



Department of  
Education and Training

# Apprenticeships and traineeships – good practice guide for Registered Training Organisations



1st Edition 2008

**TITLE:** Apprenticeships and traineeships – good practice guide for Registered Training Organisations

**SCIS NO.** 1390923

**ISBN** 978 0 7307 4290 6

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## Purpose

The purpose of this publication is to provide Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) delivering training for apprenticeships and traineeships in Western Australia with guidance to achieve good practice standards.

This document has been designed to accompany other Department publications on assessment but with a focus on apprenticeships and traineeships. Other products in the series include:

- Guidelines for assessing competence in VET – 2nd edition (2008)
- A guide to continuous improvement of assessment in VET – 2nd edition (2008)
- Troubleshooting guide: Assessment in VET – 2nd edition (2008)
- Recognition of Prior Learning: An assessment resource for VET practitioners – 2nd edition (2008)
- Designing assessment tools for quality outcomes in VET (2008)
- Reasonable adjustment: a practical guide to reasonable adjustment in assessment of candidates with disability in VET (2008)

Some information in this publication has been referenced to AQTF standards and conditions.

All publications are available in hard copy and can be downloaded from [vetinfontet.det.wa.edu.au](http://vetinfontet.det.wa.edu.au)

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## Introduction

Apprenticeships and traineeships are an important part of the Australian Vocational Education and Training system and form part of a national strategy to address skills shortages. The recent focus on the effectiveness of apprenticeships and traineeships has driven reform in the system. The reforms, combined with changes to regulatory frameworks, are the stimulus for this publication. This publication is a guide, not a policy document, and RTOs should always refer to legislation and national and state policy to ensure that they are meeting their obligations.

The guide provides information about the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) as well as current state and national policies and draws from the latest research in effectiveness in employment based training<sup>1</sup>.

The guide is organised to follow the actions that would be taken by an RTO; from its initial notification that it has been chosen as an apprenticeship or traineeship provider, through to providing a certificate once an apprentice or trainee has completed their training and assessment. The diagram below illustrates that pathway and the layout of the guide.

The guide is supported by three case studies that demonstrate the principles discussed in the guide. RTOs are encouraged to use the information in the guide to reflect on their own practice, and where possible and appropriate, use the principles discussed and ideas to improve their delivery, assessment and support services.




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<sup>1</sup> NCVER 2008, *Effective models of employment-based training*.

### **AQTF Condition 8**

The AQTF Essential Standards for Registration provides RTOs with specific advice about the accuracy and integrity of marketing. It states that:

*“The RTO must ensure that its marketing and advertising of AQF qualifications to prospective clients is ethical, accurate and consistent with its scope of registration. The Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo must be employed only in accordance with its conditions of use.”*

The AQTF 2007 Users Guide (page 43) explains what ethical and accurate marketing means by listing what the RTO needs to do when marketing their training and assessment services.

## Marketing

Marketing the services of a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) is an important business activity. It provides the RTO with an opportunity to showcase their training, assessment and support services to prospective clients. The marketing material is often the only information that a prospective client will have about an RTO when making the choice of a training provider.

The marketing materials can deliver benefits to an RTO such as:

- reminding current and prospective clients about the benefits of the training, assessment and support services
- establishing and maintaining the RTOs distinct identity
- enhancing the RTOs reputation
- encouraging existing clients to continue to use the RTO
- attracting new clients and replacing clients who have completed their apprenticeship or traineeship
- promoting the business to clients and others.

To realise these benefits the marketing needs to be targeted. It should present a consistent image and message, be current, accurate and easy to use.

When marketing an RTOs services it is possible to access generic apprenticeship and traineeship marketing materials. State-specific information is available from ApprentiCentre. These materials can be useful for explaining to potential clients the benefits of an apprenticeship or traineeship, but the RTO must keep in mind its role in the Australian Apprenticeship System. Having appropriate references and contacts is important. The following websites will be a starting point for accessing the most up to date information about apprenticeships and traineeships, and contacting the agencies involved in the system.

[apprenticentre.wa.gov.au](http://apprenticentre.wa.gov.au)

[australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://australianapprenticeships.gov.au)

### *Indicators of good practice*

- *The media and message is suitable for the target group.*
- *The information provided is clear and concise.*
- *The information provides an accurate picture of the training, assessment and support services the RTO is offering.*
- *The RTO monitors the effectiveness of the marketing and makes improvements when necessary.*

## Negotiating the Training Plan with the employer and apprentice or trainee

Once an RTO is notified by ApprentiCentre through the Training Records System (TRS) that it is the provider for an apprenticeship or traineeship, the RTO can contact its new client and organise a meeting between the RTO, the employer and the apprentice or trainee to negotiate the Training Plan.

The negotiation of the Training Plan is an important part of establishing an apprenticeship or traineeship because it provides all parties with a clear picture of what learning and assessment has to be achieved during the term of the Training Contract and how and when it will be achieved. It is the blueprint for the delivery of the apprenticeship or traineeship. To be able to effectively negotiate a Training Plan the RTO, employer and apprentice or trainee will need to discuss and decide on a number of important issues.

### 1. The packaging of the qualification

Training Package qualifications have been designed to allow customisation to meet the needs of a range of clients. This is achieved by choosing a combination of units of competence that meet the needs of the employer and apprentice or trainee and also meet the packaging rules for the qualification. The RTO, the employer and the apprentice or trainee will need to discuss and decide which units will be included in the qualification. Factors that may influence the choice of units include:

- the type of work undertaken by the employer
- the availability of machinery/equipment and staff to support the learning and assessment
- any conditions imposed by licensing authorities or regulatory requirements
- any competency already held by the apprentice or trainee
- any seasonal or shift requirements that may restrict the opportunity for learning and assessment.

This list is not definitive and the RTOs discussions with the employer and apprentice or trainee will uncover any other opportunities or restrictions that may need to be considered in deciding the qualification packaging. RTOs can also refer to pages 24 and 25 of the *AQTF 2007 Users Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration* for more information about engaging the employer. RTOs will also need to be aware of any delivery requirements specified in legislation or regulations.

