO**
* **provide transparency regarding how appeals will be managed and what appellants can expect**
* The appeals process should be well-documented, easily accessible and clearly communicated to all students. This includes outlining the steps to lodge an appeal, the grounds for appeal and the timeline for each stage of the process.
* **ensure appeals are considered within a reasonable timeframe**
* This helps prevent prolonged uncertainty and stress for the student. Timely resolution is crucial for maintaining trust and confidence in the RTO's assessment processes.
* **ensure procedural fairness**
* RTOs are expected to have a system for ensuring:
* the appeal is heard by an unbiased person that was not involved in the making of the original decision
* the appellant is given an opportunity to be heard and to provide relevant information
* protection of the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved. Sensitive handling of information ensures that students feel safe and supported when lodging an appeal.

If the person making the appeal is not satisfied with the outcome, the RTO should have arrangements in place for the person to seek review by an independent third party at no or low cost to the appellant. This should form part of the appeals management system and the details of this avenue should be clearly communicated to appellants.

# Quality Area 3: VET Workforce

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| **Outcome: VET students are trained, assessed and supported by people who are qualified, skilled and committed to professional development.** |

## Overview of Quality Area 3

**Quality Area 3 comprises 2 focus areas and 3 standards that shape the way an RTO’s workforce is configured to deliver quality training and assessment.**

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| **Focus areas** | **Standards** |
| **VET workforce management** | **3.1.** The workforce is effectively managed to ensure appropriate staffing to deliver services. |
| **Trainer and assessor competencies** | **3.2.** Training and assessment is delivered to VET students by credentialled people with current skills and knowledge in training and assessment. |
| **3.3.** Training and assessment is delivered by people with current industry skills and knowledge relevant to the training product. |

## Intent of Quality Area 3

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| Quality Area 3 focuses on the VET workforce, including how RTOs plan and manage the VET workforce and ensure trainers and assessors are appropriately skilled and credentialled to deliver training and assessment.  Quality training and assessment requires RTOs to have sufficient numbers of appropriately skilled, qualified and experienced staff to support its operations.  Effective workforce planning enables RTOs to strategically consider their workforce needs – both now and into the future. As part of this, RTOs should identify the roles to be filled, the knowledge, skills and experience required for each role and the number and mix of staff required to deliver its operations and meet its obligations (including these Standards). Recruitment and retention strategies will be critical to ensure RTOs have a sufficient number of skilled staff to deliver quality training and assessment, particularly in light of workforce shortages.  RTOs must also consider how they will monitor staff performance and support staff to continuously develop their skills and experience. This enables staff to continue to perform their roles effectively, builds a more robust and capable workforce and improves staff satisfaction (improving retention).  **RTOs are responsible for ensuring training and assessment are delivered by credentialled people, in line with the Credential Policy.** The Credential Policy outlines the credentials required for undertaking validation of assessment (in line with [Standard 1.5](#_Standard_1.5)) and for delivering training and assessment, including for training products from the TAE Training Package (in line with [Standard 3.2](#_Standard_3.2)). This seeks to ensure that only appropriately credentialled people, with current skills and knowledge in training and assessment, deliver training and assessment.  **RTOs are required to ensure that all trainers and assessors undertake continuing professional development to maintain the currency of their skills and knowledge.** This includes ongoing professional development in relation to industry skills and knowledge and also in relation to training and assessment practices, skills and strategies. This helps to equip trainers and assessors to effectively engage and support students who may have varying needs and backgrounds.  It is critical that trainers and assessors (and any experts engaged to support trainers and assessors) have current industry competencies, skills and knowledge relevant to the training product. This helps to ensure students receive training and assessment that is grounded in current industry practice and provides them with the skills and competencies needed for employment or further study. |

# VET Workforce Management

**Standard 3.1 relates to the focus area of VET workforce management.**

## Standard 3.1

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| **The workforce is effectively managed to ensure appropriate staffing to deliver services.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. how it ensures the number of trainers, assessors and other staff are appropriate for the delivery of the services it offers; and 2. it facilitates access to continuing professional development opportunities to enable staff of the organisation to effectively perform their role. |

#### Intent of Standard 3.1

Standard 3.1 requires an RTO to plan and manage its workforce so it has the right people, with the right skills, in the right positions, at the right time to deliver quality training and assessment.

