



# **General Information on Training Packages**

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Prepared by Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA)  
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**Readers please note**

These FAQs are based on a range of questions stakeholders have recently asked us about Training Packages. Our responses are based on the best information available at the time of writing and on policy information from DEEWR.

We have taken every care to ensure these FAQs are accurate, but imply no warranty of the accuracy of the advice. You are advised to check our website for regular updates of these FAQs or contact the relevant State or Territory Training Authority, details of which can be found on the DEEWR website: [www.deewr.gov.au](http://www.deewr.gov.au)

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# General Information on Training Packages Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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## What is a Training Package?

A Training Package includes nationally endorsed and recognised sets of integrated components for training and assessment for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise that can be used for developing and recognising people's competencies. Conceptually, a Training Package also includes support materials referred to as 'non-endorsed' components.

A Training Package must include three key components endorsed by the National Quality Council (NQC). These 'endorsed components' are the Competency Standards, the Assessment Guidelines and the Qualifications Framework. When we talk about 'Training Packages', we are referring to these nationally endorsed components.

When you use Training Packages for training and assessment leading to nationally recognised qualifications, you *must* use the endorsed components. They provide the benchmarks for training and assessment and the rules you must follow in assessing competency and issuing qualifications.

However, you need more than these endorsed components to provide adequate learning and assessment services. You also need a range of resources to facilitate the teaching, learning and assessment processes. These are referred to as the 'Training Package support materials' and can include learner guides, assessment tools, professional development materials, trainee record books and so on.

Trainers and assessors have the freedom to choose which particular Training Package support materials they use to meet the requirements of the Training Package and the needs of clients. They can select support materials from a range of sources, including from the Training Package developer or other organisations that develop resources, or they can design or adapt their own support materials.

## What are the benefits of Training Packages?

The benefits a Training Package offers include:

**Flexibility:** Training Packages have great flexibility. They encourage the development of relevant workplace competencies and can be learnt directly in the workplace or at a learning institution in conjunction with simulated workplace experiences.

There is a high level of flexibility available for delivery and assessment of Training Package qualifications because of the choice among support materials and the range of possible modes of delivery and assessment. This flexibility should encourage trainers and assessors to develop learner-centred training programs.

**Training and career pathways:** Training Packages contain a suite of qualifications and a wide range of their own units of competency and also those imported from other Training Packages. This allows for diverse pathways in the industry for which they are developed and also into other industries. In addition, some Training Packages provide indicative advice regarding occupational pathways.

**Choice:** Training Packages give enterprises and individuals more choice in setting up and providing training and assessment to suit their needs. In addition, workers can be trained and assessed at times and in locations that suit their individual requirements, as well as those of their employers.

**Consistency:** Training Packages provide a consistent framework for Vocational Education and Training (VET), thus reducing unnecessary duplication of courses and resources.

**National recognition:** Training Packages provide qualifications and units of competency that are recognised across State and Territory boundaries.

**Recognition of current skills:** Training Packages give people the opportunity to have their current skills, knowledge and experiences recognised formally, without having to complete unnecessary training, through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes.

### How are Training Packages developed?

Training Packages are developed by national Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) or enterprises to meet the identified training needs of specific industries or industry sectors. To gain endorsement of Training Packages, developers must provide evidence of extensive national consultation and industry support.

### How often are Training Packages reviewed?

Training Packages are subject to ongoing review through a continuous improvement process so they are able to keep up-to-date with the needs and changing circumstances of industry.

A change in the then Department of Education, Science and Training (now the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) policy for Training Package development in 2006, changed the review process from a point in time model to a model of continuous improvement. What continuous improvement means is that the Industry Skills Councils collect information about the currency, relevance and practicality of all units and qualifications in the Training Packages and update them to reflect industry needs.

However, a full review is to be undertaken where the evidence of continuous improvement is not considered to be sufficient, or where consultation indicates that there is a need for a full review. Full reviews may also be requested by the NQC or by the ISC.

### Will Training Packages have a review date?

Even under the continuous improvement model, Training Packages will still be endorsed with a review date. The review date for a Training Package is shown on the title page and in the footer of each page of the Training Package.

The review date is determined at the time of endorsement and indicates when the Training Package *should* be reviewed. The review date is *not an expiry date* as Training Packages remain current until a replacement Training Package is endorsed.

## How do I know if I have the most current version of the Training Package?

You will find the print version number towards the bottom of the title page in Volume 1 and in the footer of each page in the Training Package. Compare this version number with the latest information on the National Training Information Service (NTIS) website ([www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au)) where you will find details of any modifications to the Training Package, along with the latest version number. Alternatively, you may contact the relevant Industry Skills Council to confirm whether or not the version you have is the latest version of the Training Package.

