Good Practice in VET Teaching and Learning – a guide to practitioner perspectives

Contents

1. Introduction

This Guide provides information about, and examples of, good practice in teaching and learning for Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers. It was commissioned by the Department of Education and Training (DET) and developed by drawing on the wide and varied experiences of VET practitioners working in the government-subsidised training market in Victoria.

The Victorian Government's agenda for a strong TAFE and training system, *Skills First*, includes a strong commitment to high quality training. It is intended that this Guide will assist training providers in their ongoing practice and support their objectives to consistently strengthen and improve their teaching, learning and assessment practice.

VET training provider experience and input shaped this Guide

The Guide had its genesis in work undertaken during 2016 to create a framework that identified and described attributes of quality teaching, learning and assessment practice. This work included focus groups and consultations with VET training provider representatives.

Further discussion took place in 2017 during two series of Quality Workshops. The workshops convened a variety of VET practitioners and staff from across the Victorian VET sector, who used the workshops to reflect on and share their own practice of quality teaching and learning.

The Guide is built from these instances of consultative engagement with training providers, as well as further input from one-to-one interviews and focus groups held in late 2017. The Guide is also informed by case studies derived from examples of good practice presented at the workshops and in follow up interviews.

The Guide's organising framework

The consultation process, supplemented by research, revealed four interdependent factors that are essential in quality VET teaching practice:

- ➢ Program Development
- ➢ Program Delivery
- ➢ The Professional Educator and
- ➢ Program Review.

These four critical factors impact on quality learner outcomes and constitute the Guide's organising framework. By examining them systematically and purposefully, the Guide seeks to assist VET training providers to further develop best fit approaches to quality delivery.

The organising framework offers additional information which extends understanding of what is meant by quality teaching and learning provision, and how to evaluate it. Short case studies in each chapter, presented as *Practice Perspectives* and *Advice from the sector,* illustrate how a range of contributors to the consultation process have addressed the four factors in the Guide's organising framework. The content of some case studies is repeated where the material applies to multiple factors. With this practical advice, the organising framework will help a training provider articulate and improve its quality teaching and learning practice more clearly.

The framework assumes each training provider is committed to quality education and training which incorporates:

- a commitment to ensuring learners achieve skills that maximise their prospects for employment and/or further study outcomes; and
- development of learners' personal and employment capabilities.

A shared language for quality provision is a baseline requirement for establishing, actively monitoring and reviewing high expectations for educational quality within a training provider. The framework contributes to developing a shared language by supporting the development of policies, processes and approaches that guide consistent and high-quality education practice across a training organisation.

This Guide is not exhaustive. It does not seek to cover everything that a training provider ever wanted to know. It is designed as a starting point for reviewing process and practice, and for framing improvement plans.

Indicators of quality practice are embedded in the four factors of the framework

The four factors are defined by *indicators* that describe quality practice across diverse learning and assessment strategies, including face to face, workplace-based, blended and online models.

Program Review Indicators
- Preparation
- Process
- Reporting

Program Development Indicators
- Assessing learner needs
- Training & Assessment Strategy (TAS)
- Program Improvements

The Professional Educator Indicators
- Workforce Development
- Supporting the Professional Educator
- Vocational Currency
- Professional Currency
- Performance Development

Program Delivery Indicators
- Assessments
- Informing learners
- Resources
- Learner engagement
- Learner support

The indicators provide guidance that a training provider can use to self-assess, identify capability gaps, and build capacity by evaluating current practice. Using the indicator statements may assist training providers and individual educators to improve current practice in learning and assessment methodology, and to develop and implement a strategic approach to future development.

The framework's four factors are interdependent. Each contributes to an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment focused on excellence in learner outcomes. The key to success is close monitoring of, and targeted support for, each factor's set of indicators. The aim is continual practice improvement, and simultaneously extending organisational capability and capacity.

By using the statement of indicators with its linked Practice Perspectives and Advice from the sector, a training provider can assess what kind of work is best undertaken to improve learning and assessment practice.

Please note that the Guide:

Uses three terms to refer to those who are employed to design, deliver, assess and review the training program. While the key term used is *professional educator*, for reasons of readability and context the terms *teacher* and *trainer* are also used to identify the teaching professional. The change in terminology is not random but is linked to context and related regulatory and official documentation. No hierarchy of role is embedded in the terminology.

Uses the terms *program, course* and *qualification* to refer to the learning that the student is enrolled to complete. *Program* and *course* are general and interchangeable terms in common usage by training providers that may refer to endorsed or accredited qualifications or to shorter learning journeys of one or more competencies or modules. The term, *qualification*, refers specifically to endorsed combinations of competencies from a training package or accredited course.

Using the framework at a training provider

Training providers can use the four factors and their accompanying indicators to:

- identify current training provider capability in quality teaching and learning provision;
- identify areas within an organisation that may require improvement;
- identify workforce capability and/or capacity gaps; and
- develop policies and procedures.

As each of the factors within the framework is considered through self-assessment, a picture develops that indicates where the training provider has excellent practice and good performance and identifies specific areas that need attention.

Of importance is a focus on the evidence a training provider can gather and record to demonstrate good practice. For example, the results and recommendations of industry consultation might be reported at a course team meeting and noted for further action in the meeting minutes. Resulting changes to assessment will be noted in an updated version of the Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS).

A training provider can develop a risk profile based on the results from its review of evidence about practice. The results can be interpreted to suggest actions the training provider can take to mitigate risk.

Applying the framework can also maximise effectiveness in staff communication across the training provider. For example, the self-assessment outcomes might suggest areas for attention in teaching and assessment practice; course teams could, therefore, develop approaches to focus on improved educational outcomes for learners.

With a focus on positive learner, industry and community outcomes, the Guide supports VET training providers and their teachers to build and sustain quality teaching and learning. It steps through the design and application of strategic policies, procedures and practices; all framed in a planned, cyclical manner.

Consistent and continuous quality improvement in teaching and learning is the Guide's baseline. The Guide's primary reference points are high levels of learner engagement and learner satisfaction which sustain excellent learner outcomes and constitute foundations for further study, employment and personal development.

The Guide identifies quality structures, and assembles reference points, for educators. It assists those responsible for teaching and learning quality to develop organisation wide approaches that bring consistency to quality provision. It offers guidance to educators, managers and senior staff about the practices that assist them to develop as effective education practitioners and leaders within their organisations.

Education overview

The majority of indicators refer to specific practice within learning programs. However, an additional level of attention focuses on an overview which requires and promotes a consistent approach to education practice in every program offered by the training provider. Consistency of educational practice and outcomes at provider level is an essential component of educational excellence.

The model for education overview will vary depending on a training provider's size and the number of programs it offers. Ideally, it will include the attention and input of teaching, support and management staff in a central committee, or a linked group of committees. In a small provider the

oversight may be the responsibility of a single person, but their conclusions will be discussed with and validated by their senior colleagues. The model can include:

- A method of approving the design, and then the implementation, of policies and procedures that address the requirements of sound learning and assessment practice. This may incorporate consistent processes for the development of, as well as an approval process for the Training and Assessment Strategy and Program Review for each course.
- Formal review of, and advice from, those responsible for audit and compliance function in a training provider to inform the work of the training provider's education development and support staff.
- Approval and review of completed Training and Assessment Strategy documents for each course, with a linked staff qualification and professional development matrix, and Program Review reports.
- Identification of educational initiatives and projects that enhance excellence in teaching, learning, assessment and support practices, and a project management model that tracks progress against improvement objectives.

A Teaching and Learning Plan

At an organisation level, many training providers develop, implement and monitor a Teaching and Learning Plan (the Plan) that guides the focus of business activity. The Plan specifies indicators of success and improvement targets, including those related to measures of both the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and learner outcomes.

In determining the success of an organisation wide focus on improving learner outcomes, training providers may use information from their enrolment data, from surveys of their own students that they have conducted or may alternatively look to surveys conducted externally such as those conducted by state and national government departments and bodies. The training provider will want to use information, such as:

- enrolment statistics;
- completion and attrition by competency and by course;
- learner feedback by competency and by course;
- learner satisfaction;
- employment outcomes;
- employer satisfaction;
- industry engagement advice;
- teacher feedback; and
- teacher satisfaction.

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2. Program Development

Introduction

Program Development encompasses the design and preparation of a program of learning and assessment to meet the needs of learners, and to achieve the outcomes of an endorsed or accredited qualification.

The key indicators of Program Development are:

- Assessing Learner Needs
- Developing the Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS)
- Program Improvement.

A good program takes account of what each learner brings with them. It builds on this to achieve the course's planned educational and employment outcomes. The planning and design processes consider the many factors required for learners to achieve the outcomes discussed at enrolment, including:

- available facilities and equipment;
- the program of knowledge and skills development required to achieve the qualification or nominated competencies;
- timing and pace of the learning program;
- available learning resources;
- personal and learning support required;
- selecting the best delivery methodology, including classroom-based, workplace-based, blended and online delivery;
- the background experience and skills of the professional educator to ensure their alignment with the cohort's needs; and
- employment or further study options available when learners complete the course.

