Queensland VET Quality Framework
Promoting quality for Queensland’s VET investment
May 2017
Key stakeholder support

**Australian Skills Quality Authority**

Each year Australia’s vocational education and training sector provides millions of people with the skills and experience they need to have a fulfilling career. The sector also powers the national economy by providing the job-ready workers employers want and need. That’s why the Australian Skills Quality Authority – the national training regulator – works closely with the Queensland Government to ensure high-quality training is being provided. The provision of high quality training means the investment being made by the student and the Queensland Government will result in the best possible outcome for employees and employers.

**Queensland Training Ombudsman**

The Queensland Training Ombudsman strengthens the state’s VET sector by improving consumer protection and helping stakeholders navigate the VET sector to find the best way to address enquiries and complaints about the VET system. The Queensland VET Quality Framework supports this role by outlining the roles, responsibilities and actions that underpin a quality VET sector.

**Office of Fair Trading**

The Office of Fair Trading, as Queensland’s consumer protection regulator ensuring a fair and safe marketplace, supports the Queensland VET Quality Framework. We do this by ensuring training providers comply with the Australian Consumer Law, particularly the rules outlawing unconscionable conduct, misleading advertising and unfair marketing practices. We also assist consumers, particularly vulnerable consumers, understand their rights when buying and using training services.

**Australian Council for Private Education and Training**

Australian Council for Private Education and Training provides its endorsement of the Queensland VET Quality Framework and looks forward to working with the Department on key initiatives relating to its implementation.
An effective and high quality vocational education and training (VET) sector is vital to equip Queenslanders with the skills they need for success in the modern workforce.

While most providers of VET in Queensland are operating at a high standard, a continuing and strong focus on quality will boost public confidence in training providers and the VET sector.

Recognising that a quality VET sector is a joint responsibility we have worked closely with industry and stakeholders to produce the Queensland VET Quality Framework, which will inform continuous improvement of VET in Queensland.

The framework outlines a comprehensive and systematic approach to ensuring the highest standards in VET are met across the five key elements of program design: supplier entry requirements; information and support; market performance and oversight; and compliance.

Every element includes focus areas that together help provide safeguards for all stakeholders in the provision of quality VET. The framework will help us to build on our ongoing efforts to strengthen quality, accountability and confidence across the sector.

Already we have established tighter entry requirements for training providers and increased our monitoring of pre-qualified suppliers, putting them on notice that we will only accept quality outcomes for students.

The government has also established the independent Queensland Training Ombudsman to provide a free, confidential and independent service to review and resolve enquiries and complaints about the VET system.

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Queensland training sector for its input during the consultation process. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure Queensland’s VET system operates at the highest standard now and in the future.

The Honourable Yvette D’Ath MP
Minister for Training and Skills
Introduction

Quality in VET
The Queensland Government is committed to quality in vocational education and training (VET) through a range of integrated measures to provide confidence that VET leads to quality outcomes.

Quality in VET is determined by the needs of the various stakeholders and requires that:

- students are supported to undertake training that best meets their interests and career aspirations
- the right skills to mutually benefit industry, individuals and the economy are delivered through a strong industry engagement model
- graduates develop skills that are relevant to their workplace, leading to industry productivity gains
- the education and training experience of students meets their expectations
- inclusive practice is embedded in all training-related activity to ensure learners have access to the support and learning pathways they need to improve opportunities for workforce participation.

Publicly funded VET in Queensland
Importantly, quality is a shared responsibility between the Australian Government, state governments and territories, industry, students, employers and training providers, with governments responsible for setting policy for the training they subsidise. In doing so, they also regulate the quality of subsidised training and monitor system performance through contract management and compliance arrangements. Stakeholders work together to provide oversight of publicly funded VET. In Queensland, a comprehensive and systematic approach to quality in VET publicly funded through the Department of Education and Training (DET) is achieved by the Queensland VET Quality Framework, which comprises five key elements:

- program design
- supplier entry requirements
- information and support
- market performance and oversight
- compliance.

Every element includes focus areas that together help provide safeguards for all stakeholders in the provision of quality VET.

The framework is used to guide the development of operational policy, procedures and guidelines, and inform the continuous improvement of VET in Queensland. The framework assists key stakeholders to understand their role, the role of the Queensland Government and how they may influence improvements to the VET system, both at a national level and for publicly funded VET in Queensland.