The number and mix of staff needed to enable an RTO to operate effectively will differ based on the RTO’s service model, mode of delivery, location, size, the number and diversity of training products on its scope of registration, the size and characteristics of its student cohort and any third party arrangements.

Workforce planning typically involves:

* **identifying the number and mix of staff required to deliver quality services**
* RTOs need to consider the staffing profile needed to deliver services – for example enrolment officers, administration and IT staff, HR and finance, training support and wellbeing services staff, the management and executive team, industry experts as well as training and assessment staff. All staff play a part in how the organisation runs and the quality of services delivered to students.
* The right number and mix of staff will vary between organisations, but RTOs should be cognisant of whether there is enough staff to support students through their training, from enrolment to exit. Where RTOs operate with an insufficient number of staff, students often experience adverse impacts (such as challenges accessing trainers and assessors, delayed responses to queries, poor access to support, etc.), which can impact progress and result in disengagement.
* **engaging and developing skilled and qualified staff**
* RTOs need to identify the skills, competencies and qualifications required for various roles / teams and develop strategies for recruiting, retaining and facilitating the professional development of staff to suit these roles. RTOs should consider how they can attract and retain high quality staff, including through providing flexible working models, facilitating professional development and supporting career progression.
* **forecasting staffing needs and preparing for the unexpected**
* RTOs need to plan ahead by forecasting / projecting enrolments to ensure there will be a sufficient number of staff to meet demand. Where an RTO is planning to expand (for example, into a new location or by diversifying the scope of training products it delivers), it will need to plan ahead as to what this means for its staffing profile.
* It can be challenging to anticipate the factors that may impact an RTO’s workforce. Skills shortages across Australia will continue to impact on the VET workforce – driving increased demand for VET and impacting on the availability of skilled staff.

# Trainer and assessor competencies

**Standards 3.2 and 3.3 relates to the the focus area of trainer and assessor competencies.**

## Standard 3.2

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| **Training and assessment is delivered to VET students by credentialled people with current skills and knowledge in training and assessment.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. training and assessment is only delivered by persons who hold the appropriate credentials for the delivery of training and assessment as specified in the Credential Policy; 2. where the Credential Policy permits a person to deliver any training or assessment under direction – the organisation has systems in place that ensure the person does not make assessment judgements and is delivering quality training and assessment; and 3. how it ensures all trainers and assessors undertake continuing professional development to maintain current skills and knowledge in training and assessment, including skills and knowledge relating to engaging and supporting VET students. |

#### Intent of Standard 3.2

To uphold the integrity of VET, it is important that only appropriately credentialled people with current relevant skills and knowledge deliver training and assessment.

Relevant to Standard 3.2, the Credential Policy sets out:

* **Credentials for the delivery of training and assessment** (Section 1)
* the credentials a person must hold to deliver training and assessment or conduct assessment only (including making assessment judgements)
* requirements for people who can deliver training and contribute to assessment under the direction of a trainer or assessor (but are not permitted to make assessment judgements)
* requirements for people who can provide direction to others delivering training and assessment
* **Credentials for the delivery of training and assessment for training products from the TAE Training Package** (Section 2)
* the credentials a person must hold to deliver training and assessment for a qualification or skill set in the TAE Training Package
* requirements for people who can deliver training and contribute to assessment for certain credentials from the TAE Training Package under the direction of a trainer or assessor (but are not permitted to make assessment judgements)
* requirements for people who can provide direction to others delivering training and assessment for a training product from the TAE Training Package.

