



# Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2011<sup>1</sup>

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I, Chris Evans, Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations, make these Standards under subsection 188(1) of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

Dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 2011

CHRIS EVANS

Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations

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## Part 1 Preliminary

### Division 1 Arrangements on commencement

#### VAC 1 Name of Standards

These Standards are the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2011*.

#### VAC 2 Commencement

These Standards commence on the later of 1 July 2011 or the day after registration on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.

#### VAC 3 Definitions

In these Standards, unless the contrary intention appears:

**Act** means the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

**Articulation** means the arrangements that facilitate the movement or progression of learners from one qualification or course to another, or from one education and training sector to another.

**Assessment** means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed by the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a Training Package or by the learning outcomes of a VET accredited course.

**Assessment requirements** means the endorsed component of a Training Package. Assessment requirements set out the industry's approach to valid, reliable, flexible and fair assessment.

**Australian Qualifications Framework** (AQF) has the meaning given by section 3 of the Act.

**Competency** means the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

**Industry** means bodies that have a stake in the training, assessment and client services provided by RTOs. These can include but are not limited to:

- (a) industry skills councils;
- (b) industry organisations;
- (c) industry training advisory bodies;
- (d) unions;
- (e) specific enterprise/industry clients;

- (f) occupational licensing bodies; and
- (g) group training organisations

**Learning** means the process followed by a learner. There are three types:

- (a) Formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of a formal qualification or award (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree).
- (b) Non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instructions, but does not lead to the attainment of a formal qualification or award (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business).
- (c) Informal learning refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative).

**Modules** means a group of learning outcomes in a VET accredited course where it can be established that it is not possible to develop an appropriate unit of competency.

**National Register** has the meaning given by section 3 of the Act.

**National VET Regulator** has the meaning given by section 3 of the Act.

**Pathways** are generally defined as a path or sequence of learning or experiences that can be followed to attain competency. The course accreditation submission must indicate whether specific pathways are mandated or whether they may vary to reflect the needs of the individual.

**Qualification** means formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes or competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.

**Recognition of Prior Learning** means an assessment process that assesses an individual's formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of, a VET qualification.

**RTO** means a registered training organisation, defined at section 3 of the Act.

**Training Package** is a nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment requirements, Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications, and credit arrangements for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

**Training Package Development Handbook** provides Standards Council (previously National Quality Council) policy for the development of Training Packages. This policy applies to all Training Packages developed

and endorsed through the Standards Council development and endorsement processes.

***Units of competency*** means the specification of industry knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance expected in the workplace.

***VET accredited course*** has the meaning given at section 3 of the Act.

***VET qualification*** has the meaning given at section 3 of the Act.

***VET statement of attainment*** has the meaning given at section 3 of the Act.

***Vocational competency*** means broad industry knowledge and experience, usually combined with a relevant industry qualification. A person who has vocational competency will be familiar with the content of the vocation and will have relevant current experience in the industry. Vocational competency must be considered on an industry-by-industry basis and with reference to the guidance provided in the assessment requirements of the relevant Training Package.

- 3.2 These Standards may be referred to by the abbreviation ‘VAC’. For example, this is VAC 3.2

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## Part 2 Introduction and purpose

### VAC 4 Introduction

Accredited courses address skill requirements for industry, enterprises and the community where these are not covered in nationally endorsed Training Packages. They also have the capacity to address changes in skill needs, and the needs of emerging and converging industries and industry sectors, in a responsive manner. A collaborative approach between national bodies concerned with the development and endorsement of national Training Packages and VET Regulators provides an effective and timely response to the changing needs of industry.

Accreditation means the formal recognition of a course by the National VET Regulator under the Act.

### VAC 5 Purpose of the Standards

The *Standards for VET Accredited Courses* apply to the course design for VET accredited courses.

Accreditation of a course is confirmation by the National VET Regulator that the course meets the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses* and the Australian Qualifications Framework in deciding whether to accredit the course, including whether the course:

- meets industry, enterprise or community needs;
- provides appropriate competency outcomes and a satisfactory basis for assessment;
- meets national quality assurance requirements; and
- is aligned to the appropriate level of the Australian Qualifications Framework where it leads to a VET qualification.

Accreditation means the course is nationally recognised and that an RTO can issue a nationally recognised VET qualification or VET statement of attainment following its full or partial completion. Once a course has been accredited, it is listed on the National Register.

Development of VET accredited courses should be consistent with the requirements of the Training Package Development Handbook.

A national template for course accreditation at Appendix 1 describes essential course information and provides the legal specification for the course. The VET accredited course document provides the basis for the development of strategies for training and assessment by each RTO and describes essential course information including the packaging rules, outcomes to be achieved, standards for assessment and required resources.

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## Part 3 Course design standards

Applications for course accreditation that are accepted by the National VET Regulator will be accredited if they are assessed as meeting the following design standards. These are the course design standards that **must** be met for accreditation.