### **AQTF Standard 2.3**

The AQTF requires that *“employers who will contribute to a learner’s training and assessment be engaged in the development, delivery and monitoring of the training and assessment.”* This is to ensure that all learners receive the support that they need from all parties who have a role in their training and assessment.

The Training Plan is a documented program of training and assessment required for an apprenticeship/ traineeship training contract. It is developed by an RTO in consultation with the parties to the contract as the basis for training and assessing a person undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship.

For further information on Training Plans see the ‘VET Practitioner’ section of ApprentiCentre’s website to access the Department of Education and Training’s requirements for Training Plans.

[apprenticentre.wa.gov.au](http://apprenticentre.wa.gov.au)

RTOs should also refer to the Industrial Training Act Regulations which specify requirements for delivering apprenticeships.

The RTO, as a learning and assessment specialist, will be able to guide these discussions and assist the employer and apprentice or trainee to understand the requirements of the Training Package. It is important to remember that the employer and apprentice or trainee will not necessarily be familiar with the terminology used in the VET sector so it is important to use plain English and avoid jargon.

**AQTF Standard 1.3**

The AQTF requires that *“an RTO has all the staff, equipment, facilities and training and assessment materials needed to meet the requirements of the training package and the RTO’s own training and assessment strategy.”*

In an apprenticeship or traineeship this includes what is needed in both the on and off the job training and assessment.

**AQTF Standard 1.4**

The AQTF requires that anyone who provides training and assessment is appropriately qualified. This relates to training and assessment qualifications as well as vocational competence. RTOs also need to refer to the Assessment Guidelines from the appropriate Training Package for guidance about the qualifications and experience required for trainers, assessors and workplace supervisors.

**2. The delivery and assessment schedule and methodologies**

Once a decision has been made about what units of competence will be included in the qualification, the delivery and assessment schedule and methodologies can be decided. Again, there are a number of factors that will influence these decisions. These include:

- any prerequisites that are stipulated by the Training Package
- the training contract nominal completion date
- the most logical order for the delivery and assessment of the units of competence (or clusters of units)
- the availability of opportunities for learning and assessment in the workplace
- integration of on and off the job training
- the qualifications and experience of staff who will be delivering or supporting learning and conducting assessment
- accessibility and availability of any resources needed including equipment, machinery and supervisory staff
- the requirement for simulation (if any)
- the arrangements for access to other workplaces (if required)
- the most appropriate methodology for delivery and assessment, both on and off the job, subject to legislation or regulations (this may include Recognition of Prior Learning or Recognition of Current Competency)
- any special arrangements for training and or assessment that need to be made for an apprentice or trainee with special needs
- the expected duration. That is, the start and completion dates for the units and/or clusters of units
- which party is responsible for the delivery and assessment of each unit of competence or cluster of units
- the responsibilities of all parties relating to monitoring the progress of the apprentice or trainee.

The decisions relating to these factors should be recorded in the Training Plan. The information in the Training Plan is very similar to what is typically found in a Learning and Assessment Strategy. In essence, the Training Plan provides a Learning and Assessment Strategy for an individual apprentice or trainee that is agreed to and used by the RTO, the employer and the apprentice or trainee. Each party to the negotiated Training Plan should have a signed copy of the plan so that they can refer to the plan throughout the duration of the Training Contract.

The employer and apprentice or trainee also need information about the support and administrative services that the RTO offers. This information is normally provided before a client enrolls and may influence the negotiation of the Training Plan. For example, if the apprentice or trainee needs numeracy support and the RTO does not have the capacity to provide the support, alternative arrangements would need to be made and included in the Training Plan. Administrative information such as fees, refunds, accessing RTO resources, complaints and appeals, should also be provided at this time.

### **3. Monitoring the Training Plan**

The Training Plan is not a static document. As a blueprint to the delivery of the qualification, the Training Plan should be updated when the progress and effectiveness of the Plan is reviewed. The RTO will have negotiated a timeframe for review with the employer and apprentice or trainee when developing the Plan. It is important to remember that the timeframe for review will be determined by the needs of the clients. That is, the employer and the apprentice or trainee. RTOs may choose to use the regular workplace visits as an opportunity to review the Training Plan.

#### *Indicators of good practice*

- *The employer and apprentice or trainee are actively engaged in developing the Training Plan.*
- *Meeting the needs of the apprentice or trainee is the focus of the negotiation process.*
- *The Training Plan is a living document that is used by all parties for the duration of the Training Contract.*
- *The RTO monitors the effectiveness of the Training Plan and makes improvements when necessary.*

## Enrolment and induction

### **AQTF Standard 2.2**

This standard requires the RTO to provide information to prospective clients so that they can make an informed decision about whether or not to enter into a contract with the RTO.

Enrolling an apprentice or trainee with an RTO can occur once the Training Plan has been negotiated. When enrolling the apprentice or trainee the RTO should provide any information needed by the apprentice or trainee to make an informed decision that the RTO is the best provider for them. The AQTF requires RTOs to provide this information before enrolment. Once an apprentice or trainee is enrolled with an RTO, an induction process is very useful. This provides the apprentice or trainee with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the RTO and the processes in the RTO that they will need to access over the term of the Training Contract. Induction processes are often supported by written information, usually a student handbook, that the apprentice or trainee can refer to at a later date. Another important function of an induction process is to prepare an apprentice or trainee for the learning experience that they are about to have.

### **Supporting the apprentice or trainee**

Engaging in work based learning is likely to be a new experience for apprentices and trainees and they will need to learn how to take advantage of a work based learning environment. An induction process should prepare an apprentice or trainee to:

- learn from experience
- learn from observation
- have fundamental work based skills
- be able to reason and problem solve
- be aware of legal and statutory responsibilities
- understand personal well being and safety
- understand the need for safe workplace practices
- have cultural awareness and sensitivity
- understand the industry and have basic workplace literacy
- understand what is required to successfully complete the apprenticeship/traineeship.

## Supporting the employer

The employer should not be forgotten in the induction process as they are also becoming a client of your RTO and a partner in delivering learning and assessment. As a minimum, the RTO should understand the attitude of the organisation to having apprentices or trainees and tailor their support accordingly.

