Australian Quality Training Framework
STANDARDS FOR REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS
(2007)

Incorporating a ‘Guide to RTOs’

Draft for Consultation
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1. Introduction

Australia’s vocational education and training (VET) system comprises nationally endorsed qualifications delivered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that demonstrate compliance with national standards for registration.

The national VET system provides benefits to its clients through:
- national qualifications designed by industry to meet the skill needs of their workforce
- national recognition of qualifications and training
- training delivered by organisations meeting national standards
- opportunities for articulation into further training and/or higher education.

Registration is a nationally recognised ‘stamp of approval’. Only RTOs:
- can issue qualifications and statements of attainment recognised nationally
- can use the Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo
- are listed on the national register, the National Training Information Service (NTIS)
- can be approved to provide courses to overseas students studying in Australia and listed on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)
- are eligible to tender for public funding for vocational education and training.

Registration brings with it responsibilities. RTOs must focus on industry requirements, ensure learners’ needs are met, and continue to improve the quality of their systems. The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) provides the framework to meet these responsibilities.

Background

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed in February 2006 that:
- the AQTF standards be reviewed and amended to place a stronger focus on quality skills outcomes
- an outcomes-based auditing model for RTOs be developed to support the new standards
- as part of the actions above, national consistency of the application of the revised AQTF standards by states and territories must be ensured.

The revised standards for registration are one of a number of changes being made in the VET system to meet these COAG requirements.

The revised standards place a greater emphasis on quality skills outcomes from RTOs. However, the standards also identify requirements essential for the effective operation of a national VET system and the protection of consumers.

The revised standards for RTOs will require evidence of quality skills outcomes and the continuous improvement of RTO operations.

The AQTF Standards for RTOs

The AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) specify the requirements for RTOs to be registered and to maintain registration, and comprise:
- three AQTF standards, which focus on the quality skills outcomes expected from RTOs
• essential elements under each standard (15 in all) critical to quality skills outcomes. Each RTO must demonstrate its operations meet the requirements of each element and it is continuously improving its operations and outcomes
• a set of contractual obligations set out in a declaration to be signed by the principal officer of the RTO binding it to operating in accordance with the standards and the requirements in the declaration. This is referred to as an RTO Declaration. (For more information, refer to section 4 RTO Declaration).

RTOs will need to demonstrate compliance with all of these components to be approved as a Registered Training Organisation and to maintain this approval throughout their registration period.

Outcomes based standards

The three standards for RTOs are expressed as outcome standards for training and assessment, client services and management systems. Work is currently underway to specify quantitative and qualitative performance measures for each of the three standards. These performance measures allow monitoring of the services provided by the RTOs and whether they are achieving the quality skills outcomes sought by industry, the community and government.

The outcomes focus of the standards and the essential elements place greater emphasis on the results the RTO has achieved against each standard. Where good quality outcomes are consistently achieved, auditors will be less concerned with the details of the processes used to achieve those results. Where RTOs are not achieving the required outcomes, auditors will assist RTOs to identify weaknesses in their systems, as a basis for continuous improvement.

A systematic approach to achieving outcomes

There is an expectation that RTOs will have a systematic approach to the planning and delivery of their services so that compliance with the registration requirements can be assured throughout the registration period.

All RTOs must comply with the AQTF standards but as RTOs range in size and complexity, the processes they use to do this will differ considerably. The outcomes to be achieved by a one-person RTO and a TAFE Institute will be the same but will differ considerably in scale. Given this, the processes used to achieve those outcomes will be different and the format, complexity and scope of records kept by RTOs will vary.

RTOs should take a common-sense approach regarding evidentiary requirements and adjust their expectations according to the size and complexity of the RTO operations. Auditors will take this into account at audit.

Continuous improvement of outcomes

Clients needs and expectations change and so does the industry and educational environment in which RTOs operate. RTOs are expected to continually improve their services and outcomes by collecting, analysing and acting on data.

Operating in a national VET system

The obligations covered in the RTO Declaration are auditable. Many of these are requirements essential to the effective functioning of a national VET system e.g. the recognition of qualifications.
issued by RTOs. These matters are generally not subject to continuous improvement in the same manner as the RTO’s operations underpinned by the standards and essential elements.

**Consumer protection**

Registration provides consumers with the confidence that they will receive quality training and assessment services, they will be treated openly and fairly, and they will receive the services they have paid for. A number of the requirements in the RTO Declaration are to protect consumers and the reputation of the VET system.

**State/territory requirements**

Each RTO is registered by only one state or territory registering body in accordance with the relevant legislation in that jurisdiction. This registration has national effect and entitles the RTO to operate across all states and territories. Organisations seeking to be registered must apply to the registering body in their state or territory.

These links to state/territory training authority websites will assist RTOs to investigate these requirements: (links to be inserted)

**Recognition of quality committed/outstanding RTOs**

RTOs can gain recognition as either a ‘quality committed’ or an ‘outstanding’ RTO. Appendix 1 to this guide shows the pathways from the registration level to recognition as a quality committed or outstanding organisation. RTOs that achieve this recognition will still need to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the registration standards and the performance outcomes (to be agreed) for all RTOs. Further details about how to be recognised as a quality committed/outstanding organisation are available in a separate publication.

2. The guide for RTOs

The standards are presented in this publication together with a guide to provide interpretation of the standards.

**Purpose of this guide**

This guide will assist RTOs to work effectively within the national VET system and also assist state and territory auditors and registering bodies to achieve nationally consistent outcomes in the regulation of RTOs.

RTOs should use this guide as a reference when applying for registration, conducting internal audits and preparing for external audits. It provides RTOs with information regarding how an effective RTO operates and should assist RTOs to review and improve their systems. The guide itself will be reviewed periodically to ensure it is meeting the needs of RTOs.

The guide is not prescriptive. RTOs need to decide how they will demonstrate compliance with the standards.

**Structure of the guide**

The guide covers each essential element in detail under the following headings:

- expected results
- management responsibility
• evidence guide
• an explanation of the key terms in evidence guide.

Expected results
‘Expected results’ defines the results an internal or external auditor should be able to confirm if the essential element is being met by the RTO. The expected results are concerned with what the RTO achieves rather than the process it follows.

Management responsibility – driving quality
RTO managers are responsible for ensuring that quality training and assessment outcomes and services are achieved by the RTO. The points under this heading in the guide are the ‘big picture’ items that should be the focus of managers – their management objectives.

Evidence guide
The actions an RTO will take to achieve the expected results and continuously improve quality are described in the evidence guide.

To meet this essential element, consider the following
This section of the guide provides explanations of the key actions highlighted in the evidence guide. This section describes practices the RTO can introduce to achieve outcomes.

The records subsection explains the types of records RTOs can keep to demonstrate compliance with the essential element. These will assist RTOs and auditors to determine to what extent results are demonstrated. They also provide evidence that continual improvement is in place and working. Some records must be kept and these are identified. The RTO may also be required to keep other records, to meet the requirements of funding or licensing bodies.

Resources to assist RTOs and auditors
A list of resources to assist RTOs meet the requirements of the standards will also be included under each essential element. (Note these resources are not included in this draft.)

How to use this guide
This guide is to be read in conjunction with the standards.

RTO managers should read the guide focusing on the management responsibility section.

RTO staff responsible for implementing the RTO’s quality system can use the guide to ensure the quality system is comprehensive and the records kept are sufficient to demonstrate the system is being effectively implemented. The guide also provides information about processes the RTO might put in place to meet the expected results for each essential element and the standards.

Internal and external auditors should refer to the expected results and explore with the RTO the extent to which these results are confirmed. The focus of the AQTF is on the outcomes achieved by the RTO – these outcomes will be the primary focus of audits.

Auditors will also examine the systems and processes the RTO has in place to assess if it is achieving the expected results and if continuous improvement processes are working. Auditors will confirm that mandatory requirements (indicated as ‘musts’ in the text) are being met. Refer to the records subsection of the guide as a prompt to check that essential (mandatory) records are in place.
3. **Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations (as at August 2006)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 1</th>
<th>Quality training and assessment is provided by the RTO across all of its operations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential elements</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>The RTO continually improves its training and assessment by collecting, analysing and acting on relevant data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>The RTO consults with relevant industry personnel to document and implement a plan for learning and assessment for each Training Package qualification and accredited course it offers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>The RTO accommodates differing client learning and assessment needs, delivery methods and client numbers through access to appropriate and sufficient staff and facilities, equipment and current training and assessment materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Training and assessment is conducted by trainers and assessors that have the training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors and have current vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and/or assessed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Assessments including RPL conducted by the RTO meet the requirements of endorsed Training Packages and accredited courses.</td>
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</table>
Standard 2  Delivery of services by the RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients

Essential elements

2.1 The RTO continually improves its client services by collecting, analysing and acting on relevant data.

2.2 Clients are fully informed about the learning and assessment services to be provided and their rights and obligations prior to entering into a contract with the RTO.