Program Development encompasses the mechanisms that ensure the learner is placed in the course that best matches their aspirations and entry abilities.

When designing a new program, or a new version of an existing program, the course team can draw on past experience with a similar cohort or a similar program. This will include Program Review outcomes for the same or a similar course. Recommendations for improvement may provide direction and ideas that inform the new program's design.

Administratively, the program design and plan are required to complete the Training and Assessment Strategy, and documentation required by scope of registration processes.

Indicators

Assessing Learner Needs

Assessing learner needs establishes that the learner is enrolling in the course most appropriate for their background knowledge and skills, and for their aspirations for further learning and employment. Among a range of items, this checks that the learner has the foundation skills required to undertake and successfully complete the nominated program. It also documents whether the learner is likely to be eligible for credit transfer or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for competencies in their nominated course.

When the assessment is completed, the outcome needs to be saved in a provider record keeping system. Once saved, it can be reviewed as part of course improvement and the Program Review process.

Practice Perspective

- Develop your learner needs assessment with the learner in mind as the user. Start with simple questions that are easy to answer. Use plain language – avoid education jargon where possible.
- Give learners the opportunity to ask about what the questions in this tool might mean before they are required to complete it.
- Make sure the educator/course team have ready access to the outcomes, so they can use them to inform training program design, development and delivery.
- Provide relevant follow up support services related to the course requirements and the profile of the learner cohort. This might include:

  Literacy Language and Numeracy (LLN)
  - reasonable adjustments made to teaching materials and assessment tools and use of teaching strategies to respond to a learner's LLN support needs
  - open access LLN support offered across training sites/campuses on a drop-in and appointment basis
  - resources for developing LLN skills provided to professional educators and learners
  - embedded LLN Support planned and delivered by LLN specialist teaching staff in collaboration with educators in each course
  - specific work based professional development program for educators to support the integration of LLN into the program design and development

  Employment and career counselling
  - group and individual support for reviewing employment and study options related to learner aspirations and the course outcomes

  Disability and personal support where learners have indicated specific needs
  - discuss alternative enrolment options with the learner, if required, including appropriate Foundation Skills courses and choice of delivery methodology
- Consider assessing learner needs as a first engagement step in the learning program and include it as part of the review and educational planning process for each learner.
- Ask for feedback from learners about course information and enrolment processes to inform improvements to your process.

Advice from the sector

Training providers interviewed for this project indicated that assessment of learner needs is routinely reviewed to address concerns for the individual learner and ensure the required support services are readily available. They discussed how the needs assessment process, which is for an individual, can be interpreted and addressed in developing a program for a group of learners. It provides a mechanism for linking individual and collective learning needs.

Campaspe College of Adult Education: The challenge is always to balance the needs of the individual with that of the cohort.

AMES: The teacher's knowledge of the learner is well informed by the detailed approach AMES takes to completing the learner needs assessment, treating it as the opportunity for a needs analysis. It covers language requirements, background education, aspirations, and pathway interests and intentions. The information guides the learner's referral into a specific program, and into further programs which may culminate in a final program that includes work placement. The needs assessment is also the first checkpoint in a pathway planning kit that the learner and the teacher revisit to review outcomes and interests, and to plan the next steps on the education journey.

Coonara Community House: The design of the courses provides flexibility that responds to the work, family and personal needs of learners. Their needs are often established in a pre-commencement interview that covers their plans and aspirations, personal circumstances and education background. If they need help in finding a placement, it may be established at this interview.

VFA Learning: The results of the needs assessment for each learner are communicated in a handover to the homeroom teacher so that the strengths and issues learners bring with them into the class may be understood and addressed.

Master Builders Association of Victoria: Learners are assigned a learning support teacher if lower levels of language, literacy and numeracy are identified during the learner needs assessment stage. An Individual Support Plan is developed for each learner that sets out the learning support available to them during their studies. This support might include assistance with researching information and understanding the requirements of assessment tasks. Learner progress is monitored and tracked through a learning support contact log and their learning support teacher contacts them regularly to offer advice and support.

SuniTAFE: Course Guidance Officers, originally funded via Back to Work funding, continue as an important resource as they guide students into appropriate courses.

Developing the Training and Assessment Strategy

Each program's Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS) reflects the current approved version of the course, including its volume of learning. The TAS also provides details of program arrangements that meet the needs of each learner cohort to which it is delivered, promoting successful completion and outcomes.

This section is not about how to complete a TAS template. It focuses on what needs to be considered in program design and planning, and how those considerations will then be documented in a way that promotes good practice.

Training providers interviewed for the Guide reported a design and development process underpinned by attention to:

- the learner, their needs, opportunities for engagement and aspirations;
- the training package/accredited course qualification, and the assessment requirements and evidence; and
- the teachers, learning resources, technology platforms and facilities available for use within the program.

When designing the program, whether it is delivered for the first time, at a new location, or to an additional cohort, the educator/course team responsible for the development can learn from what has happened before:

- with the course or those that are similar;
- with the cohort;
- at the location; and
- using similar delivery methodology, including workplace-based, classroom, blended and online delivery.

Each instance of a course for a different cohort may require a variation in teaching, learning, assessment and support arrangements. For example:

- the design of a course for apprentices who attend the campus on a regular schedule will differ from that for apprentices who are enrolled in a workplace-based delivery model; and

- when designing and documenting the program details for a cohort of learners that consists of school leavers and return to study learners, the teacher will need to pay attention to the learners' varied background experience and knowledge, their expectations and preferred learning sequences.

Of equal importance to consideration of the needs of the cohort is the need to carefully plan the assessments to make sure that they meet the evidence requirements for each competency in the qualification. The rationale for this position is twofold:

- successful completion of mapped assessments is required for completion of the qualification; and
- if a student is unlikely to be able to complete the assessments, then perhaps they should not be enrolled in the qualification.

Many professional educators prefer to develop draft assessments that meet the competency requirements and then adjust them as needed to align with the opportunities presented by any needs of the cohort. From that starting point, the learning program can be more easily modified to reflect the development of the required knowledge, skills and application.

Practice Perspective

- Design assessment with attention to the learner profile, competency requirements and delivery plan.
- Map every assessment back to one or more competencies. The aim is to ensure that every part of every competency is adequately covered in the program. The mapping document should be retained and available for discussion with colleagues to improve practice.
- Use more than one assessment per competency to demonstrate competence and, therefore, completion of the competency. Aim for a range of assessment types for each competency. The performance and knowledge evidence statement, required for each competency, will provide the details of what needs to be gathered and reported.
- Link the learning and assessment program to the cohort's documented needs; this includes how you manage the volume of learning requirement.
- Vary the learning and assessment strategies to apply specifically to differing delivery methodologies and cohorts.
- Complete separate documentation for each delivery and assessment strategy, including workplace-based, classroom, blended and/or online modes.
- Check that the outcomes of the learning and assessment program are consistent with current workplace expectations.
- Link strategies for learner support to the learner cohort's documented needs.
- Make improvements to Program Delivery based on the recommendations of the previous course review.
- Consider the pathway options into and out of your courses.
- Set up support services to improve transition into and out of your courses in a way that is directly related to your learners' entry and exit needs, and their aspirations.
- Review your process for approving each TAS to ensure its completion, its accuracy, and its focus on learner success.
- Discussion at a focus group conducted for this project focussed on how a training provider could provide a shared repository of all required documents and resources including:
    - course resources portal – for the TAS, assessment plans, and assessment tasks;
    - centralised resources and compliance documents database – accessible to everyone; and
    - centralised templates, resources, instructions, exemplars, guidelines, policies and procedures – all learner focused.

- The group also confirmed the importance of having a nominated educator or specialist support person to provide advice for each delivery area in developing the learning and assessment program. This could be an external contractor employed by the training provider to provide oversight, if required.

Advice from the sector

VFA Learning: The primary design of courses is face to face supplemented by online delivery. This structure responds to the needs of the client group and is significant in developing learners who are motivated and engaged. The approach also promotes the development of a strong learning culture within the group.

Learners enjoy being in the class with their peers. The courses are practically based. Typically, a course will be scheduled for two days a week in class, and an additional day using a flipped classroom approach where learners work at home using online materials to review the content and prepare for the next sessions. The online content is interactive. This sort of timetable gives learners the opportunity to work in paid employment.

CIRE Services: The learners may come from a disadvantaged background, not believing they can control their lives. They lack motivation and the resources to travel or leave their homes and communities. Isolation, together with a lack of financial resources, erodes their confidence and results in a feeling of hopelessness. These learners need an extra level of support to experience success in an education and training environment.