Induction for employers could include:

- the roles and responsibilities of those involved in supporting or teaching an apprentice or trainee
- how to facilitate learning in a workplace
- providing opportunities for learners to be withdrawn from work for other learning experiences
- completing documentation
- duty of care responsibilities
- supporting an apprentice or trainee
- understanding of what is required to successfully complete the apprenticeship/traineeship.

### **AQTF Standards 2.3 and 3.2**

These standards cover learning and assessment that occurs in an employment situation and where a third party is involved in providing training and or assessment services for an RTO. RTOs should review pages 24, 25, 36 and 37 of the AQTF 2007 Users' Guide for advice about preparing for and monitoring the delivery of services.

### *Indicators of good practice*

- *The information provided by the RTO is clear and accurate.*
- *The information and media is suitable for the client group.*
- *Any induction process prepares the employer and apprentice or trainee to maximise the learning experience.*
- *The information is regularly reviewed and the RTO consults with the clients about the usefulness of the information.*
- *The inclusion of an ApprentiCentre Apprenticeship Officer in the induction process whenever possible.*

## Providing and supporting learning opportunities

### **AQTF Standard 2.4**

AQTF Standard 2.4 states that  
*“Learners receive training, assessment and support services that meet their individual needs”*

Implicit in this statement is that the RTO needs to find out what the needs of individuals are. This may happen through interviews or responses within enrolment forms or some type of diagnostic assessment. Irrespective of how the information is collected it should inform the negotiation of the Training Plan and guide the development of appropriate learning activities for the apprentice or trainee.

An apprenticeship or traineeship potentially provides a rich experiential learning opportunity with integration of on and off the job training. The learning can occur in the workplace or in a classroom situation or both, taking into account any prescribed regulatory delivery requirements. Irrespective of where or how the learning occurs, the RTO is responsible for ensuring that the apprentice or trainee is provided with the opportunity to develop the required knowledge, skills and competence. For apprentices or trainees to be able to take advantage of this learning opportunity a number of factors need to be considered and managed by RTOs. This includes preparing the apprentice or trainee and the employer for learning (discussed in the previous section), providing a learning experience that is pedagogically sound, supporting the employer and apprentice or trainee for the term of the Training Contract, focusing on delivering quality outcomes and reviewing and responding to feedback as part of a continuous improvement approach.

This section of the guide will focus on supporting the apprentice or trainee by providing a learning experience that is pedagogically sound.

NCVER has recently released a report *Effective models of employment-based training, 2008*, which suggests that three features are present in pedagogically sound employment based training models. Firstly they suggest that the vocational experiences should involve an integrated on and off the job training and employment arrangement involving a range of stakeholders and that access to vocational experiences be sequenced to develop competency. This requires the structuring of learning experiences and opportunities. While the Training Plan provides broad direction about learning opportunities, it is clear that further planning of the learning is required. As the RTO is the certifying body for the qualification and the learning and assessment specialist, it is incumbent upon the RTO to ensure that the combination of on job and off job experiences are sequenced to foster knowledge and skills development and appropriate practice for the apprentice or trainee.

Secondly, NCVER suggests that the vocational experiences should be long enough to provide the necessary range of experiences to ensure learning covers the full scope of the vocational activities to be practised. Reference to the appropriate range statement and evidence guide in the Training Package units of competence, combined with industry consultation, will define the scope of vocational activities.

Thirdly, the NCVER research suggests that learners be provided with opportunities to engage with experts who possess the knowledge to be learnt, who can guide the learner, monitor their progress and provide direct assistance. The experts may be drawn from the workplace or from the RTO but most often a combination of both is required. Irrespective of where the expert is from, the RTO needs to ensure that they are vocationally competent.

### **Supporting the employer, apprentice or trainee**

The RTO should be providing resources to support learning in the workplace which can be used by the employer, apprentice or trainee. This will often involve providing learning resources that address underpinning knowledge for the units of competence.

Careful consideration needs to be given when providing or choosing appropriate learning resources. Learning resources are important and the use of the right resources will contribute to achieving learning objectives. Learning resources are the many things that contain content and help learners to acquire knowledge and/or skills. They include textbooks, journals, CD-ROMs, videos, podcasts, excursions, work experience, learning guides, broadcast television and radio, lecture notes and PowerPoint slides. The possibilities are endless. It is vital that RTOs remember that because resources simply contain content, the trainer or facilitator (whether that be the RTO trainer or the workplace supervisor) needs to assist students to construct meaning from them by well designed, interactive learning activities.

### **AQTF Standard 1.4b**

The AQTF requires that *“Training and assessment is conducted by trainers and assessors who have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed.”* RTOs need to make sure that the person who is providing the learning experience, whether that be in a workplace or classroom situation, can demonstrate the competencies from the current version of the Training Package.

### **AQTF Standard 1.3**

This standard requires the RTO to ensure that it has the resources required, including training materials, to meet the needs of the training package and the agreed strategy. RTOs should review pages 12 and 13 of the AQTF 2007 Users’ Guide for more information about resources.

Given the range of learning resources available, the challenge is to select those that are most likely to enhance learning. RTOs should be very clear about what they are trying to achieve and then choose a resource that is fit for purpose. For example if you want to develop a skill, would reading about how to do the task be the most effective resource to support learning? Probably not. Watching a demonstration of the task may be more effective. It is also tempting to provide a range of resources and large amounts of written materials but, in selecting learning resources, the aim should be to provide only key resources. Too many resources will be overwhelming for workplace supervisors and learners.

RTOs should also consider that an effective resource for promoting the apprentice or trainee's learning in the employer's workplace may also develop the teaching skills of the workplace supervisors. In this way, the workplace supervisors are more likely to be able to provide the apprentices or trainees with effective learning resources and activities.

### **Training Journal**

The WA Department of Education and Training requires the RTO delivering apprenticeships or traineeships to maintain a Training Journal/Training Record Book for each apprentice or trainee.

[apprenticentre.wa.gov.au](http://apprenticentre.wa.gov.au)

### **ApprentiCentre**

ApprentiCentre provides advice about the requirements for a Training Plan and a Training Record Book/Training Journal. This can be found in the *VET Practitioners* section of ApprentiCentre's website.