2.3 Employers and other parties who contribute to each learner’s training and assessment are engaged in the development, delivery and monitoring of learning and assessment.

2.4 Each learner receives learning, assessment and support services that are delivered and monitored to meet their needs.

2.5 Learners have access to current and accurate records of their participation and progress.

2.6 Complaints and appeals are resolved efficiently and effectively.
Standard 3  Management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO operates

**Essential elements**

3.1 The Chief Executive ensures the RTO complies with the standards for registration including the RTO Declaration and continually improves the quality of its operations.

3.2 The RTO maintains appropriate systems for managing the recruitment, selection, induction, professional development and performance management of its staff.

3.3 The RTO ensures that training and/or assessment provided on its behalf is in accordance with all aspects of the Standards for RTOs and RTO Declaration.

3.4 The RTO maintains accurate staff, client and other business records, safeguards the integrity of these records and archives them in accordance with statutory and registering body requirements.
4. Guide for Registered Training Organisations

Standard 1: Quality training and assessment is provided by the RTO across all of its operations

**ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 1.1** The RTO continually improves its training and assessment by collecting, analysing and acting on relevant data.

**Expected results**

Training and assessment arrangements are modified in accordance with evidence.

**Management responsibility**

RTO managers ensure that:

- there is a documented system for continually improving training and assessment
- staff are aware of the system and performing their roles appropriately
- the system is being implemented and quality improvements are being made.

**Evidence guide**

The RTO collects and analyses data through a **documented systematic process**.

The data that is **collected** and **analysed** is sufficient to make judgements about the quality of its training and assessment across its scope of registration and operations. The collection of data may be informed by a risk assessment process.

The RTO must **act on this data** in a timely manner to improve the quality of its training and assessment.

The RTO maintains **records** of continuous improvement activities and outcomes.

**To meet this essential element, consider the following:**

*A documented systematic process*

Whatever the size of your RTO, you will need to have policies and procedures in place that describe how your RTO is continually improving its training and assessment. Logically, these will form part of your broader continual improvement policies and procedures.

Procedures will vary in complexity, depending on the size and type of the RTO but it is important to be able to communicate how you are improving to staff members (both current and future) and to other interested parties.

**Collecting data**

You must collect data that is relevant to improving the quality of training and assessment. This data provides your RTO with evidence about how the quality and assessment is perceived by stakeholders and should indicate where there are opportunities for improvement.

Data relevant to improving training and assessment could include:

- the performance of trainers and assessors and their competence
• the effectiveness of delivery modes, materials and resources and methods of learning and assessment
• confirmation that assessments are effectively judging the competence of graduates
• industry satisfaction with RTO training and assessment services and learner skills and knowledge.

The focus of your activities should be informed by risk assessment and prior continuous improvement activities.

Data should be collected from learners as well as from other stakeholders about the quality of training and assessment. It is therefore important to identify your stakeholders.

You can also collect data about completion rates, entry of learners to further study or employment and on withdrawals. By regularly collecting this data you will see if your learning and assessment strategies are effective.

Data can also be collected through processes such as internal audit and staff feedback.

**Analysing data**
You must analyse the data you have collected. Identify trends and aspects of training and assessment that need to be improved.

**Acting on data collected**
You will need to show how you have acted on the data you collect. This could be by improvements made to learning and assessment resources, to learning and assessment strategies, to the information you provide to learners about learning and assessment or to the professional development of staff. These improvements may also need to be reflected in relevant policies and procedures.

Staff members can help to work out how to improve processes, products and services and should be involved in problem solving, planning for improvements and ensuring improvement plans are carried out.

**Records**
You must maintain records of your continuous improvement activities. This includes data collected, its analysis and actions taken.

These records include:
• client satisfaction survey results and their analysis
• internal audit reports
• staff performance appraisal reports and professional development plans
• continuous improvement reports and action plans
• corrective action reports
• correspondence with and from stakeholders about changes to the RTO's processes
• quality improvement team meeting minutes
• records of assessment validation and action plans
• records of complaints and appeals and their resolution.
The key to continual improvement is that it is systematic, it involves stakeholders (including staff), and it is effective in improving the quality of training and assessment.
Standard 1: Quality training and assessment is provided by the RTO across all of its operations

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 1.2 The RTO consults with relevant industry personnel to document and implement a plan for learning and assessment for each Training Package qualification and accredited course it offers.

Expected results
Customised learning and assessment plans.

Management responsibility
RTO managers ensure that:
- learning and assessment plans set out how the RTO will deliver training and assessment
- training and assessment is delivered in accordance with the plan
- plans are monitored and reviewed.

Evidence guide
Each plan is clearly documented and must be based on data collected on learners’ needs and enterprise requirements.

Learning and assessment plans must meet the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course. The plans specify resources, both human and physical, that will be used in learning and assessment.

Each plan sets out the program of learning and assessment.

The RTO implements learning and assessment in accordance with the plan.

The plan is monitored and reviewed as part of a continuous improvement process.

The RTO maintains records of consultation and continuous improvement.

To meet this essential element, consider the following:
Consultation with industry
The term ‘industry’ is a broad term, which could mean industry bodies, unions, specific clients, occupational licensing and other relevant regulatory bodies. You need to provide evidence that the industry members you consulted have agreed that your learning and assessment plan will ensure that learners hold the required skills and knowledge. If the qualification does not have a clear vocational outcome, you should consult with other bodies, such as community groups or other RTOs.

Staff responsible for planning learning and assessment for clients need to be aware of and follow the processes used in your organisation for developing learning and assessment plans.

The process for developing learning and assessment plans should be documented so that it can be accurately repeated and refined. This might be (for example) in a procedure, a flowchart or in a template.
Clearly documented plans
There must be a documented learning and assessment plan for each Training Package qualification or accredited course on your RTO’s scope of registration. The learning and assessment plan is a specification for the learning and assessment your organisation will provide to learners, and it will set out for clients and staff how your organisation will approach and resource delivery. The plan should cover the matters listed in the sections below.

Plans based on data
Your learning and assessment plans will be based on data you have collected about your learners’ needs and industry/enterprise requirements.

Meeting the requirements of the Training Package/accredited course
The learning and assessment plans must be consistent with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course, in particular the:

- assessment guidelines and qualification packaging rules
- required trainer and assessor competencies
- outcomes specified in the units of competency/modules.

Resources
Your plans outline the resources your organisation will use for training and assessing learners. This will include identifying the learning and assessment materials, trainer and assessor competencies, facilities and equipment, and any support staff.

The learning and assessment program
For each client group, consider if your plan:

- indicates the mode of delivery (for example, online, classroom, on-the-job) as well as learning strategies to be used that suit the needs of your learners (refer to Essential element 2.4 for information on meeting the needs of learners)
- provides clear advice on how assessments will be conducted and a broad description of any reasonable adjustments that need to be made for the group of learners (or of individuals)
- provides information on pre-requisites, grouping of units and an indication of timeframes
- describes how you will validate assessment.

Implementing the plan
Relevant staff need to have copies of each learning and assessment plan they are delivering, understand them and follow them. This must be part of the induction for new staff (see Essential element 3.2). Encourage them to identify any improvements that could be made to the plans.

Monitoring and review
Seek feedback on the plans from staff, learners and from workplace personnel, where relevant. This needs to be done systematically. While all learning and assessment plans are subject to continual improvement, a risk management approach will assist you to determine priorities for review.

Records
In addition to the learning and assessment plans, you will need to keep records:

- of data collected about learners’ needs and of enterprise/industry consultation and its analysis, together with the revised learning and assessment plans
• that indicate that staff have been fully briefed on the plans (for example, induction checklists, meeting minutes, correspondence with staff)
• that show that you have monitored and reviewed the plans as part of a continuous improvement process.

The key to good quality learning and assessment strategies is that they provide a clear roadmap for trainers and assessors and that they lead to competent learners who have received training and assessment that meet their requirements.
Standard 1: Quality training and assessment is provided by the RTO across all of its operations

**ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 1.3** The RTO accommodates differing client learning and assessment needs, delivery methods and client numbers through access to appropriate and sufficient staff and facilities, equipment and current training and assessment materials.

**Expected results**
Resources required to accommodate the identified needs of clients are in place.

**Management responsibility**
RTO managers ensure that:
- all training and assessment staff are competent for the tasks they perform and are appropriately qualified (see Essential elements 1.2 and 1.4)
- training and assessment materials and facilities and equipment meet the specifications in the learning and assessment plans (see Essential element 1.2) and are accessible to learners.

**Evidence guide**
The RTO must ensure that the resources specified in the learning and assessment plans are in place.

The RTO maintains a record of current resources, and ensures that staff and learners use the most recent version.

The RTO regularly reviews the effectiveness of the facilities, equipment and training and assessment materials and makes adjustments where needed.

The RTO maintains records of action taken to ensure resources are current and adequate.