## What are the main components of a Training Package?

Training Packages include three mandatory components which are endorsed by the National Quality Council (NQC). These are the:

- **Competency Standards** provide units of competency that describe discrete workplace outcomes, with each unit having a unique code and title
- **Assessment Guidelines** describe the industry requirements for assessment
- **Qualifications Framework** detail how the units of competency are 'packaged' into nationally recognised qualifications. The framework also provides the unique codes and titles for these qualifications, and information about skill sets.

These three mandatory components are referred to as the endorsed components of a Training Package. The endorsed components of a Training Package form the basis for delivery and assessment of a Training Package. The information provided within the endorsed component of the Training Package must be complied with by trainers and assessors using the material. The information is also used by State Training Authorities to ensure that registered training organisations are compliant with several requirements for registration under the Australian Quality Training Framework.

The endorsed components of a Training Package are complemented by support materials that provide for choice in the design of training and assessment to meet the needs of industry and learners; you can use whichever support materials meet these particular needs.

Training Package support materials can relate to a single Unit of Competency, multiple units of competency, an industry sector, a qualification, or to the whole Training Package. They tend to fall into the following categories:

- **Learning Strategies**, which are resources (such as learner guides) developed to assist in training, teaching and learning.
- **Assessment Materials**, which are resources (such as assessment tools) to assist in assessment
- **Professional Development Materials** (such as a User Guide) which assist understanding of the Training Package.

## What are Competency Standards?

The Competency Standards endorsed section within the Training Package contains all the units of competency that are included in its qualifications. Units of Competency are sometimes collectively called 'competency standards.' The term for an individual unit is 'a Unit of Competency' and is sometimes referred to as a 'competency' or 'unit.'

Each Unit of Competency identifies a discrete workplace competency outcome and also includes the required knowledge and skills to underpin competencies necessary in the workplace.

Units are made up of the following specific parts:

- Unit Code and Title
- Unit Descriptor
- Employability Skills
- Pre-requisite Units (Optional)
- Application of the Unit
- Competency Field (Optional)
- Unit Sector (Optional)
- Elements
- Performance Criteria
- Required Skills and Knowledge
- Range Statement
- Evidence Guide

The whole of each Unit of Competency must be adhered to in training and assessment to ensure consistency of outcomes. To achieve these outcomes a Unit of Competency may require the use of specific tools, equipment and/or workplace resources, and/or may require delivery and assessment to be undertaken in conjunction with another Unit or Units of Competency.

Units of Competency cover all aspects of work performance including:

- Task skills—performing individual tasks
- Task management skills—managing a number of different tasks
- Contingency management skills—responding to irregularities and breakdowns in routine
- Job/role environment skills—dealing with the responsibilities and expectations of the work environment, including working with others.

Units of Competency are further described in the DEEWR publication, *Training Package Development Handbook* available online from the DEEWR website at <http://www.tpdh.deewr.gov.au/>

In addition to using Training Packages for nationally recognised training, enterprises may find the Training Package Units of Competency useful when designing job classifications or conducting employee performance appraisals.

Individuals can check the workplace competencies they have against those set out in the Training Package to gain an initial indication of the training they need, although it may be more efficient for them to be supported by a VET practitioner with knowledge of the Training Package that is being used.

## **What are employability skills?**

A recent change to the structure of a Unit of Competency has been the inclusion of Employability Skills. From 2006 Employability Skills have progressively replaced Key Competencies within Training Packages.

Employability Skills are skills that apply across a variety of job and life contexts. They may be defined as the skills required, not only to obtain employment, but also to enable an individual to grow and progress within an enterprise, to achieve their personal potential and to contribute to their employer's strategic directions.

The Employability Skills included in Training Packages are:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Initiative and enterprise
- Planning and organising
- Self-management
- Learning
- Technology.

Some Training Packages provide Employability Skills Summaries. These summaries broadly identify the application of each Employability Skill in the context of the job role(s) covered by the qualification. The summaries have been designed to identify and assist the inclusion of relevant industry applications of the Employability Skills into learning and assessment strategies. If you need more information on Employability Skill Summaries go to <http://employabilityskills.training.com.au/>

When you are using Employability Skills, whether in training or assessment, they should always be considered within the context of the Unit of Competency being delivered – and not as individual skills. This holistic approach of embedding Employability Skills within the application of the technical skill is more relevant and closely aligned to real job expectations and practices.

## **How do I read a Unit of Competency?**

The whole of the Unit of Competency applies in training and assessment. Trainers and assessors are required to be aware of all of the requirements within a Unit of Competency they are delivering or assessing.