[apprenticentre.wa.gov.au](http://apprenticentre.wa.gov.au)

### **The Training Journal/Training Record Book**

Having multiple people involved in providing learning experiences for an apprentice or trainee needs all parties to communicate frequently and effectively about the apprentice or trainee's progress. Regular meetings that involve all parties should discuss:

- the progress being made by the apprentice or trainee
- any further support required by the apprentice or trainee and employer
- identification of any risk of not achieving competency
- any adjustment of the negotiated training plan
- further opportunities for training and assessment
- sign off of any completed components of the Training Plan.

A Training Journal is to be used to facilitate and document this communication and tracking of progress. Documenting the apprentice or trainee's progress at regular intervals throughout the execution of the Training Plan will help all parties to have confidence in the learning and assessment process. The Training Journal also permits the documentation of any employer, apprentice or trainee's comments on specific tasks/competencies within the Training Plan between monitoring visits.

Training Journals should be presented in a simple format and provide the learner and employer/supervisor with easy to understand instructions for its completion. A completed Training Journal will provide valuable information for a prospective employer as to the specific skill sets of the learner.

### *Indicators of good practice*

- *The learning activities and resources are tailored to the needs and learning styles of the apprentice or trainee.*
- *The learning is structured and builds logically (simple to complex) to develop knowledge and skills.*
- *The apprentice, trainee and employer are supported throughout the learning process.*
- *Learning is valued and recognised by the apprentice or trainee and employer.*
- *All parties communicate effectively and regularly about the apprentice or trainee's progress using a Training Journal.*
- *The learning is reviewed and improved based upon feedback from a range of stakeholders including the apprentice, trainee, employer, RTO and industry.*

### **AQTF Standard 2.3**

AQTF Standard 2.3 states that:

*“Employers and other parties who contribute to the learner’s training and assessment are engaged in the development, delivery and monitoring of training and assessment.”* Within the context of apprenticeship or traineeship delivery, this involves developing a comprehensive training plan in consultation with the employer and then monitoring the learner’s progress and achievements throughout the Training Contract.

**AQTF Standard 1.5**

The AQTF requires that RTOs ensure their assessment practices meet a number of requirements that are documented in standard 1.5 a, 1.5 b, and 1.5 c. RTOs should refer to pages 16 and 17 of the AQTF Users’ Guide for advice.

RTOs can also access a set of six publications produced by the WA Department of Education and Training via the VETINFONET website which are aimed at assisting RTOs to provide high quality assessment services.

[vetinfonet.det.wa.edu.au](http://vetinfonet.det.wa.edu.au)

## Providing and supporting assessment

Assessment is a fundamental activity within a competency based system. In the apprenticeship and traineeship system, RTOs assess to determine if the apprentice or trainee can be deemed competent in the units of competence that make up an AQF qualification. Assessment in an employment based (apprenticeship or traineeship) pathway is as rigorous as that undertaken in an institutional pathway. The primary difference is where the evidence is collected and who collects the evidence.

Evidence collected from a workplace can have a richness that is difficult to replicate in an institutional pathway. Many RTOs however, are hesitant to use workplace evidence as their personnel are not the evidence collectors and therefore they have concerns about validity, reliability and authenticity of the evidence. Another common concern is that assessment tools, such as checklists commonly used in institutional pathways, place an unwanted paperwork burden on workplaces and are therefore not used as intended. These concerns can be addressed by ensuring that the employers are:

- actively involved in the development and monitoring of the Training Plan, provided with support, including training if necessary, to fulfil their role in the apprenticeship and traineeship
- given assessment tasks that reflect actual work tasks and are written in the language of the workplace
- provided with a mechanism to ensure that appropriate training, assessment and communication records are kept.

These concepts have all been discussed in the previous sections of this document. In addition, a vast number of resources are available to RTOs to assist in developing and conducting assessment. The most recent of these are included in the sidebar. RTOs should access and utilise the ideas in the resource documents as required.

Quality assessment occurs when:

- the RTO provides information and assistance to apprentices, trainees and employers at each step of the process
- assessment methods and processes follow the negotiated Training Plan
- the assessment tasks provide for contextualisation to reflect the individual's workplace
- the assessment tasks provide for holistic assessment by grouping elements from various competencies to form meaningful work tasks
- assessment tasks integrate the four dimensions of competency and RTOs ensure the rules of evidence are met
- assessors consider levels of literacy and numeracy so that the assessment tasks do not exceed the expectations of the workplace
- assessment is undertaken only when the apprentice or trainee is ready to be assessed
- RTOs increase the validity and reliability of assessment decisions by having employers verify evidence being gathered prior to judgements being made by the assessor
- the assessment process allows for feedback to be provided by the employer regarding the workplace performance of the apprentice or trainee
- assessment processes, tasks and judgements are validated
- assessment judgements are made by appropriately skilled and experienced assessors who consistently update their vocational and assessment skills
- the workplace values and actively supports and encourages skill development.

### *Indicators of good practice*

- *The assessment activities and resources are tailored to the needs of the apprentice or trainee.*
- *The apprentice, trainee and employer are supported throughout the assessment process.*
- *All parties communicate effectively and regularly about the apprentice or trainee's progress using a Training Journal.*
- *The assessment is reviewed and improved based upon feedback from a range of stakeholders including the apprentice, trainee, employer, RTO and industry.*

## Certification

### **AQF Implementation Handbook 4<sup>th</sup> Edition 2007**

The AQF Implementation Handbook details the requirements for the content and format of AQF Qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

### **AQTF Condition 6**

Condition 6 of the AQTF describes the minimum requirements for certification. See page 42 of the AQTF Users Guide for more information.

RTOs will issue AQF qualifications to apprentices and trainees once all requirements to meet the qualification have been completed. This means that the apprentice or trainee has been deemed competent in all of the units of competence listed in the Training Plan, both by the RTO and the employer. An important aspect of completion is the validation by the employer that all competencies have been successfully demonstrated in the workplace.

ApprentiCentre requires RTOs to notify them of completion of on and off the job training via TRS. RTOs should refer to the *AQF Implementation Handbook* to ensure that they use the correct format and terminology on the Qualifications or Statements of Attainment that they issue. All traineeship/apprenticeship qualifications should include the wording “achieved through apprenticeship or traineeship arrangements”.