*To meet this essential element, consider the following:*

**Resources are in place**
The resources you use will conform to your RTO’s learning and assessment plan and the requirements of the Training Package/accredited course.

If you use another organisation to deliver and assess on your behalf you will have a written agreement in place that describes each party’s responsibilities. Refer to Essential element 3.3 for information on agreements.

**Reliable records of current resources**
Processes will be in place so that staff are confident that they are accessing and using the current version of training and assessment materials: both materials that have been developed by your RTO and materials that have been sourced externally. When developing and implementing version control procedures, consider the following questions:
• Who is authorised and responsible for reviewing materials (include Training Packages, accredited course documents and learning/assessment materials) to ensure that they are current?
• Does this person have the skills and knowledge to carry out these responsibilities? Will they know how to check for changes in legislation or regulations, or updates to Training Packages/accredited courses?
• How will you ensure that your staff know which version of documents are the current ones?
• How do staff members access the current materials that they need to carry out their work?

Reviewing the effectiveness of resources
Data on the quality and appropriateness of resources could be collected from:
• feedback from clients and staff
• internal audit and risk management findings
• organisations delivering and assessing on your RTO’s behalf.

When learning and assessment plans are revised, resources need to be checked to ensure that they will accommodate any changes to delivery and assessment methods, location of delivery, client numbers and the needs of learners.

Records
You need to be able to show that your organisation is using current, relevant and sufficient resources. Records could include:
• completed facilities/equipment checklists for each site where training and assessment is taking place
• records of planning meetings with enterprise supervisors
• equipment registers
• leases/contracts relating to premises and equipment
• agreements for the use of training and assessment materials
• partnership agreements with other RTOs, specifying resources to be made available for training and assessment
• mapping documents, showing the relationship between the units of competency to be delivered and learning and assessment materials
• records of staff qualifications (refer to Essential element 1.4)
• agreements with other organisations providing delivery and assessment services on behalf of your RTO.

The key to guaranteeing that your RTO has access to the required resources is careful planning, systematic monitoring of resources and ensuring that improvements are implemented when the need for them is identified.
Standard 1: Quality training and assessment is provided by the RTO across all of its operations

**ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 1.4** Training and assessment is conducted by trainers and assessors that have the training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors and have current vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and/or assessed.

**Expected results**

Training and assessment services are delivered by competent personnel.

**Management responsibility**

RTO managers must ensure that:

- all training and assessment staff are appropriately qualified or staff competencies have been confirmed as appropriate against these units of competency
- there is evidence that staff hold the required vocational competencies (refer Essential element 3.4)
- staff competencies are reviewed for currency and updated if required.

**Evidence guide**

The RTO analyses the Training Packages/accredited courses and associated regulatory requirements to determine which competencies trainers and assessors must hold.

The RTO establishes that staff who are allocated to train and/or assess these competencies hold the required verified:

- trainer/and or assessor qualifications (or their equivalent) and
- vocational qualifications and experience.

Where an assessor does not hold the required assessment competencies (or their equivalent) and the vocational competencies, co-assessments are conducted. This activity is documented and recorded.

Where a trainer does not hold the required training competencies (or their equivalent) direct supervision is implemented. Supervision arrangements are documented and supervision activity is recorded.

Staff qualifications and experience are systematically reviewed to ensure ongoing adherence to the requirements of the Training Packages/accredited courses and associated regulatory requirements.

The RTO keeps records of how competency was established and verified, of supervision arrangements and activities and of co-assessment arrangements and activities. Records are also kept of steps taken to review staff competencies (also refer to Essential element 3.4).

*To meet this essential element, consider the following:*
Analysing Training Packages/accredited courses

When you developed your learning and assessment plans you analysed the Training Packages/accredited courses to determine the competencies staff would need to train and assess. This is done for each unit of competency your RTO is delivering and assessing. Also ensure that you address any additional regulatory body competency requirements.

Establishing that staff hold the required qualifications and experience

You must be able to demonstrate that you have made an assessment to ensure that staff hold the required qualifications and experience. Trainers and assessors must hold the competencies they are delivering and/or assessing (or demonstrate equivalent competencies), to demonstrate to you that they have current industry knowledge and skills.

An effective way to demonstrate that you have made this assessment is to ask staff to map their qualifications and experience to the relevant competencies. Auditors will expect to see mapping documents (or similar) for all staff in relation to the competencies they deliver and assess.

Trainer qualifications or equivalent competencies

Trainers must either:
- hold the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment from the TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package; or
- be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies; or
- hold the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training (from the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98); or
- have demonstrated equivalent competencies to the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training prior to 20 November 2005.

If staff do not hold the certificates listed above, the RTO can make an assessment of evidence to judge whether the trainer/assessor has the equivalent competencies. As an auditor can challenge this judgement it must be defensible and based on a thorough evaluation of the evidence of equivalence provided by the trainer/assessor.

Assessor qualifications or equivalent competencies

Assessors must:
- have certification that they hold the following competencies from the Training and Assessment Training Package: TAAASS401A Plan and organise assessment; TAAASS402A Assess competence and TAAASS404A Participate in assessment validation; or
- be able to demonstrate equivalent competencies to the above listed units; or
- have certification that they hold the following competencies from the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training: BSZ401SA Plan assessment, BSZ402A Conduct assessment, and BSZ403A Review assessment; or
- have demonstrated equivalent competencies to the BSZ units prior to 20 November 2005.

Vocational qualifications and experience for trainers and assessors

Trainers and assessors must also be able to demonstrate vocational competencies at least to the level of those being delivered and assessed. Vocational competencies must be current and could be demonstrated by:
- relevant and current work history
- attendance at relevant professional development activities
- participation in networks/communities of practice
• participation in industry release schemes
• personal development through reading of industry journals
• participation in projects with industry

Co-assessments
Assessment may be conducted by a team that collectively meets the competency requirements for assessments. If co-assessment is being used (when an assessor holding the all the required assessor units of competence or equivalent competence works with one or more assessors who have the relevant vocational competence) this co-assessment arrangement must be documented, preferably in the learning and assessment plan. There must also be evidence that the planned co-assessment is occurring.

Direct supervision
If a trainer does not hold the appropriate trainer qualifications or demonstrated equivalent competence then they must be directly supervised. This does not mean that the person supervising this person must observe the trainer at all times. However, there must be a clear arrangement in place that shows that the supervisor/s provides regular guidance, support and direction to the trainer.

This could include a combination of some of the following:
• providing input to the preparation for training
• discussing strategies to support specific learners
• assisting the trainer to locate appropriate resources
• observing some training sessions and providing feedback
• de-briefing the trainer after training sessions.

The supervising trainer is accountable for the training delivered by the supervised trainer.

Systematic review
Review of staff qualifications should take place (at least) when you conduct your internal audit. Whenever a Training Package/accredited course is reviewed, staff qualifications should be checked to ensure that they are still appropriate. Your professional development plan for trainers and assessors should provide opportunities for staff to maintain the currency of their skills and knowledge.

Records
The following records must be kept:
• verified copies of qualifications of all trainers/assessors and their verified CVs
• (refer to Essential element 3.4)
• records that show how the competency of each trainer/assessor meets the requirements of the competencies they are delivering and assessing (for example, mapping documents)
• where relevant, records of supervision arrangements and arrangements for co-assessment (logically, this information would be included on the learning and assessment plans)
• where relevant, records of the co-assessment and direct supervision arrangements being implemented (for example, joint sign-off on assessment instruments, meeting notes, emails)
• record of staff competency reviews
• records of professional development activities used to maintain currency.
In addition to the information in the learning and assessment plans it is strongly advised that you develop a staff matrix, showing arrangements for delivery and assessment.

The key to ensuring staff are appropriately qualified is in analysing the Training Package/accredited course, checking staff qualifications in relation to this analysis, identifying gaps in competency and putting in place a process to fill these gaps.
Standard 1: Quality training and assessment is provided by the RTO across all of its operations

**ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 1.5** Assessments including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) conducted by the RTO meet the requirements of endorsed Training Packages and accredited courses.

**Expected results**
Valid, reliable, fair and flexible assessments.

**Management responsibility**
RTO managers ensure that, across all sites and including where partnership agreements are in place:
- assessment, complies with the assessment guidelines in the applicable Training Package and/or assessment requirements in accredited courses
- assessments are valid, reliable, fair and flexible
- valid assessment judgements are made
- assessment services, processes and tools are systematically improved.

**Evidence guide**
The RTO ensures that assessment candidates are informed about what to expect regarding assessment: the context for assessment, its purpose and the assessment process itself.

Where relevant, assessment focuses on the application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace and covers all aspects of performance, including task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job role environment skills.
Assessment tools are designed so that they collect sufficient evidence to enable a judgement to be made about whether competency has been attained.

Processes are in place to ensure that the applicant is provided with feedback on the outcomes of assessment as well as guidance on future options.

Assessment is equitable and there is an effective appeals process in place.