We are keen to support learners to make sensible choices that maximise their use of government funding. We encourage learners to undertake 'industry taster' and 'plan your career' courses before they commit to a program which uses one of their funded places.

AMES: The group may include mixed abilities, varied backgrounds, differing expectations and language levels. The days of uniform class groupings are gone, and the challenge for the teacher is to manage diversity to the benefit of all. An example is the program at Glen Waverley Library for 24 largely Chinese background learners from varied education backgrounds. The class primarily focuses on language development in the context of job seeking. Given the range of learners' needs, the teacher usually prepares several lessons for a single session – all of which will happen simultaneously. Learners may be using a computer, working with a volunteer or working with the teacher. This approach to learning program design has implications for mapping learning and assessment against the competencies, and for ensuring everything is properly covered and reported. This is not simply about compliance; it is focused on making sure the learners achieve the planned educational outcomes. To aid the teacher in the delivery of a program, AMES has traditionally used a centralised unit for the design of the learning and assessment program and its resources. This provides a consistent approach across classes in the same program and also ensures mapping and reporting is covered. But it cannot take into account the present and current needs of the individual in the class during each session.

Assisting the work of the teacher is a team of Lead Educators who are usually experienced teachers with expertise at a particular level of the learning program, in curriculum design, or in a particular delivery methodology such as online. They provide general and specialist support to teachers, review the needs analysis of a group, and work with teachers to confirm the curriculum for the semester or the term.

WCIG: Cert II Cleaning Operations was recently offered to a group of 15 Tibetan people. The vocational course was preceded by an ACFE language and literacy pre-accredited course to prepare them. WCIG includes a social enterprise that delivers cleaning services, so work placement and practice can be provided. The group also visited local venues such as a university and a shopping centre to demonstrate different sorts of cleaning.

South West TAFE: There is a strong focus on the TAS. The TAS Review Panel meets weekly to review TAS documents, both for courses new to scope of registration and revised TAS documents. The Panel's task is to approve and lock the final documentation before uploading to the intranet document library or making an application to add the new qualifications to scope. The Panel's focus is to consider all the issues related to a program's quality development and delivery. The Panel focuses on specific aspects of the TAS, depending on

the course/program and any previously identified issues. The process acts as a kind of moderation and professional development as the staff proposing each TAS meet with the Panel to explain their course design. The process also means staff need to understand all aspects of the TAS and the reasoning behind its use; for example, Volume of Learning and understanding the Learner Cohort.

The TAS Review Panel can approve with no changes, approve with small changes, grant conditional approval, or deny approval. The proposer receives feedback about the decision and ways to make improvements, if required. Assistance is provided by specialist support staff. An example of conditional approval may be when a course has started but the TAS was not completed prior to enrolment. The course will be allowed to 'teach out' but no further enrolments can occur until the TAS has been completed to the Panel's satisfaction. It is intended to have all aspects of the TAS online by the end of 2017 and have pre-filled forms to assist staff. The outcomes of the TAS Review Panel are available on the intranet. Staff are now better informed and engaged with these processes.

Master Builders Association of Victoria: To get the best training outcomes, courses are developed based on discussions with employers and learners. For example, when designing its Diploma of Building and Construction (Building), industry partners were keen for a 52-week course. However, after speaking to learners, Master Builders advised that a longer course was required for quality learning. This was based on learner feedback that intensive study was not possible while working and managing family commitments. Therefore, the final Diploma course developed is 95 weeks in length, operates 'one week on, one week off', and learners complete 15 hours of coursework outside the classroom each week, so they can manage learning in their own time. Classes are scheduled outside work hours (in the evening and on Saturdays) to provide flexibility for learners with commitments outside study.

Springvale Neighbourhood House: Tutors work with each learner to develop an individual Learner Plan that sets out their learning goals and milestones. Learning is 'self-paced' so that learners take ownership of their learning and feel they're in control. Tutors design language, literacy and numeracy learning around practical and engaging tasks that also promote leadership and participation. Class sizes are small and paid tutors are supported by volunteer tutors so that learners can receive one-to-one support. Examples of classroom activities include:

- The Literacy Cultural Kitchen, where learners write, demonstrate and present cultural recipes;
- Community excursions, which involve completing worksheets and making classroom presentations, and
- Real world learning, where learners practise tasks such as ordering a coffee in a café or purchasing food from a local market.

Program Improvement

Changes to, and/or improvements in, the design of the learning, assessment and support arrangements can occur at any time. They may be prompted by feedback from learners or teachers, regulatory changes, or expert advice from industry, community or educational support services. Minor adjustments that improve learner outcomes and satisfaction do not have to wait until the next delivery of the program.

It is not sensible, however, to introduce mid-course changes that will disrupt learner attendance, interaction or engagement. Some changes – such as the sequence of competency delivery, significant changes to assessment arrangements, or a new delivery methodology – will need to wait until they can be properly thought through, discussed, designed and documented. A scheduled systematic Program Review will help clarify the improvements that can be made for the course's next iteration.

The Program Review process is considered in detail in Chapter 5.

Practice Perspective

- Use a clear and consistent process for gathering and considering feedback from learners at specified intervals, both during the course and at its end.
- Ensure the process for gathering feedback from learners gives you data that can be analysed and reviewed across cohorts, delivery methods and locations.
- Use a clear and consistent process for engaging with industry and community about matters relevant to the learning program and document the outcomes.
- Use formal and informal engagement with industry and/or community groups to advise on new resources, guest speakers, excursions, scenarios or case studies that can be included in the learning program to improve its relevance, application and outcomes.
- Check that the strategies and arrangements for learner support are relevant to the documented needs of the learner cohort and that you are aware of the way in which learners make use of the support services.
- Engage with stakeholders to inform and advise on:
    o design of training and assessment strategies;
    o details of training and assessment practices;
    o practices to complement training package/course requirements and the learner needs;
    o resources, including facilities and equipment;
    o current industry skills and knowledge required by educators; and
    o pathways into and out of courses.
- Stakeholders can include industry, community, schools and government offices and agencies and any other organisation or interested group that can provide advice, ideas and opportunities for cooperation or joint activity.

Advice from the sector

Swinburne Online and Chisholm Online: Reported continuous review of learner engagement, outcomes and feedback, and of teacher and developer suggestions for improvement and redesign. The team managing the learning environment then decides what can be improved immediately, what can wait for the next delivery period, and what needs to be included in the next cycle of redesign.

WCIG: The placement model for Early Childhood Education and Care has been adjusted to better meet learner needs. Learners start placement of one day a week at Week 8, or when they are ready. The teacher visits the learner on site once a month. This model offers flexibility in ensuring the needs of the individual learner, whether mature age or young person, can be considered and met. From an education perspective, the one day a week placement gives the learner the opportunity to become part of the staff of a centre, developing relationships with children, their parents and other staff.

Holmesglen Institute: When Holmesglen identified that a significant proportion of apprentice learners were not completing their studies, the Institute sought to understand why, and to identify how it could increase completion rates. Responses from disengaged apprentices indicated a range of issues, including falling behind due to a lack of time allowed to complete study at work, or employers who did not allow time off to attend school. Some learners said they had struggled to understand the course requirements. Others said they had a learning disability, and/or were unable to afford tuition fees. Personal issues were also a barrier, with some learners experiencing unstable accommodation.

In mid-2016, the Institute launched the Apprentice Support Centre across all its campuses. For those learners identified as being at risk, the Apprentice Support Centre offers support in addition to the assistance they receive from their classroom teacher and their Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) provider, who liaises between apprentices and their employers. This enables 'wrap around' support for each apprentice. A learner counsellor with a specific focus on apprentices is also available, can arrange assistance with fees,

housing, and support with understanding course requirements and managing learning difficulties. While the completion rate of apprentices varies from trade to trade, Holmesglen's average completion rates are now significantly higher than the national average.

Coonara Community House: Early Childhood Education and Care learners now complete a return to study module embedded in the early stages of their course. There is no extra cost for the module. Since its initiation, the teaching team has seen a decrease in individual academic support required by their learners. The co-ordinator plans to extend the module to the learners in the Community Services courses in the next enrolment period.

Campaspe College of Adult Education: The Individual Support course used to take learners to local aged care sites towards the end of the course. The teacher suggested changing the timing of the visits to the first two weeks of the course. The change means the teacher can use the site visit experiences as an important aspect of the training program by focusing on the learners' concrete and shared experience of the industry.

3. Program Delivery

Introduction

This chapter considers the key indicators of Program Delivery which enable focused delivery and assessment methodologies that meet learner needs. The indicators are:

- The Assessment Process
- Informing Learners of Program Requirements
- Learning Resources and Facilities
- Learner Engagement
- Learner Support and Services.

Program Delivery addresses key aspects of assessment, desired characteristics of learner support and engagement, and provision of effective learning materials, resources, facilities and equipment.