### *Indicators of good practice*

- *The RTO monitors the apprentice or trainee’s progress against the Training Plan and issues a qualification or Statement of Attainment when required.*
- *The qualification or Statement of Attainment meets the requirements of Condition 6.*
- *The issue of the qualification is timely.*
- *The RTOs records for the apprentice accurately show the award of a qualification and/or a Statement of Attainment.*

## Improving your learning, assessment and support services

Continuous improvement is a common term in the VET sector as well as other industry sectors but it is sometimes difficult for RTOs to understand and realise the benefit of such an approach. The AQTF suggests that “The value for RTOs of adopting a continuous improvement cycle is its potential to create a stronger, more sustainable business that meets the needs of clients and stakeholders. Such a cycle also enables RTOs to adapt quickly to changing external environments such as economic factors and skills needs.” (Source: AQTF 2007 – Users’ Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration, p.4.)

To realise these benefits, RTOs need to have systems in place that drives them to seek feedback from their stakeholders about the services they provide. RTOs should be systematic about collecting, analysing and then (if needed) acting on the feedback they receive.

When considering how to improve the assessment provided for apprenticeships and traineeships, RTOs commonly utilise a process known as validation. Validation requires RTOs to review, compare and evaluate all aspects of the assessment system as well as the judgements that their assessors make. This process is equally valid for assessments conducted in an apprenticeship or traineeship and importantly, should be used to ensure consistency between judgements made through institutional pathways and employment based pathways.

Reviews of learning or training delivery are most commonly achieved by doing client surveys. RTOs should remember that this is but one of many methods that can be used to gather information about the learning process. RTOs need to ensure that they collect information about the learning process from all stakeholders, including the employer of the apprentice or trainee and that once analysed, the data can be used to make business decisions.

### *Indicators of good practice*

- *The RTOs systems promote the continual and systematic review of its products, services and the way it operates.*
- *All stakeholders in the apprenticeship or traineeship pathway have the opportunity to provide feedback.*
- *The focus of improvement actions is meeting the needs of the clients.*
- *Continuous improvement activities have lead to measurable improvements to the business.*

### **AQTF standards 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1**

These three elements of the AQTF all require RTOs to improve the products, services and way the RTO operates based upon continuous improvement processes.

### **A guide to the continuous improvement of assessment, version 2.**

The WA Department of Education and Training released the above publication to assist RTOs to improve their assessment practice. RTOs can review the information provided in the guide and where appropriate adopt the suggested practices in their organisations. The guide can be found at [vetinfonet.det.wa.edu.au](http://vetinfonet.det.wa.edu.au)

**Learning and assessment strategies – Part two: Resource Guide (2002)**

Pages 62 to 71 of this publication provide RTOs with a range of strategies that can be useful in gathering information for continuous improvement. While the guide examines the processes in the context of assessment, the processes are equally valid in considering learning processes and client support services.

**The Training Accreditation Council (TAC)**

To assist RTOs in Western Australia TAC has provided policy advice about records management that an RTO should maintain for accreditation purposes. RTOs should access this policy from the TAC policy and guidelines section in the toolbox on the TAC website.

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

**AQTF Standard 3.3**

This standard requires RTOs to effectively manage their records and record keeping systems. The AQTF 2007 Users' Guide, pages 38 and 39 provide RTOs with advice and guidance in regard to record keeping.

## RTO records

In any RTO, records are kept for a variety of purposes. Some records are required by legislation or regulatory requirements and others are required by the RTO as a part of their operating procedures. When delivering apprenticeships and traineeships RTOs should note that the following records are required by the WA Department of Education and Training for each apprentice or trainee:

- Training Plan
- Training Journal / Training Record Book
- Qualification or Statement of Attainment.

There is also a range of other legislation that exists in industry that specifies records that are to be maintained for training and assessment. Each RTO needs to be aware of the legislation that is relevant to their industry and any specified record keeping requirements that result. For example, qualifications that include units of competence that have been designated as '*high risk work activities*' have additional record keeping requirements for RTOs providing training and assessment services in these areas.

RTOs will keep a variety of other records relating to training and assessment. These records may include for example: enrolment forms; fee payment records; workplace visit notes; records of conversation between the RTO and apprentice or trainee and employer; assessment plans; assessment tools; and completed training and assessment materials. The records may be used for continuous improvement, knowledge management, making assessment judgements, assessment moderation, internal audit and review. Each RTO will need to determine what records to keep so that its processes are effective. Irrespective of the way the record is used, the RTO needs to ensure that its record keeping system ensures the accuracy and integrity of the records.

All parties to an apprenticeship or traineeship need to understand clearly what records they are required to keep and why they are keeping them. The RTO should ensure that this is established when negotiating the Training Plan and inducting the apprentice or trainee and employer. The accuracy, integrity and effectiveness of the record keeping arrangements should be monitored throughout the apprenticeship or traineeship and any improvements that are required to the arrangements should be made in a timely manner.

**ApprentiCentre**

ApprentiCentre also provides advice about the requirements for a Training Plan and a Training Journal/Training Record Book. This can be found in the *VET Practitioners* section of ApprentiCentre’s website.

[apprenticentre.wa.gov.au](http://apprenticentre.wa.gov.au)

*Indicators of good practice*

- *The RTO records are managed systematically.*
- *The RTO keeps all required records and clearly understands the purpose for any additional records they choose to keep.*
- *Records are able to be accessed in a timely manner.*
- *The record management system is consistently monitored to ensure it is effective and improvements are made when required.*