Assessors are fully informed on the RTO’s assessment processes, and the assessment practice of assessors is monitored.

Assessment validation is systematically planned and implemented and its outcomes contribute to continuous improvement.

The RTO maintains records of assessment services, processes and tools.

**To meet this essential element, consider the following:**

*Candidates are informed*
Candidates for assessment will need to be informed about where and how assessment will take place and that they have access to RPL processes. They need to know:
- how much evidence will be collected
- when it will collected
• how it will be collected
• how they can appeal an assessment decision or the process used in assessment.

**Standard of performance required in the workplace**

Competency standards and assessment guidelines (or assessment requirements in accredited courses) provide you with advice about the application of knowledge and skills. To meet the assessment requirements of the Training Package/accredited course RTOs assess the *whole* of the unit of competency: the evidence guide, including the context of assessment and the critical aspects of evidence must be integrated into assessment tools. Make sure that the key competencies/employability skills are also addressed.

The consultation that you carried out when developing your learning and assessment plans provides you with a clear picture of a competent candidate: what unusual circumstances they need to deal with; what competing pressures they may need to manage and what they need to know (for example, legislation and operating procedures) in order to work effectively.

**Sufficient evidence**

The assessment tool is designed to ensure that assessment will collect sufficient evidence to make a judgement about competence. The assessment procedures will need to be defined (for example: information and instructions for the assessor/candidate relating to the use of assessment tools and the conditions for assessment). Most units of competency require evidence to be collected over a period of time and in a number of contexts. You will need to ensure that assessment tools are designed to do this and to accurately *record* the evidence collected.

**Feedback on outcomes of assessment**

In addition to the assessment results, assessment candidates need to receive feedback about how they performed – particularly those who are assessed as not yet competent. This information includes:

• how they can improve their performance
• how they might collect further evidence for assessment
• how many times they can be re-assessed
• what support is available to prepare for re-assessment.

Your RTO will have a process in place to provide feedback to the candidate. This feedback will be in a form that is easily understood by the candidate, the feedback will be provided in a timely fashion and staff will need to consistently provide feedback that is documented.

**Assessment is equitable**

The learning and assessment plans provide information on any special needs that a candidate might have. To ensure that assessment is equitable, RTOs:

• provide candidates with clear information about assessment
• determine the needs of candidates relating to assessment
• include and make reasonable adjustments to assessment procedures so that special needs are met
• support candidates according to their needs
• ensure that assessment candidates have easy access to appeals processes and that appeals procedures are implemented.
Monitoring of assessors
Your RTO needs to ensure that assessment is being conducted in line with learning and assessment plans and your RTO’s assessment policies and procedures. The outcomes of this monitoring can contribute to continuous improvement.

Validation
RTOs must ensure that assessment is valid, reliable, fair and flexible. Your RTO needs to plan its validation activities so that assessment is systematically reviewed and improved, where necessary. RTOs can take a risk management approach, identifying specific competency standards for review.

Validation requires assessors to review, compare and evaluate the assessment processes, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same competency standards. Validation can take place before assessment (in the design stage) and/or during assessment (for example, by assessors working together) and/or after assessment (by assessors comparing evidence collected against the same unit of competency).

Records
The following records assist you to demonstrate that you are providing quality assessment services:

- information provided to candidates before assessment
- assessment tools mapped comprehensively against the applicable Training Package/accredited course (including assessment guidelines/requirements and the units of competency)
- assessment tools aligned to training and assessment plans, including candidates’ needs and industry advice
- records of assessments, delineating the evidence collected
- records of feedback provided to candidates
- assessment validation records
- records that indicate that improvements are made as a result of validation outcomes
- assessment validation strategies included in each learning and assessment strategy.

The key to providing quality assessment is careful planning, mapping assessment tools to Training Package/accredited course requirements, providing candidates with the level of support they require and carefully recording assessment outcomes so that they defensible.
Standard 2: Delivery of services by the RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients

**ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 2.1** The RTO continually improves its client services by collecting, analysing and acting on relevant data.

**Expected results**
Improved client services.

**Management responsibility**
RTO managers ensure that:

- there is a documented system for continually improving client services
- staff are aware of the system and are performing their roles appropriately
- the system is being implemented and quality improvements are being made.

**Evidence guide**
The RTO is collecting and analysing data on clients’ needs and the services provided to clients through a **documented systematic process**.

The data that is collected and analysed is **sufficient to make judgements** about the quality of its client services.

The RTO **acts on this data** in a timely manner to improve the quality of its client services.

The RTO **maintains records** of continuous improvement activities and outcomes.

**To meet this essential element, consider the following:**

**A documented systematic process**
Your continuous improvement procedures will describe how you will collect and analyse information about the effectiveness of the student services offered by your RTO.

You might also need to develop and implement a plan indicating which aspects of student services will be reviewed, the process for review, responsibility for data collection and timeframes. You might integrate this planning with planning for risk management. Staff need to understand their role in data collection and continuous improvement.

**Sufficient and relevant data**
You must collect data from stakeholders to identify whether the client services need to be improved. You can collect data from learners, trainers and assessors, employers and other relevant stakeholders to ascertain whether clients’ needs are being met.

Data could be collected on:

- the effectiveness of language, literacy and numeracy assistance
- processes for learner selection, enrolment and learner induction/orientation
- client satisfaction with support provided, including external support
- effectiveness of welfare and guidance services
• RPL processes
• complaints and appeals processes.

The amount of data you collect should be sufficient so that trends can be identified and any subsequent improvements are justified. You will need to design data collection questions so that they will provide specific feedback on client services. The way that data is collected will need to be suited to the client group. For example, focus groups, casual discussions or one-on-one interviews might be more effective than written surveys for some clients.

Once you have collated the data, you will identify aspects of services provided requiring improvement. You will need to document what you have learnt.

**Acting on data collected**

With RTO staff you will need to develop and document an action plan for implementing the improvements identified, with timelines, priorities and responsibilities. Actions arising from the analysis of data might include:

• revising information provided to clients so that it is clearer or provided in a different format
• streamlining enrolment processes
• developing/changing referral information for clients with special needs
• changing orientation processes
• introducing language, literacy and numeracy assessment
• changing appeals and complaints processes.

When you make such changes you will need to monitor and review them as part of your continuous improvement processes.

**Records**

The following records will assist you to demonstrate that you are continually improving client services by collecting, analysing and acting on relevant data:

• copies of instruments used to collect data (for example, surveys, interview questions)
• analyses of data collected (for example, reports, staff meeting minutes, correspondence)
• action plans to implement improvements
• records of improvements made to client services
• records to show that improvements are monitored and reviewed (for example, internal audit reports, bulletins to staff and clients)

The key to providing quality client services is establishing what your clients’ needs are, collecting data about whether the RTO’s services meet these needs and then continually improving services in response to the lessons learnt from the data collected.
Standard 2: Delivery of services by the RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients

Essential Element 2.2 Clients are fully informed about the learning and assessment services to be provided and their rights and obligations prior to entering into a contract with the RTO.

Expected results
Clients are satisfied with information provided by the RTO.

Management responsibility
RTO managers ensure that:
- information about services available to clients and their rights and obligations is developed
- this information is provided to clients before enrolment
- staff responsibilities are identified and all staff are made aware of this information
- marketing and advertising materials are accurate.

Evidence guide
The RTO develops information in an accessible form about client services, student rights and responsibilities.

Processes are in place so that all potential clients are provided with the following information before the commencement of the contract:
- client selection, enrolment and induction/orientation procedures
- fees and charges, including refund policy and exemptions (where applicable)
- provision for language, literacy and numeracy assistance
- client support, including any external support the RTO has arranged for clients
- flexible learning and assessment procedures
- welfare and guidance services
- appeals and complaints procedures
- disciplinary procedures
- staff responsibilities for access and equity as provided for in the RTO's code of practice or similar document
- recognition of prior learning (RPL) arrangements, recognition of AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by any other RTO, and credit transfer.

Information provided to clients before a contract is entered into is systematically reviewed (refer Essential element 2.1)

To meet this essential element, consider the following:

Information in an accessible form
You will need to ensure that the information provided to potential clients is in an easily-understandable form. A client needs to make an informed decision before entering into a contract with your RTO. A contract in this context could mean that a learner enrolls with your RTO;
Alternatively it could describe the agreement that your RTO has with another organisation to train and assess its staff.

Information is accessible when it gives a clear and accurate picture of the services your RTO provides, taking into account the clients’ abilities and access to materials. For example, pre-enrolment materials for lower AQF programs will be in plain English, and RTOs will not use their website to provide information to learners who are unlikely to have Internet access.

**Processes are in place**
A systematic and reliable process needs to be in place so that potential clients receive this information. Staff need to know what their responsibilities are in ensuring that current information is provided in a timely fashion. Processes for providing information to potential clients could be described in marketing procedures, enrolment procedures, a flowchart or in checklists for administrative staff.