This chapter offers evidence of good or excellent practice. Case studies provide examples of training providers meeting the challenges associated with effective course and program delivery.

Indicators

The Assessment Process

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence from multiple sources and making professional judgements as to whether competency has been achieved by the learner. Assessment:

- is informed by industry engagement;
- meets training package qualification and/or accredited course requirements; and
- is consistent with the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence.

Course progression rates can be an indicator of whether the learning and assessment program is meeting learner development needs.

For assessment to be effective, assessors need to understand the principles of competency based assessment. The aim is to develop assessment processes linking contemporary workplace practices and procedures with the competency standards and other components of the respective Training Package/accredited course. Assessors need to be able to identify quality evidence and work cooperatively with learners, peers and other key stakeholders in the assessment process.

The hallmarks of sound assessment apply equally to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). RPL is another form of assessment of a learner's competence. The RPL process uses evidence from formal, non-formal and informal learning undertaken and achieved by the learner/candidate.

As a cycle of continuous improvement, the assessment process can be considered in the following way:
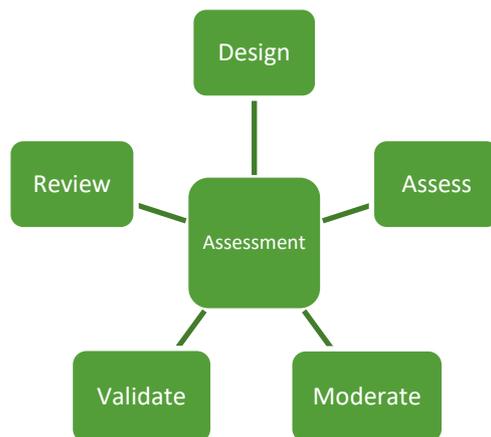
The following Practice Perspective provides further detail.

Practice Perspective

Ensure there is an agreed and well communicated policy and procedure about assessment that includes information regarding design, conduct, recording, validation and improvement.

Design assessment:

- ensure you have a template or set of templates for educators to use in recording the required details of each assessment, including that it covers every part of the competency;
- select assessment methods that are appropriate for the delivery methodology (such as classroom, workplace, blended and online);
- ensure the selected assessment methods are reasonable for the cohort undertaking the course; and
- include a range of assessment methods for each competency or cluster of competencies.

Assess:

- use a mapping document to show that assessment addresses every part of the competency;
- ensure the training provider templates for assessment include instructions for assessors, including model answers and criteria for observation;
- check that the educator gathers a useful range of accurate assessment information to support a decision of competent/not competent;
- provide prompt and constructive feedback on learner performance for each assessment;
- where assessment is graded, ensure the competent/not competent decision is made before a grade is assigned; and
- ensure the RPL process is consistent with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.
- Check that:
    - o the template for RPL provides clear process, instructions and advice for both learners and assessors
    - o RPL outcomes can lead to a range of appropriate pathways
    - o appropriately qualified assessors conduct the RPL process
    - o assessors seek multiple examples of evidence if they consider they do not have sufficient relevant evidence – they use appropriate methods to put evidence together and judge it
    - o timely and appropriate feedback is provided to candidates, and they are assisted to develop appropriate action plans based on the RPL outcomes

Moderate:

- moderate assessment instruments, tasks and outcomes across the course team, and/or within a community of practice that could include other providers; and
- capture the outcomes of the moderation exercise in updated versions of assessment instruments, tasks and materials.

Validate:

- document and follow up on the validation of all assessment processes and outcomes; and

- attending to the following factors is likely to increase the willingness of industry experts to contribute to external validation of assessment processes.
    - Prepare a validation schedule early in the year so industry experts can choose to contribute to those sessions they are most interested in or are available for. Leave space in the schedule to allow industry experts to nominate their own topics of interest or available times – invite them to nominate topics or times. If appropriate, schedule a validation event to accommodate this interest. If not appropriate, thank them for their input and explain why it is not being acted on.
    - During initial engagement with industry, extend an invitation to participate in the validation of assessment sessions outlined in the schedule, rather than leaving the invitation until later in the year immediately prior to the validation session. Present the validation schedule as the opportunity for industry experts to choose the topic and when they wish to contribute.
    - Advise industry experts that they will consider refined and updated assessment tools. Their input will be sought only on industry specific issues.
    - Present the validation invitation as an opportunity for input not restricted to a specific time or a specific place. Multiple industry experts' involvement in validation of assessment may be required to achieve comprehensive feedback. This can be achieved through meetings attended by a number of industry experts, conversations with individual industry experts, and oral or written input which may be face to face or conducted via communication technology.
    - Consider clustering units of competency around 'topics' or 'themes' that logically fit together, or breaking units down into topics related to workplace roles or activities that are meaningful to industry.
    - Address concerns about intellectual property and confidentiality by recording educators' and industry experts' commitment to confidentiality.

Review:
- Ensure that recommendations from any level of course review are reflected in changes to assessment protocols, instruments and instructions for learners and educators.

For further information, refer to Chapter 5, Program Review.

Assessment is not an isolated process. It is a collaborative approach that includes the learner, the educator/s, and industry input and feedback. In developing skills and knowledge, it forms part of a pathway to employment or to further training. Assessment happens within a framework that develops the skills and knowledge to perform effectively in the workplace. Skill gaps identified during the learning process are seen as opportunities for further development.

Informing Learners of Program Requirements
Learners are best supported when they have a clear understanding of the training and assessment they will undertake. Training providers should seek to provide students with information on what program they have enrolled in, where training and assessment will be delivered, who will deliver it, and how it will be delivered.

A course delivery schedule can be a useful way of ensuring the information provided to learners results in a clear understanding of the course/program they are enrolled in. It is usually best communicated in some form of standardised template (hard copy or electronic) and is completed for, and formally acknowledged by, each student or group of students. The formal document should be available to all educators delivering into a course and adjusted to reflect any changes in the course for an individual learner.

For individual educators responsible for these administrative requirements, the challenge is to ensure the document is adjusted to reflect changes in delivery, and/or to update changes in

response to learner need. Good review processes within the training provider can often simplify these tasks to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Learning Resources and Facilities

Learners need to have ready access to learning resources, facilities and equipment that are relevant for each competency undertaken. These learning materials and resources are explicitly linked to the competencies in which each learner is enrolled, and all are linked to training package/accredited course requirements. All learning resources, facilities and equipment need to be referenced in the TAS. As part of the Program Review process, there should be feedback mechanisms that enable responses from learners and educators about learning resources, facilities and equipment. This feedback should then be addressed in the updated delivery arrangements.

> **Practice Perspective**
>
> - Ensure each learning resource, facility and piece of equipment is clearly linked to one or more competencies.
> - Provide ready access to each learning resource, including access through a learning management system, borrowing through a library, printed copy or availability on a USB. More than one option for access is preferred.
> - Where the learning resources are workbooks, check for their consistency and coverage of the competencies they address.
> - Where the learning resources are prepared by the educators, include a check for compliance with copyright requirements.
> - Ensure facilities, equipment and software are consistent with workplace standards and expectations.
> - Include industry feedback on facilities and resources in industry engagement and consultation conducted by educators, and in validation and moderation of assessment.
> - Engage new staff in the development of an individual delivery schedule for learners to provide a valuable professional development opportunity for them to better understand the training and support required and build their knowledge and skills of the VET system.

Learner Engagement

To support successful completions, learners need to be provided with educational support services and have the opportunity to provide formal feedback on their engagement with the learning and assessment program. A widely recognised and understood policy and process for addressing complaints regarding the learning program, and regarding support arrangements, should be in place and accessible to all learners. The feedback from learners in all cohorts and delivery strategies is then ideally gathered in a planned and systematic way. Consideration of this information informs changes to practice. Learner feedback can be gathered in multiple ways so as to gather responses related to specific delivery and assessment conditions, including workplace, classroom, blended and online methodologies. Using a regular satisfaction survey at unit level or course level can inform improvements in Program Delivery, and data obtained can be used in Program Review processes.

A quality training provider will have a policy and procedure in place for identifying learners at risk of non-completion and addressing their needs; see the Practice Perspective below for an example.

> **Practice Perspective**
>
> During the delivery and formative assessment of competencies, you may become aware that you need to adjust some aspects of the program to better meet learner needs or take advantage of emerging opportunities. The scenario might apply to the whole group, a subset within the group, or to an individual.

For example:

- Where learners may be struggling with a particular competency or grappling with a concept or process, you may need to modify the pace of the program to give more time to covering the problematic aspects. Or you may look at how you can revisit the same concept or process within the delivery of another competency.
- As you get to know your learners and their backgrounds, you may realise you want to adjust the detail of an assessment task to more accurately reflect discussion and interests within the group.
- You may decide to add additional learning resources to address perceived gaps, to extend the understanding of the learners, or take advantage of their interests.
- Where work within the learner group indicates the need for further development of language, literacy, digital literacy or numeracy, you may include extra activities and resources, or you may vary your planned activities to provide more focus on the underpinning foundation skill requirements.