## Compliance

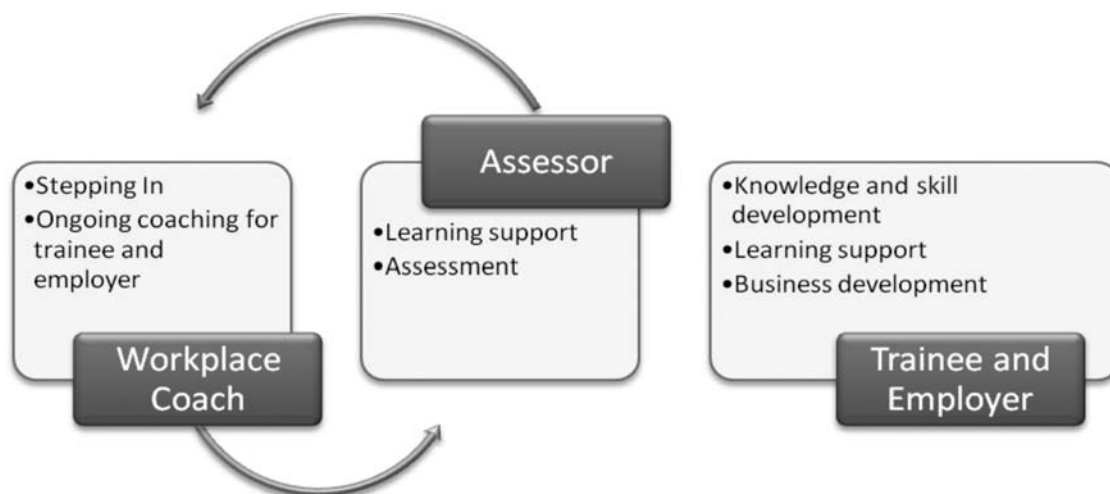
### **AQTF Conditions 1 and 3**

These conditions require RTOs to ensure that they are complying with the AQTF Essential Standards for Registration and any relevant Commonwealth or State or Territory legislation. RTOs should refer to pages 42 and 43 of the AQTF 2007 Users' Guide for more information.

Compliance with the AQTF Essential Standards and other contractual or legislative requirements is often foremost in the mind of the RTO. While it is important that RTOs meet their obligations, it is crucial that the quality of the training, assessment and support services is not compromised by being overly focused on compliance. When an RTO focuses on providing quality learning, assessment and support services for its clients, it is likely to be compliant with the AQTF Essential Standards for Registration, as these standards are focused on providing quality outcomes for clients. RTOs need to ensure that they are focused on quality outcomes and improving the services that they provide.

## Case study: Workplace Services

Workplace Services is offering a traineeship model aimed at fostering innovation, productivity and skill development in the Furniture Industry. The RTO and Group Training Organisation (GTO) work together to grow the skilled tradesperson of tomorrow. The concept of looking at holistic development is central to the model. The trainee is provided with support to assimilate into the workplace and this complements the knowledge and skill development in the trade.



**Figure 1. Workplace Services traineeship model**

The model involves the support of a workplace coach and the assessor. Once the potential trainee is selected for the job he/she then attends an induction with the company. The induction involves both the GTO and the RTO providing information about the requirements of employment and the requirements for completing a traineeship. The interview and induction are the first opportunity for the RTO and GTO to gather information about the needs of the individual trainee. The workplace coach is the first contact that the trainee has in the workplace. The workplace coach makes two ‘stepping in’ visits in the first month which are focused on assimilation into the workplace.

The visits can address the fundamentals of getting to work, nutrition, communicating with workmates, or focus on helping the trainee identify any weakness he/she has and develop strategies to address the weakness. It is important to note that the coaching provided is aimed at developing an effective independent worker and as such, the coaching is dependent upon the trainee engaging actively in the process.

The information collected by the workplace coach is recorded in monitoring sheets that are kept on the trainee’s file. The monitoring sheets provide a full history of the development of the trainee as a worker. The information from the monitoring sheets is also discussed with the assessor so that the assessor is properly prepared for workplace visits. It may be used, for example, to decide on learning and assessment methodologies, to organise additional support, or to schedule visits at appropriate times. Workplace coaching occurs each month after stepping in. The assessor also visits the trainee each month at a minimum.

The first visit from the assessor is aimed at explaining the assessment journal. This document has a list of the competencies that will be undertaken, and the assessment methodologies that can be utilised. This will be discussed and agreed to by the trainee and the employer. The journal also contains task information and assessor's notes. The task information describes workplace tasks that are to be used as assessments. The information is explained using the terminology of industry and highlights key knowledge and skill to be demonstrated. The '*assessor's notes*' section gives the assessor, trainee and employer a record of what has been undertaken, what was done well, what needs improvement and timeframes for developing the skills. The journal functions as a communication tool between all parties as well as a record of progress. The assessment journal is the Training Record Book for Workplace Services.

The assessor also has the capacity to withdraw the trainee from the workplace if extra help is needed by the trainee. This may involve the trainee attending the RTO and getting assistance with the underpinning knowledge required in the trade, or attending the assessor's industrial workshop and getting one on one assistance in developing skills needed for the trade, at his/her own pace.

The focus is on the individual needs of trainees. This means that any difficulties are identified early in the traineeship and addressed either through the workplace or the resources of the RTO and GTO.

The trainee files held by the RTO provide a complete record of the traineeship. They include the Training Plan, the induction records, monitoring sheets, the assessment journal, any completed bookwork by the trainee and a verification that the trainee has met all workplace requirements by the employer. The files are reviewed and verified by a third party from the RTO prior to the issue of a qualification. This contributes to the RTOs moderation and promotes the discussion of assessment processes and decisions. If the third party is satisfied that all the requirements have been met, then a recommendation is made to issue the trainee with the qualification.

