

Queensland Skills Strategy and Skills Assure Suppliers (SAS) Renewals

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Skills Strategy?

The new *Good Jobs, Great Training: Queensland Skills Strategy 2024 – 2028* is a transformative plan for the state's training system and follows the most significant review of the system in almost a decade.

It aims to unlock billions in government investment for Queensland skills over five years, doubling as the state's roadmap to deliver on the landmark National Skills Agreement.

Across five focus areas and five years, the Queensland Skills Strategy will further strengthen the state's TAFE and training system while guiding billions in skills funding to boost productivity and participation – with its vision for Queensland to be an economic powerhouse driven by skilled Queenslanders.

The five focus areas are:

1. **Skills for good jobs** – Get more Queenslanders into highly skilled jobs quicker.
2. **Training that has the power to change lives** – Support Queenslanders to access the lifelong benefits of training for good, highly skilled jobs.
3. **TAFE for all Queenslanders** – Deliver training across Queensland and skills for local economies by putting TAFE at the heart of the training system.
4. **A training system backing Queenslanders** – Build on the strengths of our world-class training system by working with our partners, promoting opportunities offered by training and standing up for Queenslanders.
5. **Quality and results driven** – Focus on economic priorities, local needs and student outcomes so our training system delivers for Queensland.

Maximising outcomes under the National Skills Agreement, the strategy aims to unlock funds for national priorities such as critical skills growth, delivering TAFE Centres of Excellence and initiatives to improve course completions.

A significant action under the *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022 – 2032*, the strategy was informed by extensive consultation involving more than 8,000 Queenslanders.

Read the strategy and learn more at www.qld.gov.au/SkillsStrategy.

How does the strategy align with national priorities?

Queensland's Skills Strategy doubles as the state's roadmap to deliver on the National Skills Agreement (NSA) – unlocking billions in state and federal funding for skills now and into the future.

The landmark five-year agreement took effect from 1 January 2024.

The initial NSA priorities include:

- Skills for critical and emerging industries, including:
 - clean energy and Net Zero transformation of the economy
 - Australia's sovereign capability, including advanced manufacturing skills, national security, food security and construction; and
 - care and support services
- gender equality
- Closing the Gap
- foundation skills
- improving the quality of apprenticeships and completion rates
- reforms to improve the regulation of VET qualifications and quality; and
- boosting VET workforce capacity.

What does the strategy mean for Skills Assure Suppliers?

To meet national and state priorities, development of a new SAS Framework is among a range of actions outlined in Queensland's new skills strategy.

We heard during consultation that funded training was working – that we were generally funding the right areas – but that more could be done to align funded training with skills and workforce needs and improve outcomes, especially for students.

Key drivers of change include calls for more local delivery and targeted support for diverse and disadvantaged learners, greater links to industry and employers, a funding model and information about training pathways that is easier to understand, more evidence-informed investment decisions, and greater transparency and accountability regarding the quality of funded training and programs and the outcomes they deliver.

Reform of the SAS Framework is also needed to introduce new contracting and performance arrangements supporting short and long-term priorities, including critical skills delivery aligned to the National Skills Agreement, the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, the Big Build, Homes for Queenslanders plan, Queensland's booming health workforce, natural disaster resilience and recovery, and ongoing regional economic development.

What can current SAS expect, including next steps?

A new Skills Assure Supplier Framework is being developed alongside the first annual Training Priorities Plan. Stability in the VET system while the new SAS Framework is

developed will be supported and there will be no systemic changes to current SAS arrangements in 2024-25. Contracting under the new SAS Framework is anticipated to start later in 2024.

SAS contracts will be renewed while the transition to a new SAS Framework is rolled out.

SAS will continue to deliver training under current contractual arrangements from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

There is an expectation that SAS will deliver training within their usual scope and volume to provide students, employers, SAS and the department with certainty over the transition period.

Further details will be released in the coming months, and the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training will continue to keep SAS informed as the transition to a new SAS Framework occurs through Contract Connector and webinars, as well as through their dedicated Contract Manager.

Will all current SAS have to re-apply for an agreement commencing 1 July 2025?

Yes. The new Skills Strategy sets out the Queensland Government's objectives for training to 2028. All current SAS and those RTOs wishing to become an approved Supplier to support these objectives will be required to participate in an expression of interest (EOI) process that will occur later this year and be open for two months.

More information on the EOI process will be communicated through a SAS Alert in the coming months. The outcomes of the process is anticipated to be announced in early 2025 for these agreements to commence from 1 July 2025.

When will the additional higher-level qualifications be available?

The new higher level qualifications approved to be delivered under the [Higher Level Skills](#) and [User Choice](#) programs will be available to all eligible students as they are announced and will be published on the [Priority Skills List](#) and [User Choice Price List](#).

Will the Free Apprenticeships for Under 25s program be extended to align with the Skills Strategy?

The [Free Apprenticeships for Under 25s program](#) is due to end on 31 December 2024.

More information on what opportunities are available under the Skills Strategy will be coming soon.

How can other skill sets be added to the Priority Skills List?

If industry is seeking to add a skill set to the Priority Skills List, an [industry proposal](#) must be completed by the Industry Stakeholder/Industry Body that is

working/specialising in the industry sector associated to the training product.

These proposals **cannot** be submitted by an RTO or those organisations providing consultancy services to an RTO.

More information on the supporting documentation that is required for these proposals is available on our [webpage](#).

When will SAS hear about applications that were submitted for the Queensland Rural and Remote Pilot program?

The applications are in the final stages of approval and applicants will be notified by VET Program Investment (VPI).

Will Fee Free TAFE be available to all SAS providers?

No. The Fee Free TAFE program will continue to be delivered by TAFE Queensland and CQUniversity only.

All other non-TAFE Suppliers can continue to deliver training under the [Free Apprenticeships for Under 25s program](#).

How can I keep up-to-date with new information that is released about the Skills Strategy?

From June, the Department will be rolling out DESBT Reference Groups (DRGs) Strategy information sessions throughout the state to provide information about the strategy and promote the power of skills for good jobs. You are encouraged to register to attend either in person or online by visiting the [Skills Strategy](#) webpage where they can also subscribe to receive any updates on its implementation.

In addition, the monthly Contract Connector will continue to provide key updates about your SAS agreement and departmental policies which is distributed to all authorised contacts.

To review all editions of the Contract Connector, please visit our [News and Events](#) webpage or contact your Contract Manager at contractmanagement@desbt.qld.gov.au.