In such circumstances you may:

- Discuss proposed changes to the type of assessment, the duration of delivery or the mode of delivery with the person responsible for the quality of the course and learner outcomes. These changes will probably need approval and will need to be reflected in an updated version of the Training and Assessment Strategy.
- Maintain clear oversight of the progress of each learner in terms of their engagement with learning activities, with other learners, and with any other factors likely to impact on their success as a learner, such as their employer.
- Ask for and document feedback from learners during each competency, as well as at the end.
- Consider including the use of technology in the delivery of your courses through whatever mechanisms are relevant and available, and support learners in its use.
- Address the LLN needs of learners and work creatively to overcome individual barriers to learning.
- Enable learners to share and take responsibility for their own learning and assessment, setting goals that stretch and challenge them.
- Use a clear process for addressing learner complaints. Ensure any lessons learned are communicated amongst teachers and/or across the course team.

You can probably think of other situations where you have acted to improve learner outcomes based on your local and immediate professional judgement. That is good practice as a professional educator.

Advice from the sector

Holmesglen Institute: Operates an Apprentice Support Centre that supports trade students to successfully complete their studies.

Holmesglen's trade apprenticeship training attracts mainly young people into areas including general construction, furnishing and upholstery, food trades, electrical and electronics, engineering and horticulture.

Holmesglen identified that a significant proportion of apprentice students were not completing their studies. In response, the Institute sought to understand why, and to identify how it could increase completion rates.

In early 2016, the Institute launched a pilot Apprentice Support Centre, which included an applied research project to understand how to better support students. The research project engaged 180 apprentice students, as well as students who had disengaged from their studies at Holmesglen.

The research highlighted that many students find the apprenticeship system complex and difficult to navigate. Life challenges add an additional barrier for some.

As was noted in an earlier Practice Perspective in Chapter 2, responses from disengaged apprentices indicated a range of issues, including falling behind due to a lack of time allowed to complete study at work, or employers who did not allow time off to attend school. Some students said they had struggled to understand the course requirements. Others said they had a learning disability, and/or were unable to afford tuition fees. Personal issues were also a barrier, with some students experiencing unstable accommodation. Holmesglen

now tracks the attendance and performance of each apprentice more closely. It also ensures that all information about apprentices is accessible to Apprentice Support Centre staff.

Increasing numbers of students are accessing advice and support from the Centre. In the first quarter of the Centre's operation in 2016, support officers engaged with 139 apprentices. In the first quarter of 2017, officers engaged with 237 apprentices, representing a 71 per cent increase in the number of apprentices receiving advice and assistance to help them successfully complete their studies.

Learner Support and Services

Learners benefit from access to appropriate personal support services, and to opportunities that provide formal feedback on these support services. Services provided could include career counselling, access to personal support (including financial advice), and language, literacy and numeracy support. Support services should be provided by staff who are appropriately qualified, trained and supported. The services should be reviewed regularly and inform changed practice. Well managed, contemporary support services can contribute to achieving positive learner outcomes, and improved satisfaction with the learning program and the training provider. An example of a pastoral care approach to support learning is identified in the Advice from the sector included below.

Practice Perspective
- Ensure you have a process for identifying learners who are at risk. And provide ready access to the kind of support that will assist them in addressing their issues, which may include study skills, LLN or personal factors.
- Build strong working relationships between educators and the support services you offer for learners.
- Ask for feedback and regular reporting (annual at minimum) from those providing each support service for your learners, detailing the issues learners have raised and the support they have required.
- Organise for some educators in each course or at each site to complete a Mental Health First Aid course.
- Include targeted professional development for educators in language, literacy and numeracy as part of their annual development plans.

Advice from the sector

VFA Learning: offers a unique pastoral care and learning support program to maintain student engagement so they successfully complete their education and training. Approximately 1,000 students enrol in the training provider's childcare, fitness and massage courses each year at its Geelong, Melbourne CBD and Narre Warren campuses.

VFA Learning offers supported progression for students who have completed school, with a unique pastoral care service called SWAP (Student Wellbeing Assistance Program). SWAP focuses on assisting students throughout their studies by supporting good study habits and attendance at classes.

It starts on the first day of each course, when each class is assigned a dedicated homeroom teacher. These teachers become a regular touch-point for students, providing individual encouragement and monitoring.

During orientation, each homeroom teacher sets out the support that VFA Learning offers, as well as student obligations required to succeed. A representative from the youth mental health provider Headspace also talks to students to highlight services available if they need further support or assistance during their studies.

Homeroom teachers are allocated time each week to attend to the pastoral care of their students. They also receive training on topics including mental health first aid, understanding different generations and training difficult clients.

Individual student attendance, and coursework completion and results are tracked through VFA's Learning Management System. If a student's attendance drops off, or their coursework achievement reduces, their

homeroom teacher approaches them to see if any barriers or issues have arisen that the student needs assistance with. VFA Learning refers to this process as 'falling stars'.

This means at-risk students are identified early and VFA Learning intervenes to offer appropriate support. This might involve assisting them with study habits or additional learning support, or even personally taking them to Headspace to receive extra support. If the student decides to withdraw from their studies, VFA Learning supports them in that too.

4. The Professional Educator

Introduction

Professional educators underpin quality learning, teaching and assessment in any training provider, regardless of size, delivery methodology, number of qualifications on scope or the number of learners. VET educators are recognised as dual professionals because they have industry expertise and knowledge as well as professional teacher/educator skills.

The challenge for VET educators, and the training providers employing them, is to maintain currency and proficiency in both industry and professional domains. Criticism of VET educators infers many do not maintain proficiency or understanding of current industry trends and practices, and it is often challenging for training providers to provide sufficient opportunity to ensure staff are current. Employment practices that see many VET educators employed as contractors or casual staff have created confusion as to where the responsibility lies for maintaining the required currency. Professional development opportunities are varied and sometimes expensive to access. Who pays for professional development is often a vexatious issue for many training providers and the ability to cover all costs often depends on the capacity, size and type of training provider. Larger training providers often have the opportunity to provide in-house services. Several examples of in-house colleges, divisions and units are considered in this chapter.

A countervailing combination of matters with potential to improve the quality of teaching provision includes: actively supporting and promoting excellence in teaching practice; providing opportunities for industry release and engagement; developing agreed standards of professional practice through a collaborative approach; developing a risk based model for assessing quality teaching provision; and creating opportunities to recognise and praise quality teaching provision.

This chapter discusses five indicators that support the Professional Educator. These include:
- Supporting the Professional Educator
- Workforce Development
- Vocational Currency
- Professional Currency
- Performance Development and Review Processes.

Indicators

Supporting the Professional Educator
As noted above, VET educators are dual professionals in that they require current industry knowledge and expertise, as well as the skills and knowledge to facilitate learning in a variety of methodologies. The methods training providers use to engage and develop their staff underpin the successful integration of the four factors outlined in this Guide.

Effective teaching is the main driver in providing successful learner outcomes. The training provider's approach to providing workforce development for the educator as a dual professional is often the game changer in establishing and maintaining quality teaching, learning and assessment. A strategic approach to workforce development addresses the requirements for qualifications and the development and maintenance of currency in both vocational and professional domains. Building practitioner inquiry and reflective practice contributes to developing effective teacher capability.

Workforce Development

Workforce planning is a mechanism for creating and maintaining an appropriate staff mix through a process of forecasting staffing needs in line with the business strategy and relevant State and Federal VET policy. A planned approach to the development of the workforce identifies current skills and knowledge needs, pinpoints gaps, and plans for current and future needs.

Ideally, all training providers would have a locally approved workforce development program, plan or strategy that may also incorporate a capability framework. Capability frameworks typically seek to standardise performance development and management criteria to enable the comparison of performance within and across teaching departments and disciplines, while standardising development expectations. Capability frameworks can assist in creating a unified culture. They provide a common performance development language across the workforce, facilitate identification of future leaders, and enable the nurturing of leadership attributes.

Many providers have used the Innovation & Business Skills Australia (IBSA) Capability Framework, either as it stands or contextualised to suit their needs.[1] J Mitchell and Associates[2] have also developed a series of planning tools to identify capability gaps and support the professional development and capability building of individuals and training providers. Whichever capability framework is used, it is common to see educator capability systematically described for both vocational and professional domains. This emphasises the dual focus of the educator role and expected goals and outcomes for improving practice should be identified in targeted individual plans. These plans are contextualised to training provider, industry and community needs.

At the very least, a workforce development plan should provide a record of each educator's qualifications, professional and vocational currency, and their development plan. It should be maintained at the training provider level. A workforce development strategy and capability framework (if in place) can result in improvements in educator engagement and in developing their practice expertise. Regular reports of actions against targets should be provided to the relevant educational oversight person/committee (as applicable) and be reflected in course team minutes. Ideally, improvements in teacher quality and practice would be reflected in evidence of improved student retention, completion and satisfaction, as recorded in relevant data, surveys and other instruments for gauging satisfaction.