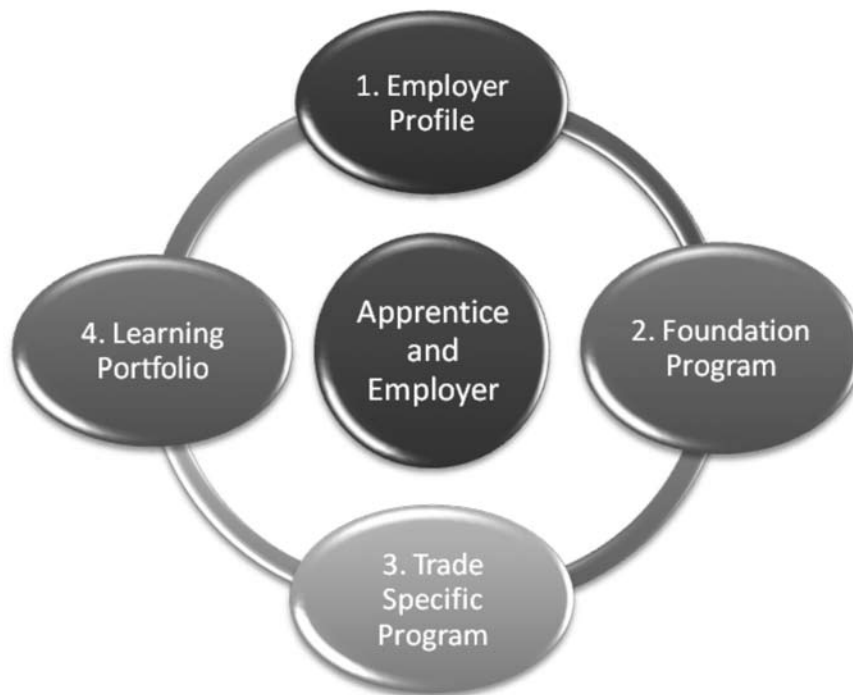
## **Benefits of the model**

The model has significant benefits for both trainees and employers. These include:

- the model supports the career aspirations of the trainee
- the model is focused on the individual trainee and provides significant support for the term of the traineeship
- the model focuses on fostering learning in a holistic manner
- the model teaches trainees to invest in themselves
- the model makes the learning real and connects the trainee, the job and the traineeship
- the employer's experience increased productivity
- the model allows for fast tracking and supports the needs of individual workplaces
- the employer has access to the workplace coach to assist in developing his/her own skills in managing and developing staff
- the employer can tailor the training to meet the needs and demands of the workplace because of its flexibility
- the employer develops workers who are dedicated to the industry and often progress into trade training.

## Case study: TAFEWA – Transforming Trade Training

A client centred approach to apprentice training is currently being trialled at Swan TAFE as part of the Transforming Trade Training Project. The approach aims to ensure early engagement of the RTO with the employer and apprentice, to eliminate duplication between learning in the workplace and at TAFE, to use the workplace language, to base assessment on a series of workplace tasks, and to utilise technologies that suit the client whenever possible. In essence, the model ensures that the apprentice and his/her employer are given the choice of how the apprenticeship will be delivered. The model has four key steps shown in the diagram below.



**Figure 2. TAFEWA Transforming Trade Training apprenticeship delivery model**

The employer profile is developed to determine the capacity of the workplace to provide learning opportunities. This information is used by the employer and Swan TAFE when developing an individual learning plan for each apprentice as part of step 4. Once the employer profile has been completed the apprentice will attend a foundation program. The 3 day foundation program is generic, addressing issues such as literacy and numeracy, use of technology, enrolling at TAFE, TAFE processes such as call ups, complaints, resulting and support that can be provided. The foundation program is common to all apprenticeships. Step 3 in the process is for apprentices to attend a 10 day trade specific program. The program is aimed at providing the apprentice with the fundamental knowledge and skills for the trade so that they can be gainfully employed when returning to the workplace. The time spent with the apprentices in the foundation and trade specific programs also provides Swan TAFE with information that is then used to develop the individual learning plan.

The individual learning plan forms the basis for the learning portfolio as it outlines exactly what the apprentice will be learning, where and when, for the remainder of the apprenticeship. The plan includes the details of the work tasks that need to be accomplished and timelines for the learning to occur. Work tasks are activities that apprentices will be performing in the workplace that are directly related to the qualification. These can be undertaken in any order to meet the needs of the workplace. Swan TAFE provides the employer with resources to assist in knowledge and skill development for the work tasks. These are available on CD. The CD also has sample assessments so that the employer and the apprentice can determine when they are ready for assessment to occur. An important part of the workplace learning process is the development of the learning portfolio. The students use blogging technology to document the learning journey, reflect on what they have learnt and provide evidence that can contribute to assessment. This may include photos, video, and comments about the work tasks.

While the apprentice and employer see the qualification in terms of the work tasks, behind the scenes Swan TAFE has been through a process of mapping the work tasks to the units of competence in the qualification. In this way the RTO can ensure that all of the Training Package requirements are being met.

Another important aspect of the model is the professional development provided to lecturers and employers. This allows the employers to have a better understanding of the obligations of the RTO and the lecturers to keep up to date with the latest technologies, processes and equipment used in workplaces. The increased engagement between the RTO and the employer also fosters a closer working relationship for the term of the apprenticeship which is ultimately beneficial for the apprentice.

### **Benefits of the model**

The model has significant benefits for both apprentices and employers. These include:

- the employer and the apprentice being the drivers of the apprenticeship
- the potential for fast tracking of the apprenticeship
- the elimination of duplication between the workplace and the RTO
- the focus on meeting individual needs and supporting individual learning style
- the use of technologies familiar to young people
- learning by live work without compromising the integrity of the qualification
- work tasks linking more directly to the workplace, are in workplace language
- workplace learning being recognised.

## Case study: Australian College of Training

Australian College of Training (ACT) provides a range of traineeships in the Agri-food Industry. The RTOs approach is based upon the philosophy that *'if you focus on the learning you will grow the business'*. ACT develops very strong relationships with the employers who have trainees and ensures that the trainee and the employer receive the support that is required by the individual. This may include, for example, ACT staff working within the employer's organisation. This supports the employer, provides the ACT staff member with a greater understanding of the business and how the business may be assisted, the challenges facing industry, current industry practice and also fostering strong mutually beneficial relationships. At a minimum, ACT staff visit their trainees fortnightly but it is often weekly and, when needed, daily. ACT will visit the workplace whenever it is most appropriate, including to accommodate shift workers. The visits are focused on providing one-on-one quality training to the trainee and reviewing what has been achieved in the workplace since the previous visit. The workplace progress is tracked using an electronic training log. This means that the RTO is able to provide progress information about individual trainees rapidly, on demand. The RTO is currently working at implementing an online system that will allow restricted access to trainees and employers so that they are able to instantly track the progress made by the trainee. The electronic log system functions as the training record book.