This recognises the specialised skills and knowledge required to deliver quality training and assessment and seeks to uphold the quality of training and protect the integrity of assessment practices.

The Standards require RTOs to meet the Credential Policy. As such, RTOs are responsible for complying with the Credential Policy and should establish mechanisms for ensuring people do not perform training and assessment tasks beyond the scope of their credentials.

The Standards also require trainer and assessor skills to remain up to date through continuing professional development in training and assessment. This ensures students have the benefit of contemporary learning practices and styles and that training is engaging for students.

## Standard 3.3

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| **Training and assessment is delivered by persons with current industry skills and knowledge relevant to the training product.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. all persons delivering training or assessment for, or on behalf of the organisation: 2. have industry competencies, skills and knowledge that are relevant to, and at least to the level of, the training product being delivered or assessed by the person; and 3. maintains an understanding of current industry practices relevant to the training or assessment being delivered by the person; 4. where it engages an expert for the purposes of delivering training, it does so: 5. by reference to the requirements of the training product or the specific VET student cohort; and 6. in response to a specific need for the expert to be engaged; 7. it has a system in place for ensuring: 8. experts have industry competencies, skills, knowledge and specialised industry or subject matter expertise that is directly relevant to the training product they are delivering; 9. experts are only authorised to work under the direction of a person with the appropriate credentials to provide direction on the delivery of training and assessment, as specified in the Credential Policy; 10. where the expert is involved in assessment judgement - they conduct the assessment alongside the trainer or assessor; and 11. the training or assessment the expert is involved in delivering is subject to oversight by the organisation. |

#### Intent of Standard 3.3

VET seeks to equip students with current and practical industry skills and knowledge so they can readily apply these in the workplace. As such, it is critical that trainers and assessors have real, current and comprehensive understanding of industry practice and understand how skills and competencies will be applied in practice. This may occur through continuing professional development, ongoing industry engagement, industry work placements, etc.

While [Standard 1.2](#_Standard_1.2) requires RTOs to ensure that the training itself reflects current industry practice, Standard 3.3 focuses on ensuring trainers and assessors maintain current industry skills and knowledge. Industry engagement should be a key input in determining whether trainers and assessors have current industry competencies and in identifying any gaps.

In most situations trainers and assessors will hold the training product (and/or units of competency) that they deliver or assess. Where this is not the case, they are expected to have equivalent knowledge and skills and depth of experience. The requirement under Standard 3.3 is that all trainers and assessors must have industry competencies, skills and knowledge that are relevant to, and at least to the level of, the training product being delivered and assessed. ‘At least to the level of’ refers to the level of skills and knowledge required for each training product, rather than equivalence of the AQF level.

The Standard does not specify that trainers and assessors must hold the training product they are delivering or assessing. While this is the most direct way of evidencing the relevant industry competencies, skills and knowledge, this could also be demonstrated through a combination of formal and informal learning and skills and knowledge gained through paid or volunteer work.  RTOs will be responsible for demonstrating how they ensure the appropriateness, relevance and currency of each trainer and assessor’s industry competencies, skills and knowledge (in line with these Standards and the requirements of the training package).

Engaging industry experts to support training and assessment and provide practical insight into real workplace settings can add value, variety and interest into the training program. Industry experts can play an important role in training and assessment; however, it is important to note that many industry representatives will not have a VET training and assessment background. As such, RTOs must have systems in place to oversee and assure the quality of training and assessment where industry experts are engaged. Experts are only authorised to work under the direction of a person who meets the requirements of the Credential Policy.