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[1] https://store.ibsa.org.au/sites/default/files/media/VET%20Capability%20Framework%20Implementation%20Guide.pdf
[2] http://www.jma.com.au/
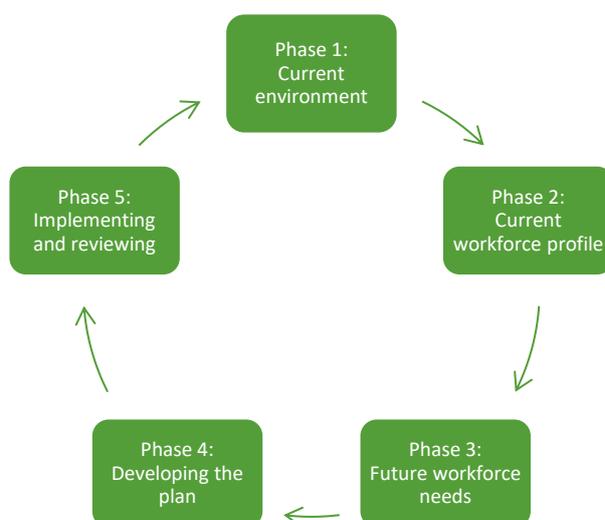
Appropriate and timely induction programs for teachers can contribute to a successful start to a teaching career. At their best, educator induction programs clarify expectations of the position which ultimately leads to improved performance, staff satisfaction and compliance with training provider policies and procedures. They would also include induction for more specialised roles such as online learning and teaching, as well as meeting other training provider business requirements.

Practice Perspective.
Effective induction for teaching staff includes:
- Access to all systems, such as IT, HR, Library, Intranet, Quality and other specific systems.
- Expectations outlined with respect to maintaining both educational and vocational currency in line with training provider's policies and procedures – for example, the professional development policy would be outlined.
- Policies related to performance management identified and explained; links to continuing professional development established.
- Policies with respect to student lifecycle identified and explained – for example:
    o staff engagement with recruitment, learner engagement, Program Delivery, student support services, assessment, completion and graduation; and
    o expectations of staff regarding their role and responsibilities.
- Expectations regarding peer to peer or team involvement explained – for example, contributions expected regarding course/program evaluation and continuous improvement processes.
- Expectations with respect to innovative pedagogy identified and explained – for example, delivery, assessment and support methodologies used in face to face, workplace-based, blended or online delivery.
- The expectations of staff involved in online/blended delivery explained and clarified.

Continuing professional development for educators includes opportunities for peer engagement, support and collaboration. A record should be kept of individual professional development undertaken and provide links to the training provider's workforce development strategy, as appropriate.

Practice Perspective
- Align opportunities for professional and vocational development of educators to the training provider's Teaching and Learning Plan and the business strategy.
- Maintain training provider systems to generate an annual report against a workforce development plan.
- Provide at least one scheduled opportunity annually for each educator to discuss with their coordinator or manager their current role in the organisation and the further development of teaching and organisational capability. The outcomes of the discussion should be documented and followed up.
- Ensure each educator has access to, and a clear contribution to maintaining their individual record of professional and vocational development and currency.
- Consider expenditure on planned and targeted workforce development as an investment in the quality of the education and training provided by the training provider – and the outcomes for learners.

Advice from the sector

The examples below highlight activities that can be undertaken or accessed.

Box Hill Institute's Teaching and Learning College: The College and the Institute's Innovation Team collaborate to bring together online material on best teaching practices, learning technology, assessment and all aspects of VET and higher education. Comprising a small group of experts with diverse experience and knowledge, the Team collaborates across the Institute to develop innovative ways to build teaching quality and generate better student learning. Staff can access a wealth of professional development through the online virtual College, including a teaching education program, teacher education materials, networks and support services.

Yarrawonga Neighbourhood House: To enable its staff to continually improve their teaching practices, the Neighbourhood House uses online platforms as a form of professional development. The platforms allow the Neighbourhood House's teachers to connect with colleagues online, and to access and share a range of professional development opportunities and resources.

Many professional development workshops and seminars are located in Melbourne and require significant travel and time. A key way these training providers have overcome their geographic isolation is through the North East e-Learning Community of Practice. This collaborative online portal links training organisations and teachers through an online portal using a webinar classroom platform. Yarrawonga's teachers are among 20 individuals who participate in the North East e-Learning Community of Practice. Teachers access and share a range of professional development opportunities, including resources from the VET Development Centre.

ACPET Professional Development Program: ACPET recognises professionals need to engage, discuss topics of interest and exchange ideas. To support this, ACPET has created four Communities of Practice via ACPET's PD LinkedIn group – LLN and Foundation Skills; Assessment; EAL and ELICOS; and Online Learning. ACPET has also developed an extensive suite of webinars that Members can access. The webinars are grouped under 27 specific headings and cover over 200 topics.

VET Development Centre (VDC): The VDC offers ongoing professional development to teachers and non-teachers in the VET sector through an extensive range of webinars, workshops and events. The VDC specialises in offering non-formal training for the VET workforce, as well as offering customised consultancy, management and strategic support services for all VET providers.

Vocational Currency

Industry engagement activities are critical to maintaining the current skills and knowledge of educators. In accordance with the training provider's workforce development strategy, an industry communication and engagement strategy should be developed to record industry activities.

Individual development plans for vocational currency activities are linked to a training provider's industry communication and engagement strategy. Individual development plans specify and monitor outcomes. Records are maintained for each educator within the training provider. Used effectively, capability frameworks can identify skills gaps and address opportunities for improvement via Professional Development Plans and activities.

Industry engagement can identify and/or confirm the skills and knowledge required of educators. These requirements can be identified in individual plans and identified in the skills matrix at the training provider level. The outcomes of an educator's industry engagement identified in course team minutes and reflected in the annual teaching plan. Opportunities for educators to share vocational knowledge and skills with peers can be provided routinely and recorded in course team minutes and may include presentations to peers and/or at workshops and conferences.

Outcomes can also be included in the Program Review process and can inform changes in Program Development and Delivery.

There is a variety of ways to ensure educator engagement in industry release opportunities, including: maintaining a log book of industry release opportunity and outcomes, attending industry network meetings, participating in industry based projects, and via peer to peer knowledge sharing. Industry release may also be facilitated through applications for VET Development Centre scholarships[3] or an International Specialist Skills Institute Fellowship.[4]

Practice perspective

- Teachers and assessors have undertaken recent professional development:
  - in knowledge and practice of vocational education and training; and
  - in learning and assessment, including competency-based training and assessment.
- The training provider has processes in place:
  - to obtain the full involvement of teachers and assessors and other staff in improving consistency of assessment;
  - to keep teachers and assessors informed about the performance of the assessment system;
  - for teachers and assessors to demonstrate they have vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed either by holding the competency they are delivering or demonstrating equivalence of competency; and
  - to ensure that all teachers and assessors, including part time, casual and sessional, have access to relevant information and professional development and have the opportunity to participate in networks and external activities to maintain currency.
- The current industry skills held by teachers, trainers and assessors are consistent with the required skills for teachers, trainers and assessors that your training provider has identified through industry engagement.

Advice from the sector

SuniTAFE: The Industry Experts as Teachers program was initially funded by the Victorian Government and managed by the VDC. SuniTAFE continued with the principles of this program which enabled providers to encourage industry personnel with specialist skills to commence teaching. With the assistance of a mentor, they are supported as they complete their teaching qualification and commence their teaching practice.

Professional Currency

Professional development programs focussed on teaching and learning encourage and support educators in exploring and implementing new pedagogical approaches required for diverse cohorts and delivery methodologies. Ways of facilitating this capability can be identified in course team minutes and reflected in the annual teaching plan/strategy (as appropriate to the training provider's size). To ensure quality improvement, a professional currency plan for each educator should be developed and maintained within the training provider. Professional currency activities that inform teaching practice may include attention to delivery methodologies such as workplace-based, classroom-based, blended and online delivery approaches. To broaden their knowledge and understanding of the VET sector, the training provider can encourage educators to engage in appropriate professional educator networks within and external to the training provider.

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[3] https://vdc.edu.au/
[4] http://www.issinstitute.org.au/

Practice Perspective

- Use an organising framework approach to identify the critical aspects of scope for both vocational and professional practice. The framework may focus on touchpoints in the learner journey, or of the kind used in this Guide. Ideally, you would include definitions and examples for each section. Providing a common and logical schema assists in deciding what is relevant to each educator, as well as determining the contribution each development activity can make to the course team and the training provider's teaching and learning practice.
- Provide opportunities for educators to share knowledge, experience and insights within their course team and across course teams. This should include interaction with educators from diverse industry areas and with those who work with similar learner cohorts.
- Where possible, frame professional development and vocational development within the context of work-based projects.
- Cultivate a culture that welcomes and responds to questions and requests for support and further learning by educators.