Where an RTO is entering into a contract with an organisation learners must also be informed about their obligations (for example, regarding disciplinary procedures: the implications of their not adhering to your RTO’s policies and procedures), their rights (for example, the right to make a complaint or to appeal an assessment decision) as well as the services available to them.

**The key to effectively providing clients with good quality information about learning and assessment services is ensuring that the information suits the needs of potential clients, that it is checked for accuracy and that it is provided systematically.**
Standard 2: Delivery of services by the RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 2.3 Employers and other parties who contribute to each learner’s training and assessment are engaged in the development, delivery and monitoring of learning and assessment.

Expected results
Learners receive support from all parties engaged in the learning and assessment process.

Management responsibility
RTO managers ensure that:
- systems are implemented to support training and assessment at the workplace
- workplace personnel are aware of their responsibilities regarding the development, delivery and monitoring of learning and assessment
- RTO staff work with workplace personnel to achieve quality training and assessment outcomes.

Evidence guide
The RTO consults with workplace personnel in the development of workplace training and assessment processes. Planned workplace learning and assessment meets the requirements of the learning and assessment plan and the training authority funding requirements, where applicable.

Workplace personnel are informed of their roles and responsibilities regarding training and assessment and accept these responsibilities.

Learners’ progress is monitored by the RTO, with the assistance of workplace personnel.

Workplace personnel contribute to continual improvement of training and assessment.

Records are kept of development, delivery and monitoring of learning and assessment.

To meet this essential element, consider the following:
Consulting with workplace personnel
You must consult with workplace personnel when planning workplace training and assessment for trainees, apprentices and learners participating in work experience as part of an institutional based program.

To get the most out of this consultation you will need to explain the learning and assessment plan (refer Essential element 1.2) to workplace personnel. This will help them to understand requirements for development and consolidation of skills and knowledge and for collecting evidence at the workplace for assessment. The learning and assessment plan will be customised to the workplace in light of these consultations.

Some of the issues to discuss with workplace personnel are:
• Who will the workplace coach/mentor be? Do they have the time and skills to provide the necessary level of support to the learner/s?
• Will the learners have the opportunity to develop all the competencies on the learning and assessment plan? For example, is the necessary technology/equipment available? Is the right kind of work available for the learner to participate in? Will learners have the opportunity to practise and consolidate skills in the workplace?
• Are there any constraints, such as seasonal or shift considerations, that need to be kept in mind when developing training plans/schedules?
• Does the learner need to be inducted to the workplace (for example, into OHS procedures) before starting their workplace training? Can induction requirements be integrated into delivery?
• Are there withdrawal rooms available for individual/group learning sessions?
• To what extent should the company’s policies and procedures be integrated into the learning and assessment program?
• Are workplace personnel able to contribute to assessment? If so, in what way?

If your RTO has a funding contract with the state/territory training authority, you will need to check that the workplace is able to meet these requirements. Requirements could include the need to provide time away from routine work duties for learning activities, the need to sign off on certain documents and so on.

**Informing workplace personnel of their roles and responsibilities**
Workplace personnel must have a clear idea of their roles and responsibilities. It is important to discuss the training plan or schedule with the workplace supervisor and other relevant staff so that they provide the learner with opportunities to develop and consolidate their skills. Your RTO needs to document these roles and responsibilities and, where applicable, to ask the workplace supervisor to sign that they accept these conditions.

**Monitoring**
Your RTO is responsible for ensuring that the learner receives quality training and assessment. Unless workplace personnel are qualified trainers and assessors (refer Essential element 1.4), RTO staff are responsible for determining the learning and assessment activities and processes to be used and for implementing them. Workplace personnel support learning and assessment.

Communication with the learner needs to be ongoing and you must monitor the learner’s progress against their training plan or schedule and record this monitoring activity. You need also to have regular contact with the workplace supervisor to check the learner’s progress, to discuss further opportunities for development and to discuss assessment.

**Continual improvement**
It is essential that you involve workplace personnel in reviewing training and assessment: workplace personnel may also provide valuable input to the review of your RTO’s administrative processes. Their input could be gained through responses to client satisfaction surveys, participation in assessment validation activities, meetings about program design, and so on. Responses must be analysed and documented. Where appropriate, improvements made as a result of this feedback should be documented in line with your RTO’s continual improvement procedures.
Records
You need to keep records of activities relating to: consulting with workplace personnel, providing these personnel with information about their roles and responsibilities, monitoring of learning and assessment at the workplace, and undertaking continual improvement.
Records could include:
- meeting minutes
- training plans and agreements signed by workplace personnel
- log books, signed by the learner, the RTO representative and the workplace representative
- records of regular contact made by the RTO with the learner and the workplace supervisor
- assessment records signed by the workplace supervisor, confirming that the learner has demonstrated competence over a period of time and in variety of contexts, as applicable
- records of assessment validation, which include personnel participation
- contact logs signed by all parties
- correspondence between the RTO and the workplace supervisor
- quality improvement forms/reports.

The key to quality workplace training and assessment is involving workplace personnel in planning, ensuring that the learning and assessment program makes full use of opportunities at the workplace, and monitoring the learners’ progress and the support provided by workplace personnel.
Standard 2: Delivery of services by the RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients

**ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 2.4** Each learner receives learning, assessment and support services that are delivered and monitored to meet their needs.

**Expected results**
Learners successfully complete their training program.

**Management responsibility**
RTO managers ensure that:
- services to support clients are in place
- learners have access to these services
- the effectiveness of services provided to learners/assessment candidates are monitored and reviewed.

**Evidence guide**
The RTO develops or provides access to services to meet the needs of its clients. Clients requiring support are assisted to access support services. These services must include (but are not limited to):
- induction/orientation
- language, literacy and numeracy assistance
- learning support services.

Depending on the type of RTO and its clients, the RTO will provide other client support including, welfare and guidance,

The RTO monitors and reviews the effectiveness of these support services as part of its continual improvement processes (refer Essential element 2.1).

The RTO keeps records to show that learner needs are identified and that support services for learners are developed or accessed.

**To meet this essential element, consider the following:**

*Identifying support requirements*
Depending on your RTO’s target groups, a language, literacy and numeracy assessment should be provided before entry to a learning and assessment program. This assessment will identify whether the learner has any special needs that might prevent them from progressing through the learning and assessment program.

The registration or enrolment form should also request the potential client to identify if they have specific needs (such as disability or poor language skills) that may require them to have access to support.
Assisting clients to access support

Clients must know how to access support services. You need to provide them with information about the services available before entering a contract with your RTO (refer to Essential element 2.2). Clients need to know who in your RTO to approach in order to discuss accessing support services. This information is provided at orientation/induction and should be included in written information about your RTO (for example, on your RTO’s website or in a student handbook).

The extent of the support services provided by your RTO will be dependent on the needs of clients and the capacity of your RTO to provide these services.

Induction/orientation

Clients need to be made fully aware, through your RTO’s induction or orientation processes, of the resources and services provided to them and their rights and responsibilities.

The nature of this induction/orientation and the information provided will vary according to:

- the length of the learning and/or assessment program
- whether learning and assessment is to take place at the workplace or at the training organisation
- whether clients are working with your RTO for the first time or if they are continuing
- the size of your RTO (i.e. number of staff and delivery sites, infrastructure).

Language, literacy and numeracy assistance

Language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) assistance is provided for groups of learners, where LLN issues are identified. Alternatively, assistance may be provided on a case by case basis, where LLN weaknesses are identified through pre-program assessment, by trainers as they get to know learners or by learners themselves as they find that they are not coping with course requirements.

The type of assistance provided will vary. Some RTOs, not having the resources to provide extensive LLN assistance, may refer learners to agencies that can help them; others might provide assistance on LLN issues specific to the learner’s program and others will provide specialised assistance to improve overall proficiency.

Learning support services

If learning and assessment plans indicate that learners have particular characteristics that might inhibit their ability to learn effectively, your RTO needs to put a strategy in place to provide support for these learners. Depending on the resources available to your RTO, these support strategies might be provided by external agencies.

Other client support

Other client support could include mentoring, disability support, IT support, job search and placement, housing support, and administration support. Welfare and guidance services might include personal counselling, career guidance, study skills programs, health information and referral and so on. Smaller RTOs might be able to provide some welfare and guidance services but if they cannot, they will need to have a process for informing clients about the services available to them that are external to the RTO.

Records

The following records will assist you to show that you have identified learner needs and developed or accessed support services for learners:
• copies of qualifications/CVs of special support staff
• records of agencies identified by the RTO as able to provide assistance where required
• for each learner:
  • LLN pre-program assessments, where relevant
  • referrals to external agencies and correspondence where appropriate
  • a record of learning support provided.

The key to providing support services that meet the needs of clients is to assess clients’ needs and ensure that they know how to access the services they will require to successfully complete their learning and assessment program.
Standard 2: Delivery of services by the RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 2.5 Learners have access to current and accurate records of their participation and progress.

Expected results
Learners are fully informed about their progress.