# Quality Area 4: Governance

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| **Outcome: Effective governance and a commitment to continuous improvement supports the quality and integrity of VET delivery.** |

## Overview of Quality Area 4

**Quality Area 4 comprises 3 focus areas and 4 Standards that detail the overarching expectations for the RTO’s governance.**

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| **Focus areas** | **Standards** |
| **Leadership and accountability** | **4.1.** An NVR registered training organisation operates with integrity and maintains accountability for the delivery of quality services. |
| **4.2.** Roles and responsibilities of NVR registered training organisation staff and third parties are clearly defined and understood. |
| **Risk management** | **4.3.** Any risks to VET students, staff and the organisation itself are identified and managed. |
| **Continuous improvement** | **4.4.** An NVR registered training organisation undertakes systematic monitoring and evaluation of the organisation to support quality delivery and the continuous improvement of services. |

## Intent of Quality Area 4

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| **Good governance is crucial for all RTOs as it establishes systems, policies and practices that ensure accountability, transparency and integrity. It provides a clear framework for decision-making, promoting efficiency and effectiveness in achieving quality VET outcomes.**  Good governance also fosters trust among stakeholders, including staff, students, regulators and the broader community. It demonstrates a commitment to ethical practices and compliance with laws and regulations. It also mitigates risks by identifying and addressing potential issues proactively, protecting student wellbeing and the RTO’s reputation and sustainability.  Quality Area 4 describes the essential elements of good governance. It involves the RTO:   * operating with integrity and being accountable for the delivery of quality services * having clear lines of accountability within the organisation, based on well-defined and understood roles and responsibilities * being able to identify and mitigate risks to students, staff and the RTO and putting appropriate risk management strategies in place * having systems and practices in place to monitor and evaluate the performance of the RTO and a commitment to continuous improvement.   **Acting with integrity also means having fit and proper persons who are committed to upholding the integrity of VET and leading a positive culture that promotes fairness, transparency and compliance with the Standards.** |

# Leadership and Accountability

**Standards 4.1 and 4.2 relate to the focus area of leadership and accountability.**

## Standard 4.1

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| **An NVR registered training organisation operates with integrity and maintains accountability for the delivery of quality services.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. the organisation and its governing persons are fit and proper persons, having regard to the Fit and Proper Person Requirements made under section 186 of the Act, as in force from time to time; 2. its governing persons are suitable persons to oversee the operation of the organisation; 3. its governing persons act diligently and make informed decisions which facilitate compliance with this instrument [these Standards] and any other instrument [the Compliance Requirements] made under section 185 of the Act, as in force from time to time; and 4. the governing persons lead a culture of integrity, fairness and transparency in the organisation’s delivery of services. |

#### Intent of Standard 4.1

Good governance requires governing persons to lead with integrity, act diligently and set the benchmark for the RTO – particularly with respect to a culture of integrity. Governing persons are expected to be committed to quality VET and continuously monitor their organisation’s performance against the Standards. They are expected to lead the organisation and make adjustments to systems and practices so they are continuously improving as an RTO.

In particular, the RTO is expected to have systems and processes for ensuring:

* **governing persons are suitable to oversee the RTO and are fit and proper**
* In 2023, the Government strengthened the *Fit and Proper Person Requirements*, including to eliminate the minority of non-genuine operators that profit from VET students and fail to provide the standards of education and training that VET students deserve.
* RTOs are expected to regularly reassess the suitability of governing persons, including to ensure that they meet the *Fit and Proper Person Requirements.*
* **governing persons are provided with the necessary information and evidence to help them make informed decisions about the RTO (and students)**
* This information should include key data regarding VET students, enrolment, progression and completion rates, feedback and complaints from students, staff and others, as well as the outcomes of any monitoring and evaluation activities.
* RTOs should have systems for enabling governing persons to review this information on a regular basis to identify the improvements the RTO may need to make to comply with the Standards and continuously improve.
* **the RTO adopts a positive culture – focused on integrity, fairness and transparency**
* There are many different ways that governing persons can drive the right culture within an organisation and hold staff and others accountable for delivering to the high standards they set. This includes documenting the RTO’s values and expectations regarding the conduct of all staff, VET students and others, reinforcing the RTO’s values and culture in staff training and listening to staff, students and others about their experience of the RTO’s culture.