Advice from the sector

AMES: Assisting the work of the teacher is a team of Lead Educators who are usually experienced teachers with expertise at a particular level of the learning program, in curriculum design or in a particular delivery methodology such as online. They provide general and specialist support to teachers, induct new staff and organise validation and moderation. They also review the needs analysis of a group and work with teachers to confirm the curriculum for the semester or the term. In addition, they lead professional development days and attend advisory group meetings.

WCIG: Meetings of teachers are held once a month, generally grouped into those teaching in Foundation and related programs, and those in vocational courses. The typical agenda focuses on group sharing and development, including what they are doing with their group, wins and losses, and information sharing. Often teachers develop joint approaches and activities. The meetings also include specific professional development for teachers to support their engagement with learners and their program.

Wodonga TAFE: Offered the Diploma of VET to teaching staff in 2016. The course was developed with input from across the various departments and tailored specifically to Wodonga's learning and quality systems. Sharing and collaboration between participants were central to developing the capability of each teacher.

Maintaining current and appropriate teaching qualifications remains a challenge for many providers given recent changes to the Training and Education (TAE) Training Package. Professional development is often required to ensure staff have contemporary knowledge and skills that enable them to train and assess effectively. Another challenge is to find staff to meet a training delivery gap, particularly in new program areas or where staff may not have current industry expertise. Bringing in casual staff who have recent relevant industry knowledge provides contemporary vocational expertise, but they will require support to develop their teaching expertise. One possibility to ease new staff into teaching is to encourage them to obtain a Skill Set from the TAE Training Package as a first step to completing the Certificate IV TAE.

Performance Development and Review Processes

Effective monitoring and development of the training provider's staff will assist in meeting quality learning and teaching outcomes. Training providers will have a performance development and review process to suit its business needs, and its form may depend on size of the operation and the employment status of staff.

The objectives of a performance development and review process ensure that training provider staff:

- understand the training provider's goals and objectives and their expected contribution to achieving positive outcomes;
- understand their current levels of proficiency and currency; and
- have the opportunity to improve vocational and educational competency and currency through effective and targeted professional development.

An effective performance development and review process (or similar) encourages discussion and feedback between staff members and their managers based on a clear understanding of performance expectations for each staff member's role and responsibilities. To facilitate a positive and productive experience, a minimum of two sessions is recommended each year. Depending on the training provider's size and scope, the process may only include direct employees of the training provider, although best practice would include casual and contracted staff.

The annual cycle can comprise the following stages:

Planning – expectations identified, and specific development goals agreed to by all parties.

Tracking progress – informal and formal feedback to monitor activities against planned and agreed targets and outcomes.

Feedback – this can be from other sources including student satisfaction surveys, responses from industry partners and other key stakeholders, any research or formal instruction programs, and 360 feedback (if in place).

Performance Review – formal discussion to review outcomes against plan, highlight achievements and identify any areas for improvement in the next planning cycle.

Practice perspective

Performance development and review must be constructive and objective and designed to monitor progress in completing agreed goals. Activities and processes to support an effective Performance Development and Review system may include:

- Reviewing and/or updating the Position Description to ensure it reflects current job role and expectations.
- Identifying major tasks required to carry out the duties of the role and the skills to do this, along with the knowledge necessary to satisfactorily perform these tasks.
- Identifying goals to be achieved in the planning period – goals may include formal and informal professional development activities and specifying links to the training provider's business strategy/educational plan.

- Setting SMART Goals – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant/results focussed, and time-bound.
- A Professional Development Plan that is developed and agreed, based on the information gathered, and is informed by the goals identified for achievement – the plan may focus on any skills gaps identified in the planning and discussion phase and
- Gathering and sharing effective feedback from multiple sources with the aim of: tracking performance; providing timely feedback on both effective and ineffective performance; and considering whether performance expectations and goals should be revised or replaced.

5. Program Review

Introduction

Continuous improvement in the form of Program Review is a planned, comprehensive and systematic evaluation of each course/program which references evidence and anecdotal factors at nominated times and with a nominated focus. The process always includes feedback loops that ensure findings are articulated and circulated. It ensures the recommendations are considered and actioned. This results in continuous improvements to the learning program and to outcomes for learners.

The key indicators of Program Review are:

- Preparation
- Process
- Reporting.

The version of Program Review addressed in this Guide focuses on the quality of learning and assessment outcomes as they relate to employment and further study. This focus is in addition to any ongoing, informal review, oversight and follow up of course delivery and assessment, and how effectively teachers are engaged with their learners.

Therefore, the focus here is on gathering information, data and intelligence that may not be readily available or visible to those teaching the course. The addition of this kind of scheduled and comprehensive review provides teachers and managers with opportunities to identify patterns of responses, and to view the program's learning and assessment outcomes through a wider lens.

There are other versions of a Program Review that do not address learning and assessment. Those versions may focus on business aspects, including consumer demand, competitors, emerging trends in industry, and employment prospects. Additional versions of a Program Review entail a strategic focus on the training provider which could include attention to a broad industry area and its related programs at all levels, required facilities and industry alliances. This chapter does not address this kind of Program Review.

At program level, the Review process assists course teams to develop an evidence based approach to gathering and acting on learner, industry and community data, information and intelligence. The intent of this Review process is to provide courses and services that are:

- distinguished by their educational quality and outcomes;
- valued by key stakeholder groups; and
- consistent with workplace practices and expectations.

The outcome is improvement in the overall performance of the organisation as an education and training provider, as measured against its targets and community/industry/learner expectations.

The challenge is to:

- monitor and review the outcomes of each program to ensure learner progress, satisfaction and outcomes; and
- manage the review of programs across the variety of learner cohorts and delivery methodologies.

Indicators

Preparation

A comprehensive Program Review of learning and assessment relies on a clear analysis and understanding of data, information and intelligence that can be gathered for the items contributing to excellent outcomes for learners. This includes attention to qualitative and quantitative measures. The process for Program Review at any training provider will depend on the number of courses, the delivery methodology for the courses, the targeted learners and the number of times the program is offered in a year.

Four levels of course/program review

Level 1: During each Course	•Educator is aware of and collects learner feedback during the delivery of the competency or set of competencies. Feedback can be acted on immediately if appropriate.
Level 2: At end of each course	•Level 1 information + Learner satisfaction, participation and completion outcomes gathered and considered at the end of the course. The outcomes are reported to the course coordinator and considered at a course team meeting. • TAS updated.
Level 3: Annual	•Level 1+ Level 2. Where there is more than one delivery cycle in a calendar year, the outcomes of each cycle are considered as a whole and improvements identified for the following year. •TAS updated.
Level 4: Every 2 to 3 years, or as scheduled	•Aggregated results of Level 2 + Level 3 reviews, as well as additional data, information and intelligence, contribute to a comprehensive review. This review considers all instances of the course against the same criteria. •TAS updated.

The selected level of review will determine the data and information that will need to be gathered and addressed. It may include:

- Enrolment, attrition and completion data. Important for Levels 2, 3 and 4. For Level 4, also include trends for the previous two years.

- Feedback from learners during and at the end of their program – this will include feedback from specific cohorts of learners. Important for all levels of review.

- Outcomes and advice from industry engagement by educators and learners, including changes in industry technology, techniques, processes. Useful for Levels 2, 3 and 4.

- Outcomes of recent professional or vocational development activity by educators. Useful for Levels 2, 3 and 4.

- Outcomes of validation and moderation of assessment. Important for Levels 2, 3 and 4.

- Advice and feedback from learner support services and the outcomes of strategies for learner success, including support for learners at risk. Important for Levels 2, 3 and 4.

- Advice and feedback from external stakeholders, such as community, schools, local government, Centrelink, job agencies. Useful for Levels 3 and 4.
- Feedback from learners and employers on specific delivery methodologies. Important for all levels.
- Learner complaints, both formal and informal. Important for all levels.
- Availability of current and mapped learning and assessment resources to address the course requirements and new cohorts that may be attracted to the course. Important for Levels 2, 3 and 4.
- Changes to the qualification due to changes in the training package or the Victorian Purchasing Guide (gathered through professional networks, subscription to the relevant national committee and Curriculum Maintenance Manager). Important for Levels 2, 3 and 4.