The Queensland VET Quality Framework diagram, at Figure 1, captures Queensland’s approach to quality. The inner pentagon represents the five key elements of Queensland’s VET investment while the outer pentagon represents the underlying building blocks of the national quality VET system.

Privately funded VET in Queensland
While DET does not have oversight of privately funded VET, registered training organisations (RTOs) must still comply with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, as regulated by Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and Australian consumer law.

In addition, the Queensland Government provides assistance to stakeholders that experience difficulty with the VET system, regardless of the funding arrangements. This assistance is provided through the Office of Fair Trading for consumer matters and the Queensland Training Ombudsman who helps stakeholders to navigate the VET sector and find the best way to address concerns.

Figure 1: The Queensland VET Quality Framework
A national perspective
From a national perspective there are a number of components that provide the underlying building blocks of a quality VET system that apply to publicly and privately funded VET. The national perspective is outlined in Figure 2.

National program design for VET
At a national level, the quality of VET is a continuing priority for the Council of Australian Governments Industry Skills Council (CISC). Membership of CISC comprises Ministers from the Australian states and territories governments, with portfolio responsibilities for industry and skills.

Its role is to initiate, develop and monitor policy reforms of national significance which require co-operative action by Australian governments.

Training packages and accredited courses
The Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) is responsible for endorsing training products, including national training packages for implementation. AISC is an industry-led body that receives advice from Industry Reference Committees (IRCs). IRCs are composed of representatives with experience, skills and knowledge of their particular industry sector. Their focus is to ensure that training packages meet the needs of industry and employers.

IRCs are supported by independent and professional Service Skills Organisations (SSOs) to develop and review training packages, and to inform training package development priorities.

Regulation of RTOs
ASQA regulates all RTOs, except those operating solely in Victoria and Western Australia and who do not offer courses to overseas students.

Aside from its standard regulatory functions, ASQA also undertakes strategic reviews of the quality of training and assessment in particular areas, such as high risk industries. Findings from strategic reviews inform national and jurisdictional reforms.

Consumer protection
Protecting the rights of consumers is an important safeguard for students or other purchasers of training. The VET sector is often complex to navigate, with a range of offices and agencies available to assist. These include:

National
- The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) enforces the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Commonwealth) and a range of additional legislation, promoting competition and fair trading, and regulating national infrastructure for the benefit of all Australians.
- The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) regulates Australian companies, financial markets, financial services organisations and professionals that deal with and advise on investments, superannuation, insurance, deposit taking and credit.

Queensland
- The Queensland Training Ombudsman, provides a free, confidential and independent service to review and resolve enquiries and complaints from apprentices, trainees, students, employers and other stakeholders in relation to the VET system.
- The Office of Fair Trading promotes the rights of consumers, provides information to consumers and businesses, and helps resolve disputes in the marketplace.

A more detailed overview of these roles is provided in the key stakeholders section.

Figure 2: A national perspective
The five key elements to maintain quality in Queensland publicly funded VET

**Program design**
Determining state policy and investment in training, and maintaining purchasing arrangements for state government-funded training focused on meeting the skilling needs of Queensland.

**Supplier entry requirements**
Setting the standards for entry by RTOs seeking to be approved to deliver subsidised training and assessment services as pre-qualified suppliers (PQS).

**Information and support**
Providing information to assist students and employers to make informed decisions regarding study options and training providers to best meet their needs, and assist PQS to comply with their contractual obligations.

**Market performance and oversight**
Maintaining an ongoing role to monitor the effectiveness of program policy measures that have a positive impact towards meeting the skilling needs of Queensland.