A good place to start is with the unit descriptor—this, and the title, provides you with a very good idea about what the unit involves .

However, you might also like to try ‘reading the unit backwards’ by looking at the:

- Evidence Guide—to note essential skills and knowledge used in assessment and also the critical aspects of evidence which may specify conditions that must exist for assessment
- Range Statement—to note the range of situations and vocational settings to which the unit applies
- Performance Criteria and elements of competency—to note the break-up of functions and the building blocks of the unit.

## What are Assessment Guidelines?

The Assessment Guidelines provide the industry framework for accurate, reliable and valid assessment using the Training Package. They ensure that all assessments are thorough, consistent and valid and provide important quality assurance in the issuing of qualifications.

## Who develops Training Package support materials?

Training Package support materials are produced by a range of stakeholders such as RTOs, individual trainers and assessors, private and commercial developers, and government agencies.

Where Training Package materials have been quality assured through a process of ‘noting’ by the National Quality Council (NQC), they display the official logo.



‘Noted’ support materials are listed on the National Training Information Service (NTIS), together with a detailed description and information on the type of product and its availability. For further details see [www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au)

Any resources that meet the requirements of the Training Package can be used in delivery and assessment—it is not compulsory to use noted support materials or to submit support materials used in training and assessment for noting.

## Who can deliver and assess using Training Packages?

Training and assessment using Training Packages that leads to nationally recognised qualifications must be conducted by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). The RTO must have the qualifications or specific units of competency on its scope of registration, or work in partnership with another RTO as specified in the *AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration*. The AQTF 2007 is critical to the registration and operation of RTOs and can be found on the Training.com website at [http://www.training.com.au/documents/aqtf2k7\\_ess-std-reg\\_final2.pdf](http://www.training.com.au/documents/aqtf2k7_ess-std-reg_final2.pdf)

To provide training and assessment in VET, trainers and assessors must meet the competency requirements spelt out in Element 1.4 of the *AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration* and *Appendix 2* of the *AQTF 2007 Users’ Guide to the*

*Essential Standards for Registration.* These documents are available at:  
[http://www.training.com.au/documents/aqtf2k7\\_usr-guide-ess-std\\_final2.pdf](http://www.training.com.au/documents/aqtf2k7_usr-guide-ess-std_final2.pdf).

In addition, trainers and assessors must have access to a current copy of the Training Package that is being delivered and assessed.

## Is a Training Package the same as a course or curriculum?

No. Training Packages are different to accredited courses and curriculum. The difference is more about the development and endorsement processes, but can also relate to the structure.

Courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications can be based on units of competency from Training Packages; Units of Competency developed to meet identified industry needs; or modules comprising learning outcomes where it is not possible to develop units of competency. These courses are accredited by a State or Territory course accrediting body. On the other hand, Training Packages are developed by Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) and endorsed by the National Quality Council (NQC).

Under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), the agreed quality assurance arrangements for the vocational education and training (VET) system, courses can only be accredited where existing Training Packages do not meet the training need. You can get more information about accredited courses from the *AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses* available at:  
[http://www.training.com.au/documents/aqtf2k7\\_standards\\_accrediting\\_courses.pdf](http://www.training.com.au/documents/aqtf2k7_standards_accrediting_courses.pdf)

## How can I become an RTO?

In order to become a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), organisations must be registered by the registering body in the State or Territory in which they have their head office, or where they will deliver most of their training and assessment. This registration is then recognised throughout Australia.

You can find information on the benefits and processes of becoming an RTO by going to training organisations at <http://www.training.com.au/>

In addition, you should contact your State or Territory registering body for information on registration and registration application procedures. Website details are:

**NSW**—Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB)  
<http://www.vetab.nsw.gov.au/>

**VIC**—Skills Victoria [http://www.skills.vic.gov.au/training\\_organisations](http://www.skills.vic.gov.au/training_organisations)

**QLD**—Department of Training, Education and the Arts  
[http://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au/partners/registration\\_and\\_audit/](http://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au/partners/registration_and_audit/)

**WA**—Training Accreditation Council (TAC) <http://www.tac.wa.gov.au/>

**SA**—Training and Skills Commission <http://www.training.sa.gov.au/>

**TAS**—Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (TQA) <http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au/>

**ACT**—ACT Accreditation and Registration Council (ARC)  
[http://www.det.act.gov.au/vhe/accreditation\\_and\\_registration/arc](http://www.det.act.gov.au/vhe/accreditation_and_registration/arc)

**NT**—Department of Employment, Education and Training  
[http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/training/training\\_organisations/](http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/training/training_organisations/)

## **How does the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) relate to Training Packages?**

Every Training Package provides details of the units of competency that must be achieved for a candidate to be awarded a nationally recognised training qualification. Each Training Package qualification is assigned an AQF level. The level assigned to the qualification is determined by the combination of units that are required for the qualification to be awarded. Individual units of competency are not assigned an AQF level.