The way governing persons achieve this and demonstrate their commitment to building a positive culture can vary. It is expected that governing persons will view their RTO’s operations through a lens of integrity, fairness and transparency and put processes in place that epitomise these concepts for students, staff and third parties. For example, ensuring:

* integrity in the way in which third parties are engaged, claims are made in marketing materials and fees charged
* fairness in enrolment processes, complaints and appeals and how students are treated
* integrity and transparency around decision-making, particularly in relation to assessment.

## Standard 4.2

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| **Roles and responsibilities of NVR registered training organisation staff and third parties are clearly defined and understood.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. it supports staff members to understand the components of this instrument [these Standards] and any other instrument [the Compliance Requirements] made under section 185 of the Act, as in force from time to time, which are relevant to each staff members’ role as an employee of the organisation; 2. it informs staff members of any changes to regulatory or legislative requirements that may affect the organisation’s delivery of services; 3. it has a system in place for ensuring any third parties meet the requirements of this instrument [these Standards] and any other instrument [the Compliance Requirements] made under section 185 of the Act, as in force from time to time, and are aware of their obligations under this instrument [these Standards] and any other instrument [the Compliance Requirements]; and 4. the roles and responsibilities of persons engaged by the organisation are well-understood and documented, ensuring accountable decision-making. |

#### Intent of Standard 4.2

Well-managed organisations have effective systems for defining roles and responsibilities, communicating these within the organisation and assigning accountabilities. For RTOs that engage third parties in the delivery of services, the system must equally describe the roles and responsibilities of the third parties, including their accountabilities.

RTOs are expected to:

* have well thought-out role descriptions and responsibilities for all staff and governing persons
* ensure staff (and third parties) are aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities, particularly in relation to compliance with the Standards
* When staff are not aware of the responsibilities of different people within the organisation, this can lead to confusion and delay in risks being identified and managed. RTOs should consider the ways in which staff are made aware of their accountabilities, including escalation pathways, particularly where there is a risk to students or a risk of non-compliance with the Standards.
* have systems for regularly monitoring whether staff are appropriately performing their roles, meeting their responsibilities and exercising their accountabilities.

While the RTO’s governing persons are ultimately responsible for compliance with the Standards, everyone within the organisation contributes to the outcomes the Standards set out. All staff, contractors, experts and third parties therefore need to be familiar with the Standards and how these are relevant to their role and made aware of any changes that will impact how they work. RTOs should have a system for identifying changes to regulatory requirements and communicating them to relevant staff and others.

# Risk management

**Standard 4.3 relates to the focus area of risk management.**

## Standard 4.3

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| **Any risks to VET students, staff and the organisation itself are identified and managed.** |
| An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:   1. it identifies, manages and reviews risks to VET students, staff and the organisation; 2. how the financial position, financial performance and cashflows of the organisation are managed, monitored and understood by governing persons; 3. it has a system for identifying, managing and disclosing any real or apparent conflicts of interest; and 4. where it offers training or assessment to VET students aged under 18 - risks to their safety and wellbeing associated with the organisation’s delivery of the training or assessment are identified and managed: 5. by having regard to the training content and modes of delivery; and 6. in accordance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, as in force from time to time. |

#### Intent of Standard 4.3

Risk management is vital for ensuring high-quality VET, promoting a stable and supportive environment for students and staff and safeguarding the RTO’s interests.

Effective risk management:

* helps RTOs ensure adherence to regulatory requirements and standards
* ensures the quality and integrity of VET outcomes
* helps protect student safety and wellbeing and creates a secure and supportive learning environment, enhancing student satisfaction and retention
* helps prevent disruptions to training and administrative functions, ensuring smooth and continuous operations, including in the face of unforeseen events
* protects the RTO’s reputation, fostering trust and confidence among students, staff and stakeholders
* supports financial sustainability and resource allocation, avoiding financial crises and ensuring long-term viability.