Management responsibility
RTO managers ensure that:
- the RTO has a system in place to assure the integrity, accuracy and currency of learner records
- records management systems are implemented
- records are accessible to learners.

Evidence guide
Learners are informed about how to gain access to their records.

The RTO documents procedures for collecting, managing and storing data on learners’ participation and progress through their training program and implements these procedures.

Staff understand their responsibilities for maintaining current and accurate learner records.

The effectiveness of records management procedures is monitored and reviewed.

The RTO maintains records of learners’ participation and progress and also records the results from activities to monitor and continually improve the operation of its records system.

To meet this essential element, consider the following:

Learners
Your RTO needs to inform learners about how to check their progress and how qualifications or statements of attainment are replaced (for example, if learners need to provide proof of identity or pay a fee).

Collecting and managing student records
The processes for recording learners’ enrolment details and assessment results should be described in your record management procedures. The system you use for enrolment or registration needs to be applied consistently and the information provided by learners needs to be recorded accurately on to your records management system.

Assessment results for each learner are kept to unit of competency level, with the correct code and title of the unit of competency recorded. Your system ensures that:
- assessment results are current
- staff keep accurate and current records of assessment results that lead to a judgement of competence
• learners receive accurate statements of attainment or qualifications within a reasonable period of time.

Storage and backup
Your RTO’s record management procedures describe how records such as attendance records and assessment results are stored and backed up. Procedures identify which records are stored, how long they are kept, where they are kept, when and how they are backed up and how they are protected.

Staff
Responsibilities for record keeping need to be clearly allocated and administrative staff and trainers/assessors need know how to use the system. Responsibilities should be included in the records management procedures and in the relevant position descriptions.

Monitoring and review
Learner records need to be systematically audited to check their accuracy and currency. Clients can provide useful feedback about how responsive your RTO is in providing results and issuing qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

Records
Records that will assist in demonstrating that your RTO is implementing and reviewing its record management systems include:

• log books (for example, workplace training and assessment logs and online logs)
• class rolls
• databases of student enrolment details and assessment results
• a register of qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued
• internal audit reports, correspondence with clients, staff induction records.

The key to ensuring that clients have access to good quality records is developing and implementing comprehensive record management procedures, ensuring staff clearly understand their responsibilities and monitoring and reviewing the quality of records.
Standard 2: Delivery of services by the RTO adheres to principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients

**ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 2.6** Complaints and appeals are resolved efficiently and effectively.

Expected results
Clients are satisfied with complaints handling.

Management responsibility
RTO managers ensure that:
- policies and procedures are in place to manage complaints and appeals efficiently and effectively
- RTO staff are made aware of these policies
- clients are informed of these procedures before entering into a contract with the RTO.

Evidence guide
The RTO has documented policies and procedures for constructively dealing with client complaints and appeals and these policies and procedures are implemented. Complaints and appeals are dealt with in a timely manner.

Complaints and appeals procedures are monitored and reviewed.

Records are kept of complaints and appeals and their resolution.

To meet this essential element, consider the following:

**Documented policies and procedures**
Your RTO’s complaints and appeals policies and procedures need to be transparent and fair. They are transparent when they are easily understood and accessible to clients: whether a complaint or appeal policy or procedure is fair can be tested by asking the following questions:
- Is the appeal/complaint recorded?
- Is the complainant/appellant given the opportunity to present his/her case?
- Does the complainant/appellant have access to an independent arbiter, where necessary?
- Does it allow for the complainant/appellant to be clearly informed of the outcomes of the complaint or appeal?
- Are realistic and fair timelines identified for acknowledging formal complaints, resolving them and for dealing with appeals?
- Are processes in place so that your RTO corrects poor processes that lead to substantiated complaints/appeals?

**Complaints and appeals**
Complaints arise when the client is not satisfied with an aspect of your RTO’s services and requests action to be taken by your RTO to resolve this matter. Appeals arise when the client is not satisfied with a decision made by your RTO. Appeals can relate to assessment decisions but they can also relate to other decisions such as a decision to exclude a learner from a program.
**Monitoring and review**
Complaints and appeals are monitored by communicating with the client to ensure that they are being provided with sufficient information and support. When the complaint or appeal is resolved, the client should be asked to provide feedback on the process used.

Records of complaints and appeals should be reviewed to determine the number of complaints and appeals, whether there are specific issues (or staff or services) about which complaints and appeals are made and whether complaints and appeals are being resolved in a timely manner. Improvements should be made as required to your RTO procedures.

**Records**
Records to show that complaints and appeals procedures are being implemented could include:
- records of complaints and appeals and their resolution
- complaint register
- staff participation in professional development relevant to handling complaints and appeals
- correspondence to the client outlining the steps that will be followed to resolve the complaint or appeal
- correspondence to the client describing the outcomes of the appeals process/action to be taken when the complaint is substantiated
- corrective action reports
- correspondence with staff indicating changes to processes to be taken as a result of the complaints process.

The key to dealing effectively with complaints and appeals is making sure that comprehensive procedures are in place, followed and reviewed and that the client and staff know about these procedures.
Standard 3: Management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO operates

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 3.1 The Chief Executive ensures the RTO complies with the standards for registration including the RTO Declaration and continually improves the quality of its operations.

Expected results

The RTO is compliant throughout its registration period.

Management responsibility

RTO managers ensure that:

- policies and procedures for ensuring that the RTO is operating in accordance with the standards for registration including the RTO Declaration and is continually improving the quality of its operations are documented
- the policies and procedures are circulated, understood and implemented consistently throughout the RTO
- the polices and procedures are systematically reviewed and improved, where necessary.

Evidence guide

The RTO materially complies with:

- the standards for registered training organisations including the RTO Declaration
- the matters set out in the Declaration signed by the principal officer of the RTO
- the legislation and regulations under which the RTO is registered.

The RTO has a plan for its business.

The RTO has polices and procedures in place for ensuring quality training and assessment consistent with its scope of registration and scale of operations. Staff and other stakeholders are informed of these procedures and know what their responsibilities are regarding their implementation. Polices and procedures are consistently implemented.

The RTO systematically monitors and reviews the policies and procedures and their implementation and makes improvements where necessary.

The RTO maintains records of the circulation, implementation and continual improvement of the policies and procedures.

To meet this essential element, consider the following:

Plan for business

Your RTO’s plan for its business will be consistent with its scope of registration and scale of operations. The plan provides an indication of how your RTO plans to operate across its scope of registration and could include:

- a description of your RTO, including an organisational plan
- the key clients and stakeholders for your organisation
• governance arrangements for the RTO
• an indication of plans for growth
• financial planning information.

**Policies and procedures**
Your RTO needs to conduct its operations in a planned and systematic manner. In addition to the policies and procedures identified in this guide, your RTO must also ensure it has documented the arrangements it has determined it will follow to ensure compliance with the registration standards and the obligations specified in the RTO Declaration.

Additional policies and procedures will ensure that the organisation:
- identifies and manages any risks that may arise from your RTO’s operations and compliance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations
- monitors the operation of its policies and procedures through a program of internal audit
- continually improves its operations by senior management reviewing and acting on data relevant to the provision of quality training and assessment services.

The amount of information and the format of the policies and procedures will vary across RTOs but procedures should:
- identify who is responsible for managing the implementation of the procedures
- identify who has responsibility for the action points in the procedures
- clearly outline processes to be followed
- reference any supporting documents (for example, forms or registers).

**Informing stakeholders of the policies and procedures**
New staff members should be told about the RTO’s policies and procedures at induction. They should be informed about how they can access the policies and procedures and they need to understand their responsibilities for implementing the procedures. Staff members also should be reminded of your RTO’s policies and procedures on an ongoing basis and they must be informed when policies and procedures are changed.

Clients also need to be provided with policies and procedures that affect their participation in training and assessment (refer Essential elements 2.2, 2.5 and 2.6).

Other stakeholders are provided with information on policies and procedures as the need arises (for example, you might provide enterprises assisting you with assessment validation with your assessment procedures and privacy policy).

**Monitoring and review**
Procedures will be implemented consistently across your RTO. You can monitor their implementation by checking records provided by staff members to see if they are following agreed processes and:
- by talking with staff and clients
- by checking feedback collected from stakeholders, including complaints and appeals
- through formal meetings with staff
- by observing staff in their work
- through internal audit
- through corrective action reports.
This monitoring activity will help you to identify any changes that may need to be made to policies and procedures. Follow your continual improvement procedure when you make improvements, keeping records of monitoring, review and corrective action.