The rules around which units of competency can be combined to make up a valid qualification are referred to as the 'packaging rules' which are found in the Qualifications Framework of each Training Package. RTOs must ensure that these packaging rules have been followed by their trainers and assessors so that they can award the qualification to successful candidates and to maintain the integrity of nationally recognised qualifications.

Each qualification has a unique code and title and you must use these accurately, for example, in promotional materials and on qualification testamurs.

## **What are the AQF qualifications in Training Packages?**

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is an agreed nationally consistent set of qualifications for all post-compulsory education and training in Australia. The qualifications that are usually available in Training Packages are:

- Certificate I
- Certificate II
- Certificate III
- Certificate IV
- Diploma
- Advanced Diploma
- Vocational Graduate Certificate
- Vocational Graduate Diploma

Each Training Package provides details of the Units of Competency that must be achieved for a candidate to be awarded a specific AQF qualification.

The rules around which Units of Competency can be combined to make up a valid qualification are referred to as the 'packaging rules' which you can find in the Qualifications Framework. The packaging rules must be followed to ensure the integrity of nationally recognised qualifications is maintained across all RTOs.

## **Skill Sets; why, what and how!**

Until recently individuals electing to complete part of a qualification have received no formal recognition that the particular combination of units they complete meets an identified industry need. The Statements of Attainment issued made reference to partial completion of a specified qualification, thereby implying that something has been unfinished, rather than the skill needs met. This has created difficulties for individuals, who have not received formal recognition for the skills they have developed, and also for employers in identifying the skills their employees have obtained.

National Quality Council decisions formalised the recognition of Skill Sets in VET from 2007 by including them in nationally endorsed Training Packages where there is a defined industry need. The National Quality Council (NQC) defines Skill Sets as "...those single units or combinations of units which link to a license or regulatory requirement, or defined industry need." Consequently you can undertake training in 'small chunks'.

There are two ways in which a Skill Set can be developed. The first process applies to those skill sets identified and developed in much the same way as any other component of a Training Package with developers consulting with industry and licensing and regulatory authorities. A less formal process applies to Registered Training Organisations who identify and develop Skill Sets to meet their local needs in much the same way as they have always done so.

Skill Sets identified by Training Package developers are separately listed and recognised within the Training Package.

You can obtain further information about Skill Sets from the Training Package Developers Handbook <http://www.tpdh.deewr.gov.au>

There are different requirements for Statements of Attainments issued for a Skill Set. These requirements are dependent upon whether the Skill Set is included in a Training Package or whether it has been locally developed by a Registered Training Organisation. You should refer to the AQF Implementation Handbook (4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2007) at <http://www.aqf.edu.au/pdf/handbook07.pdf> for further information on issuing statements of attainment for Skill Sets.

## **What are Statements of Attainment?**

If a person completes one or more units of competency, but fewer than the number required for a Training Package qualification, they are issued with a Statement of Attainment.

Units of competency achieved and recorded in this way can progressively build to a full qualification. For example, the person might undertake further skills development or training, achieving singles units and/or skills sets, and progressively achieve all the units required for the qualification.

RTOs must recognise the units of competency recorded on a Statement of Attainment issued by any other RTO.

## Who has overall responsibility for Vocational Education and Training in Australia?

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is the federal government department responsible for vocational education and training (VET) in Australia. The DEEWR was established on 3 December 2007, bringing together elements of the former Departments of [Education, Science and Training](#), [Employment and Workplace Relations](#) and the Youth and Early Childhood functions from the Department of [Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs](#) .

For further information about DEEWR, go to <http://www.deewr.gov.au/>.

Through DEEWR, the federal government has worked with state and territory governments and with industry to develop a national training system for more than fifteen years. Training Packages are one component of the national training system which provides the basis for high quality, industry developed and nationally recognised training to about one in eight working-age Australians. Through a national network of over 4,000 public and private Registered Training Organisations, over 1.6 million Australians from all ages, backgrounds and locations participate in VET each year to support their lifelong learning goals. The national training system operates within a national governance framework, details of which are available at [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training\\_skills/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/national\\_training\\_system/how\\_nat\\_training\\_system\\_prov\\_train.htm#The National Governance and Accountability Framework](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/national_training_system/how_nat_training_system_prov_train.htm#The National Governance and Accountability Framework)