**Compliance**
A risk-based approach focused on PQS contract compliance to monitor, assess and respond to the integrity of PQS performance.
Our key focus areas

Program design
- Investment priorities
- Government subsidy levels
- Eligibility criteria for students
- Funding agreement terms and conditions

Supplier entry requirements
- RTO registration as a mandatory requirement
- PQS entry criteria
- Performance and governance history
- Knowledge of the VET investment programs
- Exclusion criteria
- Industry endorsement

Compliance
- Maintaining the audit strategy
- Maintaining training provider risk profiles
- Managing enforcement and sanctions
- Partnering with the national regulator

Market performance and oversight
- Payment model
- Key account management
- Performance monitoring
- Market analysis
- Undertaking investigations

Information and support
- Assisting consumers to make informed decisions
- Assisting consumers when they experience difficulty
- Maintaining communication channels
Program design

Introduction
Purchasing arrangements for government-funded training and assessment services are built on effective program design. Policy and operational arrangements are developed with a focus on achieving outcomes and meeting skilling needs, as identified by the Queensland Government in collaboration with industry.

Key attributes of program and market policy include:
- student access and recognition of their aspirations
- industry input into the determination of priority training areas
- support for disadvantaged learners
- requirements for career advancement and/or entry level employment.

Characteristics of program policy may include:
- the identification of priority qualifications and skill sets approved for subsidy
- indicative course value and level of government subsidy
- co-contribution fees policy
- student eligibility criteria
- key performance standards and compliance requirements, including marketing and disclosure directives
- the ability to adjust policy settings to manage investment levels and supplier behaviour, send price signals to the market and redirect investment to industry and regional priorities.

Key focus areas

Determining investment priorities
Priorities for investment are determined through a number of inputs, including:
- advice provided by Jobs Queensland
- national, state and regional skills demand data
- Queensland Government commitments and priorities
- identification of effective training pathways
- ongoing consultation with industry peak and other representative bodies such as VET Industry Advisory Organisations (VETIOs)
- strategic advice on the key priorities for long-term workforce planning and skills development in Queensland, including emerging innovative industries
- advice based on national, state and regional employment projections.

Setting the level of government subsidy
The Queensland Training Subsidies List (QTSL) identifies the qualifications and skill sets that attract a government subsidy and is updated periodically to reflect new industry priorities or superseded qualifications.

Determining eligibility criteria for students
Student eligibility criteria is shaped by a number of factors, including:
- national reform directions
- Queensland Government commitments focused on ensuring that training provides pathways into the labour market and results in measurable job outcomes
- building the skills of specific disadvantaged cohorts who are under-utilised or under-employed.

Determining funding agreement terms and conditions
Funding agreement terms and conditions need to be designed to:
- accord with key Queensland Government objectives for funding, such as:
  - increasing the proportion of Queenslanders that hold a certificate III qualification (under the national student entitlement arrangements)
  - training opportunities linked to employment outcomes
  - RTO standards of performance.
- be based on core principles and values, including:
  - informing consumers about training options, including value for money and support services available
  - inclusive training environments
  - cost sharing in recognition that the benefits of training are shared between individuals, employers and the community
  - improving the alignment and responsiveness between the training system and industry.
- ensure that the procurement and investment strategy used to obtain training services includes levers to manage budget risks and provider-driven growth, such as:
  - the ability to suspend enrolments, remove qualifications, adjust subsidy levels or impose additional student eligibility restrictions
  - subsidy payments after the completion of training for the unit or module.
Supplier entry requirements

Introduction
The Queensland Government requirements for RTOs to gain PQS approval are in addition to registration conditions of ASQA and signify additional scrutiny and rigour to entry, enabling an increased level of confidence in the quality of service provision through Queensland’s network of PQS.

The PQS system is based on a performance framework for the assessment, selection and monitoring of RTOs linked to national standards, and Queensland Government specific requirements for program and quality management. The PQS system provides prospective students and employers with increased choice and levels of assurance that their chosen RTO is able to deliver high quality industry-standard training and assessment services that supports employment opportunities and/or workforce development.

The PQS system alone is not a guarantee of quality for consumers, as it is dependent on industry and individuals being informed decision makers, and on RTOs maintaining compliance with state and national quality standards and contractual requirements.

Key attributes of the operational policy include:
• reliance on the national VET regulator to set and maintain standards that match industry and community expectations
• comprehensive assessment of RTO, including delivery profile and history
• ongoing review and maintenance of PQS risk profiles.

Key focus areas

RTO registration as a mandatory requirement
To be eligible to apply for PQS status, the applicant must be registered with ASQA as an RTO.