The assessment of the trainee involves a range of evidence that always includes discussion and demonstration of their knowledge and skill in the workplace, as well as a team leader report from the employer. The RTO utilises a completion notification, as is used in apprenticeships as a final due diligence check for certification. In this way the employer is reviewing the trainee's performance in regard to the qualification and endorsing that they are performing at the standard required by industry. This is combined with a review of the training log to ensure that a qualification can be issued. If a trainee leaves before the completion of a qualification, the electronic training log ensures that the RTO is able to issue a Statement of Attainment for the units that the trainee has achieved. Again, competence is confirmed with the workplace prior to the issue of the Statement of Attainment.

The focus on learning means that ACT has been involved in significant resource development for use in traineeships and aligned with a number of training packages. Every unit on the RTOs scope has learning materials available and is often customised for use in the workplace. This means that employers are able to pick and choose from a wide range of units and whatever units are most suited to their workplace. The materials provide underpinning knowledge in a manner that is in a simple, easy to read format, using workplace terminology, and they are able to be customised for individual workplaces. For example, when discussing machinery that is used for a production process, ACT may use photographs of the machinery that the trainee finds in their workplace. When discussing processes, ACT will include the process from the trainee's workplace.

The resource materials have also been developed by ACT and endorsed or moderated by industry peak bodies. This includes Industry setting the performance benchmarks, vetting the documents and being involved in independent evaluation activities where ACT provides access to its students and clients for Industry to evaluate the College's performance.

The services offered to trainees are not confined to the content of the traineeship. The RTO also offers higher level qualifications and as trainees progress through the traineeships they are encouraged to access workshops and sessions from the higher level programs without incurring additional costs. This is seen as a motivational tool. The trainees gain additional knowledge and skills that are useful in the workplace as well as a taster of what is offered in higher level programs. The RTO has found that trainees who attend these workshops are more likely to then enrol in higher level or further training. The RTO actively promotes learning pathways to the industry and encourages continual professional development, espousing the view of work as a career rather than just a job.

Professional development undertaken by ACT staff is aimed at understanding the challenges and advances in the industries that they work in. This includes looking at best practice in the industry, wherever that may be, and identifying opportunities for continuous improvement. Adopting this approach has meant that the RTO has developed professional relationships with a number of industry groups both nationally and internationally and is now progressing to develop partnerships with international organisations for the provision of quality training. The RTO also actively shares the information and skills developed in professional development with its client organisations.

### **Benefits of the model**

The approach has significant benefits for trainees, employers and the Agri-Food Sector as a whole. These include:

- significant decrease in staff turnover in employer organisations
- real business growth
- increased workplace mentoring for trainees and employers
- the introduction of new skills to the workplace
- the development of technical knowledge in the workplace
- the use of modern technologies familiar to young people and in keeping with changes in the industry
- learning in a supportive workplace environment
- structured learning experience and increased levels of success
- recognising learning as a valuable tool in achieving business goals and career success
- development and maintenance of a skilled workforce for the Agri-Food Industry
- enabling real opportunities for employees' career enhancement and promotion.

## Glossary

### **ApprentiCentre**

ApprentiCentre is part of the WA Department of Education and Training with responsibility for regulating the apprenticeships and traineeships system in Western Australia. ApprentiCentre provides information and support to employers, apprentices and trainees. ApprentiCentre can be contacted on 13 19 54.

[apprenticentre.wa.gov.au](http://apprenticentre.wa.gov.au)

### **Apprenticeship**

A structured employment based training program that leads to apprentices becoming qualified tradespersons and gaining a nationally recognised qualification. Apprenticeships are established by the Minister, through a Parliamentary process and may be full-time, part-time or school-based. Refer to the list of apprenticeships available at [apprenticentre.wa.gov.au](http://apprenticentre.wa.gov.au)

### **AQF**

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is a unified system of national qualifications in schools, vocational education and training and the higher education sector

[www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au)

### **AQTF**

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is the national set of standards which assures nationally consistent, high quality training and assessment services for the clients of Australia's vocational education and training system.

[training.com.au](http://training.com.au)

### **AAC**

Australian Apprenticeships Centres (AAC) are contracted by the Australian Government. Staff help complete and lodge the training contract. They also provide general information about apprenticeships and traineeships and process claims for employer incentive and apprentice or trainee allowances.

### **NCVER**

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is Australia's principal provider of vocational education and training (VET) research and statistics.

[ncver.edu.au](http://ncver.edu.au)

### **NTIS**

The National Training Information Service (NTIS) is the official national register of information on Training Packages, Qualifications, Courses, Units of Competency and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and has been developed for experienced training sector users.

[ntis.gov.au](http://ntis.gov.au)

### **Off the Job Training**

Training that takes place away from a person's job, usually off the premises and at the RTO premises but may be on the premises of the enterprise such as in a special training area.

### **On the Job Training**

Training acquired or learned while working at a job.

### **RTO**

A Registered Training Organisation (RTO) is a vocational education organisation that provides students with training that results in qualifications and statements of attainment that are recognised and accepted by industry and other educational institutions throughout Australia.

Registered Training Organisations can be State and Territory government or privately owned training organisations. All Registered Training Organisations in Australia and the qualifications they are registered to deliver are listed on the National Training Information Service (NTIS).

### **TAC**

The Training Accreditation Council (TAC) is the Western Australian Registering and Accrediting Body  
[www.tac.wa.gov.au](http://www.tac.wa.gov.au)

### **Traineeship**

A structured employment based training program that leads to trainees gaining a nationally recognised qualification. Traineeships may be full-time or part-time. Traineeships at Certificate II level are generally available under school-based arrangements. Refer to the list of traineeships available at:  
[apprenticentre.wa.gov.au](http://apprenticentre.wa.gov.au)

### **TRS**

The Training Records System (TRS) is ApprentiCentre's database for recording all information regarding apprentices and trainees in Western Australia.

### **Training Contract**

A legally binding agreement between an employer and an apprentice or trainee and their legal guardian, where required, to undertake apprenticeship or traineeship training.

### **Training Plan**

A documented program of training and assessment required for an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract. It is developed by an RTO in accordance with AQTF requirements and in consultation with the parties to the contract as the basis for training and assessment.

### **Training Journal / Training Record Book**

The Training Journal is a document provided by the RTO to the apprentice or trainee with the purpose of monitoring the progress of the apprentice or trainee against the Training Plan.

## References

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