Practice Perspective
- Develop a formal schedule for Program Review to ensure each course, and each group of courses, is reviewed at agreed intervals. This might include review of learning and assessment at a few levels of complexity.
- Plan for, schedule and conduct reviews of each course. The aim is to identify good practice, address issues of concern, and identify opportunities for improvements in practice for course teams and support services.
- Document the process for undertaking, completing and reporting on each level of course review. Make sure it is consistent across the training provider.
- Use an agreed and consistent template for course review across the organisation – one for each version of review. Each template should use an evidence based approach to address the quality of teaching, and of the learning and assessment program. Ideally, each should be approved by an education oversight committee/person, as applicable.
- Decide who is responsible for undertaking and completing each review of each course. That person should have ready access to: enrolment and completion data; reports and minutes of meetings where industry feedback, assessment validation and course team outcomes are recorded; learner feedback and satisfaction data.
- Where there are several instances of the delivery of the same course to different cohorts, at different sites, by partner organisations and/or using different delivery methodologies, plan to review the outcomes at two levels:
  - Each instance of the course as a stand-alone entity
  - Across all instances at the same time and against the same criteria.
- Develop an agreed process, including responsibility and scheduling across the training provider for sign off, reporting and follow up of reports of the Program Review per course, and across course instances.

Advice from the sector

Campaspe College of Adult Education: Learners provide feedback at the end of each unit. The manager and her team live and work in the local area, so they hear feedback around town about their courses and also about employment outcomes. Both formal and informal feedback inform changes to the course.

Coonara Community House: Coonara is part of a VET Network of up to 10 Learn Local Organisation training providers. They meet once a month to share processes, paperwork, problems, people and experiences. And to develop sustainable approaches and solutions. The network also provides a mechanism that supports the validation of assessment.

WCIG: Learners provide feedback at the end of each unit. The short form is completed anonymously. The teacher provides the forms to the coordinator and they work through the feedback together, identifying what might be adjusted in the next section of the program. Actions might include assessment validation, adjustments to learning resources, the pace of the course, or support needed by the teacher. The coordinator maintains an overview of the feedback from all courses.

Process

Training provider staff with the responsibility for reviewing each course (or group of courses) gather and analyse the nominated data and information. The outcome will be a report that identifies good practice and provides recommendations for further development and improvement.

The general process for each level of Program Review can be summarised as:

- Select the level of program review that is applicable and who is responsible for its completion. At Levels 1 and 2, each educator is responsible for providing an evaluation of the outcomes of the enrolled course for the group of learners. For Levels 3 and 4 which may address more than one course instance, the person responsible may be a course co-ordinator, a senior educator or another nominated education specialist.
- Ensure that those responsible have the required template for completion and access to all the required data, information and ancillary reports.
- Undertake the review within the nominated timeframe, noting any gaps in the expected documentation.
- Complete the report in the nominated template, asking for feedback and support, as required, from the course educators. The report should identify areas of good practice as well as proposing changes to key documents, learning and assessment practices, and processes.
- Present the report to those nominated for sign off and follow up action.

Practice Perspective

- Be clear about the version of the Program Review report you want to complete, and who will sign off and follow up.
- Be clear about the local process for undertaking each level of proposed Program Review and communicate your expectations and process to all whose input and co-operation is required or preferred.
- Use the training provider's approved template to compile the nominated report, and record gaps in the required information and data. Include strategies for filling the gaps in the recommendations.

For staff responsible for course improvement: Once the review team has agreed on improvements to the course, the required course documents may need adjustments to reflect changes. Adjustments may include:

- Modifying the TAS as needed
- Ensuring teaching staff modify their staff matrix of industry and professional currency, including plans for future vocational and professional development
- Ensuring marketing and promotion materials are consistent with changes to the course
- Adjusting assessment resources, including instructions for learners and assessors as required
- Reviewing arrangements for moderation of assessments
- Adjusting the industry engagement plan to accommodate changes to the industry context and the training program
- Adjusting and informing the validation of assessment plan if required
- Adjusting learning resources as required.

Advice from the sector

Some training providers interviewed reported continuous review of learner engagement, outcomes and feedback, and of teacher suggestions for improvement and redesign. The course team then decides what can be improved immediately, what can wait for the next delivery period, and what needs to be included in the next cycle of course development and redesign.

PRACE: At the end of a course, teachers complete a course evaluation form that covers their response to the hours allocated to delivery, the days on which the course is offered, the room that was allocated, the equipment provided, the support offered, the content covered including response top core and elective competencies, and the attendance patterns of learners. Teachers address each item and provide suggestions for improvement.

Twice in each Education Support course, at mid-course and end of course, the coordinator has a session with the learners – without the teacher – to encourage feedback from learners on their response to the course and their progress in it. After completing the course, some learners contact the organisation to share what they are doing. The good news stories are written up and circulated.

Learners complete the mandatory government survey, so they are not asked to complete anything else. But at the end of the year, all EAL classes come together for a social event that also is designed to capture learner feedback. Volunteers and interpreters circulate with learners and gather feedback on three topics:

- What went well for you?
- What would like to have done differently?
- What are your plans for the future?

Reporting

The report of the Program Review describes the outcomes of the learning and assessment program for the nominated course or courses across the nominated cycle. It provides recommendations for improvement to be considered and followed up by the management team of the delivery area.

Where required, changes in delivery will be included in an updated Training and Assessment Strategy and reflected in the course delivery schedules for learners.

Practice Perspective
- Each report should be evidence based and include:
  - specific examples of feedback from learners, teachers/trainers, and industry stakeholders who have influenced the report and proposed Program Delivery improvements.
  - specific examples of stakeholder feedback that may influence an improvement in delivery methodology, including for learner cohorts in courses delivered in workplace, classroom, blended and online arrangements.
  - specific examples of industry engagement and advice that may influence the required skills and knowledge of educators, and also influence access to the facilities and resources that learners need.
- The report is considered and addressed by the responsible teacher and/or course management team.
- If you are unable to access any of the information you need, including data and meeting minutes, include a recommendation to ensure access for the next review report.
- The documentation of Program Review provides evidence that review recommendations have been considered, addressed and completed.
- Those who review the report and follow it up provide feedback to the reviewer/s to build their understanding of the process and its outcomes. Reviewers also need to know their work is valued. This may include discussion at course team, department and training provider levels.

Advice from the sector

VFA Learning: The VFA has a three-month continuous improvement cycle for each course. To inform review, the continuous improvement committee considers both data and feedback. Learners complete a short survey at the end of week 1, week 8, on exit, and through the quality indicators. Engagement of each learner in the LMS is gathered and analysed, as are reports from Skills Vic. The homeroom teacher and other teachers provide feedback, as does industry with an emphasis on employment outcomes.

Chisholm Online: Reported examples of changes made as a result of both formal and incidental review, and feedback from learners and teachers. They include: redesigning the interface to be clearer and remove scrolling; visual cues in the template redesigned to improve focus on assessment and interactive activities; and installing a video for each module that features the teacher and their welcome to the module.

6. Conclusion

This Guide offers training providers an organising framework to support good practice in VET teaching and learning. Built around the four factors and their associated indicators, the Guide seeks to assist training providers in their endeavours to maximise outcomes for their learners – whether employment related, associated with further study or personal skills development.

The Guide provides practitioner with suggestions for how the journey from good to excellent practice can be built into each training provider's day to day operations.

Each of the factors in the framework describes an aspect of a training provider's scope of practice. While not exhaustive, the processes, activities and outcomes ascribed to each factor add value to the outcomes for learners. The factors converge to support and improve quality teaching and assessment practice. The indicators for each factor provide examples of how the training provider can extend the quality of their programs, and the Practice Perspectives provide evidence of good practice from across the sector.

Each training provider will identify where their practices, and key contributing processes, systems and outcomes are on track to excellence, and where they might choose to dedicate more time, resources and attention. Identifying priorities for action can only be done within the training provider by its program/course teams, and education coordination and support teams.

Fundamentally, the realisation of continuous improvement in education practice relies on thorough planning, careful execution, and effective professional development. In turn, each of the processes and activities depends on well-informed, consistent and reliable evidence-based judgments about all aspects of organisational performance and capability.

The challenge for each VET training provider is to assess and review its operations, to establish and implement plans and processes for improvement, and to set the indicators that demonstrate progress towards excellent educational practice.

Contributors to the focus groups and interviews are identified in Appendix 1

Appendix 1 Contributors to the focus groups and interviews

Included representatives from:

Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET)
AMES Australia
Box Hill Institute
Campaspe College of Adult Education (CCAE)
Chisholm Institute
CIRE Services
Coonara Community House
Employease
Holmesglen Institute
Master Builders Association of Victoria
Melbourne Polytechnic
NetGain
Orange International
Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education (PRACE)
RMIT
SuniTAFE
South West TAFE
Springvale Neighbourhood House
Swinburne Online
The Gordon
The Malka Group
Victoria University
VFA Learning
Westgate Community Initiatives Group (WCIG)
William Angliss
Wodonga TAFE
Yarrawonga Neighbourhood House

Over 100 staff from public, private and community providers attended workshops to discuss aspects that influence quality teaching and learning. The outcomes of the workshops also contributed to this Guide.