The accreditation of a VET accredited course may be cancelled under section 52 of the Act if these standards cease to be met.

### VAC 6 Duplication

- 6.1 The course must not duplicate, by title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed Training Package qualification.

### VAC 7 Course design standards

- 7.1 VET accredited courses are based on an established industry, enterprise, education, legislative or community need.
- 7.2 VET accredited courses are based on nationally endorsed units of competency where these are available and where these are not available the course is based on:
  - (a) units of competency developed as part of the course; or
  - (b) modules.

These units of competency or modules are developed in consultation with, and validated by, industry, enterprise, community and/or professional groups and documented in accordance with nationally agreed specifications, consistent with the requirements of the Training Package Development Handbook.

(Note: For the purpose of this legislative instrument the Training Package Development Handbook is as in existence at the time of commencement of this legislative instrument.)

Consultation with Industry Skills Council must take place to ensure that the course does not duplicate, by title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed Training Package qualification.

(Note: Modules may be included where the person in respect of whom the course is accredited can establish to the satisfaction of the National VET Regulator, prior to development, that it is not possible to develop appropriate competency standards.)

**VAC 7**

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- 7.3 VET accredited courses either:
- (a) lead to a VET qualification and have course outcomes that are consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework qualification descriptor identified for the course; or
  - (b) lead only to a VET statement of attainment when course outcomes meet an identified industry/enterprise/ community need but do not have the breadth and depth required for a VET qualification as stated in the guidelines for qualifications in the Australian Qualifications Framework. The course title will read 'Course in...'.
- 7.4 VET accredited courses identify employability skills relevant to the course outcomes.
- 7.5 VET accredited courses confirm recognition to be given to the course by licensing, regulatory, professional or industry bodies where applicable.
- 7.6 VET accredited courses specify rules for the structure of the course.
- 7.7 VET accredited courses identify exit points from the course which provide for vocational or educational outcomes where applicable.
- 7.8 VET accredited courses provide information on educational pathways and articulation where applicable.
- 7.9 VET accredited courses specify any entry requirements to the course and justify any explicit limitations to access.
- 7.10 VET accredited courses specify course assessment strategies, which:
- (a) are valid, reliable, flexible and fair;
  - (b) support the collection of evidence that is sufficient, valid, authentic and current;
  - (c) are consistent with the assessment requirements in the relevant Training Package(s) where nationally endorsed units of competency are used;
  - (d) ensure that workplace and regulatory requirements, where relevant, are met; and
  - (e) identify and justify any requirements for workplace and/or simulated assessment.
- 7.11 VET accredited courses provide guidance on appropriate delivery modes, together with advice on limitations on course delivery modes and any requirements for on-the-job training.



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**VAC 7**

- 7.12 VET accredited courses specify specialist facilities and resources and the vocational competency requirements of trainers and assessors essential for the delivery of the course.
- 7.13 VET accredited courses identify course monitoring and evaluation processes which will ensure that the course content and outcomes are reviewed and remain current and relevant throughout the period of accreditation.

VAC 8

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## Part 4                      Obligations of persons in respect of whom a course is accredited

(Note: VET accredited courses must be delivered by an RTO. It is an offence under the Act to deliver a VET accredited course without being an RTO. A person who is not an RTO, and does not intend to become an RTO, is required to develop an agreement with an RTO for the delivery of the course under the conditions they have determined.)

### VAC 8    Obligations of persons in respect of whom a course is accredited

8.1    The following obligations apply throughout the course accreditation period:

The person in respect of whom a course is accredited will:

- (a) monitor and evaluate the VET accredited course in accordance with the processes outlined in the VET accredited course document;
- (b) inform the National VET Regulator of any proposed significant changes to the VET accredited course and, if required, provide any relevant material to enable the National VET Regulator to confirm that the course remains current and relevant and that it continues to comply with the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2011* during the period of accreditation;
- (c) advise RTOs licensed/franchised to deliver the course of changes made as the result of course monitoring and evaluation;
- (d) not make any misleading statement regarding its VET accredited course; and
- (e) if required, participate in strategic evaluations initiated by the National VET Regulator, the Ministerial council, or a delegate of the Ministerial council.

#### Note

1. All legislative instruments and compilations are registered on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments kept under the *Legislative Instruments Act 2003*. See <http://www.frli.gov.au>.

## Appendix 1

### Template for course documentation for accreditation

This national template is designed to assist in the development of courses for accreditation and re-accreditation under the Act that lead to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or to a VET statement of attainment. The template is divided into three sections (A, B and C) which together form the course documentation.

The course document (Sections A, B and C) is the specification for the VET accredited course. It provides the basis for the development of strategies for training and assessment by each RTO and describes essential course information.

- Section A provides information about persons in respect to whom a course is accredited and course classification
- Section B contains details of industry need, and the rules under which the course may be accessed, delivered and assessed
- Section C includes the units of competency or modules that are contained in the course.