**Records**
The following records will assist you to demonstrate that your policies and procedures are being implemented, monitored and reviewed:

- records that indicate that business planning has taken place
- staff induction records (also refer Essential element 3.2)
- correspondence, bulletins or meetings notes indicating that staff are being given updates
- internal audit reports
- meeting minutes (if you hold formal meetings with staff it is helpful to have a standing item for continual improvement on your meeting agendas)
- corrective action reports
- correspondence with clients and other stakeholders regarding policies and procedures
- data collected from stakeholder (also refer to Essential element 1.1 and 2.1)
- client appeals and complaints and a record of how they were dealt with (also refer Essential element 2.7)
- risk assessment matrices and plans, addressing all of the AQTF standards
- records of refunds (refer also to Essential element 2.2) and outcomes of monitoring of financial policies and procedures
- audit reports on student records (also refer Essential elements 2.2, 2.5, 3.4)
- products that have been improved and policies and procedures that have been revised as a result of continual improvement.

The key to developing and maintaining a well-documented quality system is ensuring that all policies and procedures are in place, that staff know what their responsibilities are for implementing the policies and procedures; and ensuring that policies and procedures are systematically monitored and reviewed.
Standard 3: Management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO operates

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 3.2 The RTO maintains appropriate systems for managing the recruitment, selection, induction, professional development and performance management of its staff.

Expected results
Staff competently fulfil their roles within the RTO.

Management responsibility
RTO managers ensure that:
- policies and procedures are in place and implemented for the recruitment, selection, induction, professional development and performance management of staff
- staffing procedures comply with relevant legislation
- policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed.

Evidence guide
Staff roles and responsibilities in the organisation are clearly defined.

Staffing policies and procedures are consistently implemented.

Staff are inducted to the organisation and their responsibilities.

Staff participate in professional development relevant to their job role.

The performance of staff is monitored and reviewed to ensure that they are meeting RTO requirements.

The RTO maintains records of staffing processes and the monitoring and review of staffing policies and procedures.

To meet this essential element, consider the following:

Staff roles and responsibilities
Staff need to be aware of their roles and responsibilities in implementing and maintaining your RTO's training and/or assessment system. These roles and responsibilities may be set out in an organisational chart or similar document that, together with each staff member's duty statement, gives a clear picture of the responsibilities and the functions assigned to each role.

Position descriptions or duty statements should also include reference to the qualifications required of trainers and assessors (refer to Essential element 1.4) and other staff as required.

Policies and procedures
Policies and procedures relating to staffing describe processes for:
- recruiting staff, including verifying their qualifications and experience
- inducting staff, including reference to induction materials
• how staff professional development needs are identified and how staff gain access to professional development
• monitoring staff performance
• disciplining staff, grounds for dismissal of staff, appeals processes and processes for dismissal.

These procedures need to be consistently applied to all people being recruited to your RTO, including sessional, contract and temporary staff.

Judgements about the appropriateness of potential staff members are documented, in case of appeals. Qualifications and experience of staff who are engaged by your RTO need to be verified. A reference check is carried out to ensure that CVs/applications for positions are accurate. Original records of qualifications or appropriately verified copies need to be viewed and copies taken. Remember that any copies that you take of staff qualifications need to be noted as verified copies.

**Induction of staff**
The induction program and materials for new staff contains information, where relevant to their job role, on each of the following:
- Training Packages: make sure that the new staff member is taken through the learning and assessment plans that relate to their role
- competency-based training and assessment: new staff members need to know about your RTO’s approach to training and assessment, including processes for validation of assessment and their responsibilities for these aspects of the their job. They need to be told how they gain access to current training and assessment materials and how version control works in your RTO
- VET requirements and policies: take the new staff member through your RTO’s policies and procedures and brief them on their responsibilities for the implementation and review of these policies and procedures
- requirements for apprenticeships/traineeships: ensure that new staff members understand their responsibilities relating to your funding contract with the state/territory training authority. RTOs that do not have apprentices or trainees but are providing programs that may lead to apprenticeships/traineeships will need to give staff an overview of conditions relating to these programs so they can answer clients’ questions
- staff responsibilities for access and equity. Your code of practice should outline staff responsibilities for access and equity. Make sure that the new staff member understands what their responsibilities are and to whom they can refer clients should this be necessary.

Your staff induction program should also assist the new staff member to become familiar with your RTO environment and the employment conditions under which they will be working.

**Professional development**
It is your RTO’s responsibility to ensure that staff are appropriately qualified. This includes ensuring that staff have current industry knowledge and skills. Your RTO needs to have a process in place to support access to professional development. Professional development can include workshops, industry release, reading industry journals, attendance at conferences, mentoring and so on. Make sure that staff members’ learning through professional development is shared with other staff.

**Monitoring and reviewing staff performance**
You need to check that staff are consistently implementing policies and procedures, that they are training and assessing according to the learning and assessment plans and that they are responsive to
the needs of their clients. Monitoring processes should highlight whether staff members require support or professional development to better perform their duties.

**Records**
The following records will help to demonstrate that your staffing policies and procedures are being implemented and reviewed:

- advertisements for staff
- duty statements/position descriptions/terms of reference for RTO administrative staff, trainers/assessors, the CEO, other managers, support staff and so on, as relevant
- CVs of trainers and assessors that have been verified as accurate
- staff selection reports, including reference checks
- correspondence with successful and unsuccessful applicants
- verified copies of staff qualifications
- signed staff induction handbook
- signed induction checklists
- skills audits
- staff review reports
- meeting notes from staff reviews
- professional development plans for staff members
- reports of professional development
- records of attendance at professional development
- suggestions for new processes from staff, resulting from professional development activity.

The key to effective staffing systems is comprehensive policies and procedures that are consistently implemented and reviewed.
Standard 3: Management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO operates

**ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 3.3** The RTO ensures that training and/or assessment provided on its behalf is in accordance with all aspects of the Standards for RTOs and RTO Declaration.

**Expected results**
Services delivered by partners arrangements is compliant with the AQTF.

**Management responsibility**
RTO managers ensure that:
- written agreements are in place with all organisations providing training and or assessment services on its behalf
- partner organisations adhere to agreements.

**Evidence guide**
The RTO has written agreements in place with each organisation that provides training and/or assessment on its behalf. The RTO keeps a register of all of these agreements.

Agreements are monitored to ensure that they are being adhered to. Agreements are reviewed and improved, where required.

**Records** are kept of the implementation, monitoring and review of these agreements.

Note that agreements do not have to be in place in relation to this essential element when the RTO is engaging contract trainers/assessors: contractors are included under Essential elements 1.3, 1.4 and 3.2.

**To meet this essential element, consider the following:**

**Agreements**
When an RTO enters into an agreement with another organisation to provide training and assessment services, your RTO is not relinquishing responsibility for the quality of its services. Your RTO’s name will be on certificates and statements of attainment awarded as a result of this training and assessment and so arrangements need to be in place to ensure that training and assessment provided by the partnering organisation is of the same quality as that provided by your RTO.

Agreements specify how each party to the agreement will discharge its responsibilities for compliance with all aspects of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations. When developing agreements, bear the following questions in mind:
- Who will be responsible for collecting data on the training and assessment services?
- If the partner’s trainers and assessors are to be used, how will staff competencies (including currency) be assured? Will your RTO require the partnering organisation to provide evidence of staff qualifications?
• If validation of assessment is to be responsibility of your RTO, how will partner staff be included in these arrangements? How will the outcomes of validation be communicated to all parties?
• Who will be responsible for developing learning and assessment plans?
• Who will be responsible for providing information to clients before enrolment? If it is the partner organisation, who checks that these materials are AQTF compliant?
• Who will develop/source learning and assessment materials?
• Who will be responsible for inducting staff into your RTO's policies and procedures? Who monitors compliance and how will continual improvement be implemented?
• Who will keep training and assessment records?
• Does the agreement allow your RTO to withdraw if monitoring processes reveal that the partner organisation is not adhering to the agreement?

When developing partnership agreements, go through the AQTF Standards for RTOs and make sure that responsibilities are clearly delineated against all of the standards. Check with your state/territory training authority to see if any restrictions apply to what can be included in partnering agreements.

State/territory training authorities have the authority to audit organisations that have agreements with your RTO.

**Register**

A register of all agreements needs to be maintained so that agreements are easily tracked. The information included in this register (at a minimum) is:

- the responsible person from each organisation
- the duration of the agreement
- the qualifications or units of competency to be delivered by the partner organisation.

**Monitoring and reviewing agreements**

Your RTO will monitor partnership agreements to ensure that the partner organisation is keeping to the terms of the agreement. This can be done through regular meetings, the collection of data by your RTO and the partnering organisation, internal audit and so on.

Monitoring of partnering organisation’s performance could establish whether:

- agreed staff are being used to train and assess
- learning and assessment plans are being implemented
- feedback is being collected from stakeholders
- administrative systems are developed and implemented as agreed
- staff are receiving professional development and assessment validation is being carried out
- continual improvement processes are understood and implemented by staff
- clients are supported as agreed.

Internal audit should not be the only strategy used to monitor and review agreements as the timing of these audits can be too late to identify problems. Monitoring is planned and comprehensive. Areas for improvement need to be identified and a plan put into place to implement these procedures.
Your RTO will review agreements to assess whether quality training and assessment is being provided by the partner organisation. Reviews can occur during the life of the agreement and/or just before its end. The review and its outcomes should be documented.