This standard requires RTOs to have a risk management system that is focused on identifying, managing and reviewing risks to students, staff and the RTO. Within the standard, some specific areas are called out. This includes management of:

* **financial risks to the organisation**
* By monitoring and managing cash flow and financial performance, this mitigates the risk that the RTO will not be able to sustain operations, which can disrupt the provision of training and assessment to students and potentially threaten the capacity of the organisation to refund any prepaid fees to students.
* Governing persons should be involved in reviewing the financial plan and be regularly informed about the financial position and forecasts of the RTO, including how the position impacts the delivery of training and assessment in accordance with the Standards.
* **conflicts of interest**
* RTOs should have a system for identifying, recording and managing actual and perceived conflicts of interest. Governing persons, staff and others should be supported to understand the importance of effective conflict management and how to apply the RTO’s system for conflict management.
* Effective management of conflicts of interest helps:
* preserve the integrity of the RTOs’ decisions and actions and promotes fairness and objectivity
* reduces the risk of fraudulent activities and corruption by ensuring transparency and accountability in the RTO’s operations
* helps protect the RTO from scandals and reputational damage, which can have long-term negative impacts on an RTO’s credibility and success
* fosters a culture of honesty, transparency and ethical behaviour, contributing to a positive and collaborative working environment
* **risks to the safety and well-being of VET students aged under 18**
* The principles of child-safe organisations in Australia are designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people within organisations. These principles are guided by the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National_Principles_for_Child_Safe_Organisations2019.pdf), which provide a framework for creating child-safe environments.
* RTOs that enrol young people are expected to apply the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations:
* Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
* Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
* Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
* Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
* People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
* Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
* Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
* Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
* Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
* Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

When designing a risk management system, RTOs should consider the context within which they operate and the risks that are most relevant to them and their students. This will be informed by strategic planning, environment scanning, relevant data and feedback from students, staff and others.

# Continuous Improvement

**Standard 4.4 relates to the focus area of continuous improvement.**

## Standard 4.4

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| **An NVR registered training organisation undertakes systematic monitoring and evaluation of the organisation to support quality delivery and the continuous improvement of services.** |
| An NVR registered training organisationdemonstrates:   1. it has a system in place for monitoring and evaluating its performance with the requirements set out in this instrument [these Standards] and any other instrument [the Compliance Requirements] made under section 185 of the Act, as in force from time to time; 2. how outcomes derived from monitoring and evaluating its performance are used to inform continuous improvement; and 3. it has mechanisms in place to lawfully collect and analyse data including any feedback received from VET students, staff, industry, VET regulators, state and territory training authorities and employers of current or former VET students. |

#### Intent of Standard 4.4

RTOs are expected to continually self-assure – that is, they are expected to be:

* continuously testing whether they are meeting the Standards
* identifying any adjustments that need to be made to their systems, processes or practices to ensure they not only remain compliant with the Standards but also continuously improve the quality of their services.

As part of their system of self-assurance, RTOs are expected to undertake systematic monitoring and evaluation. The nature of the monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the RTO will vary based on context, including the size of the RTO, the complexity and scope of operations and the student cohort.

Systematic monitoring and evaluation should include:

* consideration of the outcomes to be measured and the indicators used to track progress and measure outcomes
* the data collection methods and tools, including how data and feedback will be collected from relevant stakeholders, including staff, students, employers and industry
* the program of monitoring, including whether it will be continuous or periodic as relevant to the activities, outputs or outcomes being tracked
* how data and feedback will be reviewed and evaluate the effectiveness of systems, processes and practices to identify opportunities for improvement
* how relevant stakeholders will be involved in the design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation activities
* how the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation will be reported and communicated to different stakeholders (including governing bodies) and how they will be able to provide feedback
* how the findings of monitoring and evaluation will be used to inform decision-making, adjust systems and improve services (i.e. how it will inform continuous improvement).