RTOs must comply with all components of the Vocational Education and Training Quality Framework regulated by ASQA, including the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

PQS entry criteria
In addition to active RTO registration status, RTOs must meet the following requirements to be eligible to apply for PQS status:
• be registered to deliver full qualifications in Queensland under its scope of registration for the subsidised qualification(s) it nominates to deliver
• agree to the terms and conditions within the applicable VET PQS agreement, associated PQS policy and program policy
• demonstrate financial capacity to fulfil PQS responsibilities
• demonstrate a satisfactory audit and legal history.

Performance and governance history
Additional eligibility control tests include ASQA compliance history and company searches (ultimate owner) and credit history.

Knowledge of the VET investment programs
An RTO applying to become a PQS confirms its knowledge and understanding of the relevant program’s operating policy, directives, guidelines and, where applicable, legislation.

Exclusion criteria
To maintain integrity of the PQS system, an exclusion period following PQS agreement termination may apply to a terminated PQS and any individual or organisation associated with the terminated PQS, including as a director, executive, manager or shareholder of the former PQS. This does not preclude such associations in their own right, but such associations cannot exist with an RTO seeking PQS status.

Industry endorsement
A key feature of Queensland’s funded training programs is a focus on qualification completions and whether the training resulted in employment or career advancement.

RTOs applying to become a PQS must demonstrate links to industry by supplying industry or employer endorsement of their PQS application.
Information and support

Introduction

Information and support services are essential to help inform decisions by students and employers about qualifications, study options and PQS suited to their needs.

For PQS, ongoing support through the provision of relevant information and communication channels, is needed for the provision of a quality service to students.

Key attributes of the operational policy include:
- timely and accurate information provision
- communication channels that meet stakeholder needs
- easily accessible and responsive support services.

Key focus areas

Assisting students and employers to make informed decisions

Timely access to information empowers individuals to make informed choices when choosing the qualification and RTO that best meets their needs.

For Queensland Government-subsidised training, DET focuses on the relationship between the PQS and the student. Through policies, the Queensland Government prescribes both the information that must be published and provided to students, and acceptable marketing practices of PQS.

DET also has an important role as a reliable source of independent information for students and employers about the range and choice of qualifications and RTOs available to them.

In addition, by DET fostering a network of informed stakeholders such as the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN), VETIOAs and other industry bodies, students and employers have access to a broader range of support services to assist them navigate the VET system.

Assisting students and employers when they experience difficulty

Managing complaints

When a student wishes to complain about training and assessment and related services of a RTO they should first contact the RTO and attempt to resolve their complaint. RTOs are strongly encouraged to resolve complaints in the first instance and are required to have in place a complaints management process.

When the RTO’s response is considered unsatisfactory, students may choose to lodge a complaint with DET. If the RTO is a PQS, a departmental officer will contact the RTO and the student to assist with resolving the issue.

Where a resolution cannot be achieved, other avenues for dispute resolution are available to the student.

DET and ASQA also work together through information sharing arrangements to resolve complaints.

Queensland Training Ombudsman

Finding the right advice and support is sometimes difficult. State and Australian Government agencies have different but related areas of responsibility and the Training Ombudsman can assist consumers understand the different areas of responsibility. The Training Ombudsman provides a single point of consumer contact to navigate the VET system, making it easier for stakeholders to progress their concerns to the most appropriate agency.

The Ombudsman will:
- consider the individual circumstances in providing a free, confidential and independent dispute resolution service for apprentices, trainees, students, employers and other VET stakeholders
- provide assistance by:
  - reviewing the issue and recommending the most appropriate action to take
  - referring the complaint to another agency if they are best suited to assist
  - mediating between parties to come to a mutually beneficial solution.

Maintaining communication channels

For students and employers

A variety of communication channels are necessary to provide timely and accurate information that is responsive to the individual needs of students and employers.

Information needs be program-specific and presented in an audience appropriate way, including dedicated resources and referrals to independent information sources and points of contact where possible.

For pre-qualified suppliers

Ongoing communication between DET and the PQS is essential to encourage best practice, and clarify standards and requirements for the best provision of training to students.

A variety of communication channels are required to provide essential reference material that is available to all PQS and other VET stakeholders – anywhere, anytime.