**Records**

Records that will assist you to demonstrate that your RTO is managing the quality of training and assessment provided on its behalf include:

- written agreements with each organisation that provides training and/or assessment on your RTO’s behalf
- meeting minutes indicating monitoring of agreements
- correspondence with partnering organisations
- internal audit reports and records of corrective action
- records of information sessions with staff from the partnering organisation
- agreements revised in light of review.

The key to ensuring that training and assessment provided on the RTO’s behalf is of a good quality is putting comprehensive written agreements in place, and monitoring and reviewing them.
Standard 3: Management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO operates

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 3.4 The RTO maintains accurate staff, client and other business records, safeguards the integrity of these records and archives them in accordance with statutory and registering body requirements.

Expected results
Records are accurate and protected.

Management responsibility
RTO managers ensure that effective systems for records management are implemented.

Evidence guide
The RTO has effective documented procedures in place for records management and these procedures are implemented.

Staff understand their responsibilities for records management.

The effectiveness of records management is monitored and reviewed.

The RTO keeps records of its implementation of its procedures and continual improvement activities.

To meet this essential element, consider the following:

Records management procedures
Records management procedures describe processes to safeguard the integrity, accuracy and currency of records. These should include:

- secure storage, including backup of electronic records
- retention, archiving and retrieval of sufficient information on client results to enable the re-issue of a qualification or statement of attainment if required, for a period of 30 years, and transfer of these records consistent with state or territory registering body requirements in the event of closure of your RTO
- compliance with external reporting requirements (for example the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) for those RTOs in receipt of government funding)
- safeguarding any confidential information obtained by your RTO and committees, individuals or organisations acting on its behalf.

Check state/territory training authority requirements for records that need to be kept on learners and their outcomes and for audit purposes.
Staff understanding of responsibilities
Staff must understand their responsibilities for records management and version control (refer Essential element 3.3). Trainers and assessors must keep accurate records of student participation and results; administrative staff must keep records of fees paid and refunds given. Staff must be informed about requirements to maintain confidentiality.

Monitoring and reviewing records management procedures
Procedures for records management and version control must be monitored to assess how well they are working. Regular audits of records to check their accuracy, and feedback from clients and staff will assist in this monitoring activity.

The procedures should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they meet statutory and registering body requirements and to assess whether they can be improved.

Records
Records kept by your RTO must include enrolments, participation and fees paid and refunds given.

Records that will assist your RTO to demonstrate that it is implementing and continually improving its records management and version control procedures include:

- staff induction records indicating they have been briefed on the RTO’s record management and version control procedures
- rolls that are current and complete
- workplace log books indicating participation in learning and assessment
- assessment records
- reports of audits of records
- confidentiality agreements signed by staff members
- version control register
- policies and procedures, learning and assessment materials that are version-controlled
- AVETMISS reports.

The key to keeping quality business records is comprehensive procedures that are understood by staff and implemented consistently.
5. **RTO Declaration**
*(To be signed by the principal officer of the RTO)*

**Interactions with the registering body**

The RTO’s chief executive must:

- i) ensure that the RTO complies with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations across all of its operations and in all of its training and/or assessment activities, including those undertaken by other persons or bodies on its behalf
- ii) ensure that the RTO provides for examination of documentation and reasonable access to all areas, records (including internal audit reports) and staff as required by the registering body for the purposes of audit
- iii) ensure that the RTO’s compliance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations is reviewed as a basis for improvement, and that demonstrated improvement action is taken as appropriate.

The RTO must:

- i) apply to the state or territory registering body that has registered it for any extension to scope of registration
- ii) on the request of the state or territory registering body that has registered it, provide details of all operations within its scope of registration including operations in other states or territories and outside Australia
- iii) advise the state or territory registering body that has registered it:
  - within 21 calendar days of commencing delivery; and/or assessment outside the state or territory of registration and/or
  - within 3 months of ceasing delivery and/or assessment in a location outside the state or territory of registration
- iv) provide the state or territory registering body that has registered it with accurate and timely information regarding registration and compliance (including major changes to the RTO’s system or staffing profile, relocation of the RTO, financial difficulties and transfer of client records)
- v) retain, archive, retrieve and transfer records consistent with contractual and legal requirements and the requirements of the state or territory registering body that has registered the organisation
- vi) comply with external reporting requirements (for example AVETMISS) for those RTOs in receipt of public funding
- vii) report to the state or territory registering body that registered it on outcomes specified by that registering body.

**Compliance with legislation**

The chief executive must ensure that the RTO complies with relevant Commonwealth, state/territory legislation and regulatory requirements including, but not limited to:

- i) occupational health and safety
- ii) workplace harassment, victimisation and bullying
- iii) anti-discrimination, including equal opportunity, racial vilification and disability discrimination
- iv) privacy
- v) VET
- vi) apprenticeships and traineeships
vii) child protection.

The RTO’s policies and procedures must meet the requirements of Commonwealth or state/territory legislation and regulatory requirements that are relevant to the RTO’s operations including industry legislation and regulatory requirements specific to its scope of registration.

**Insurance**

The chief executive must ensure that the RTO has all the insurance cover necessary to carry out its business, including insurance for workers compensation, public liability, professional indemnity, building and contents.

**Financial management and reporting**

When requested, the chief executive must provide the state or territory registering body that has registered it with a formal assurance that the RTO has sound financial management standards for matters related to the RTO’s scope of registration and scale of operations.

The RTO’s accounts must be certified, at least annually, by a qualified accountant:

a) with membership of one of the following:
   i) Certified Practising Accountants Australia
   ii) Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia
   iii) National Institute of Accountants

or

b) otherwise registered as an auditor with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission

and, on request, the report must be made available to the state or territory registering body that has registered the organisation.

The chief executive, if requested by the state or territory registering body that has registered it, must obtain, and make available to the state or territory registering body, a full audit report of the RTO’s financial accounts from a qualified independent accountant:

a) with membership of one of the following:
   i) Certified Practising Accountants Australia
   ii) Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia
   iii) National Institute of Accountants

or

b) otherwise registered as an auditor with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission.

The RTO must:

- document and implement systems to protect fees paid in advance
- have a fair and reasonable refund policy.

**Certification and issuing of qualifications**

The chief executive must ensure that assessments (including RPL) lead to the issuing of a qualification or statement of attainment under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) when a person is assessed as competent against nationally endorsed unit(s) of competency in the applicable Training Package or module(s)/unit(s) specified in the applicable accredited course.
The RTO must only issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment that are within its scope of registration and that certify the achievement of:

i) qualifications or industry/enterprise competency standards from nationally endorsed Training Packages; or

ii) qualifications, competency standards or modules specified in accredited courses.

The RTO must issue records and report AQF qualifications and statements of attainment that meet the requirements of the AQF, endorsed Training Packages and accredited courses and identify the RTO by its national provider number.

The RTO must note the language of delivery and assessment on AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued if the delivery and assessment have been entirely in a language other than English.

**Recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs**

The RTO must recognise the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by any other RTO.

**Use of logos**

The RTO must use the Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo on all AQF qualifications and statements of attainment it issues. Logo use must be in accordance with the current NRT Logo Specifications.

The RTO may use the NRT logo in advertisements only where it complies with the requirements of the NRT Logo Specifications.

The RTO may only use the logo of the state or territory registering body that registered it on AQF qualifications or Statements of Attainment where this is permitted by the registering body and the logo is used in accordance with the registering body’s conditions of use.

The RTO may only use the logo of the state and territory registering body that registered it in its marketing and advertising materials where this is permitted by the registering body and the logo is used in accordance with the registering body’s conditions of use.

**Marketing**

The RTO may use the following statements in advertisements only in respect of training and/or assessment within its scope of registration:

i) ‘Nationally Recognised Training’; and/or

ii) ‘registered by (the registering body) to issue the following qualifications...’.

The chief executive must ensure that the RTO obtains prior written permission from any person or organisation for use of any marketing or advertising material which refers to that person or organisation, and must abide by any conditions of that permission.

The RTO’s marketing and advertising material must identify training and assessment services leading to AQF qualifications and/or statements of attainment separately from any other training/assessment services.
The chief executive must ensure that the RTO’s marketing and advertising of training and assessment products and services is ethical and accurate and has been approved by a duly authorised member of the RTO’s staff.

**Transition to Training Packages/expiry of accredited courses**

The chief executive must ensure steps are taken to manage the transition to reviewed Training Packages within 12 months of their publication.

If accredited courses are included in the scope of registration, the CEO must ensure steps are taken to manage the re-accreditation or transfer to a Training Package prior to its expiry date.
6. Glossary of terms

Training Package
Accredited course
Industry
Client
Learner
Stakeholder
Continuous improvement
Risk management
System
Process
Procedures
Record
Monitor
Review
Learning and assessment plan