PQS also need to be kept informed through broadcast messages of upcoming changes and updates that may impact on their business activity, allowing sufficient time for planning and change management activities.
Market performance and oversight

Introduction
Market performance and oversight is an integral part of the continuous improvement of the Queensland VET Quality Framework.

Oversight activities include performance reporting and analysis, market performance reviews and investigations.

Attributes of the operational policy include:
- PQS account management to provide consistent advice
- payment validations to check that only conforming claims are paid and automated as much as possible
- oversight reporting to identify trends requiring investigation.

Key focus areas

Payment model
PQS are paid after the provision of services. Each month, PQS that have provided error-free data will be paid the government subsidy at an individual unit of competency level, up to the total subsidy for the qualification.

Key account management
DET provides a range of key account services as the primary contact for PQS, including:
- processing of payments and payment queries
- policy interpretation and program specifications
- variation requests and other agreement-related issues.

A contract manager is appointed to each PQS, providing them with a primary point of contact for DET. The contract manager monitors the PQS performance for compliance against the PQS agreement across a range of indicators.

Performance monitoring
A suite of skills market reports are produced which highlight investment and delivery trends of programs outlined in the Annual VET Investment Plan, at a qualification and PQS level.

The reports are analysed to identify areas for follow-up through either:
- investigation by the PQS dedicated contract manager
- inclusion in performance reviews of targeted qualifications
- a compliance audit (if related to a specific PQS)
- industry consultation.

Performance monitoring is further informed by an independent 12-month post-completion employment outcome survey. The survey is administered through the Queensland Government Statistician’s Office.

In addition, DET recognises the value of information provided by stakeholders where they are aware of any behaviour that is contributing to low quality training and assessment practices of RTOs.

Market analysis
Market performance reviews are coordinated examinations of target qualifications conducted on a rolling basis to:
- produce and analyse available performance information
- build a consolidated picture of the outcomes achieved and satisfaction with the demand-driven skills market.

The process allows DET to identify areas where market intervention (such as adjustments to subsidy levels) is required to address areas of concern. Where issues relating to a PQS’ compliance with the national standards are identified, the matter will be referred to ASQA for investigation.

DET also examines the data at the qualification level to identify whether significant investment is being directed to areas where course completions and job outcomes are weak, as this could indicate a potential over-servicing in a training area.

Undertaking investigations
Market performance concerns may relate to systemic issues or be specific to a PQS.

DET has authority to investigate complaints, including those raised through the contract managers.

Where appropriate, the Queensland Training Ombudsman can investigate complaints received. Recommendations may then be forwarded to the Queensland Minister for Training and Skills and DET, in order to strengthen departmental policies and procedures. Referrals to other agencies such as ASQA or the Office of Fair Trading are also possible if matters are within the remit of these agencies.

A statewide network of DET regional training offices is recognised as a valuable source of local market intelligence. They also undertake a range of activities aligned to the framework, such as information and support, market performance reviews and compliance activities.
Compliance

Introduction
Ensuring compliance with the requirements of PQS agreements is key to safeguarding the integrity of VET in Queensland.

A range of regulatory functions were referred to ASQA in June 2012 and DET has maintained the role of undertaking compliance audits of PQS funding agreements.

Key attributes of the operational policy include:
- risk detection and prevention techniques
- early intervention for non-compliant behaviour(s)
- consistency of approach to enforcement of standards and application of sanctions.

Key focus areas

Maintaining the audit strategy
DET’s audit strategy is informed through ongoing intelligence gathering, including:
- performance reporting and analysis
- environmental scanning to identify key risks and challenges to VET investment arrangements
- input from key business units of DET
- input from students, employers, industry, RTOs and other stakeholders.

The audit strategy
The audit strategy outlines the approach auditors will follow to plan compliance audits of PQS agreements and includes details about the type of audits to be performed, the activities to be checked and appropriate resourcing. It is designed to:
- identify and eliminate the existence of any loopholes
- assess risks
- supply appropriate resources for the completion of audits
- determine audit outcomes are reached within agreed timelines.

There are two streams of audit activity:
1. core audit program, planned in advance
2. off-cycle audit program, triggered in response to emerging issues.

Regular review and improvement of the quality of audit reports and increasing the use of available information technology tools to gather, analyse and present factual data are important aspects of the continuous improvement cycle. This activity aims to further enhance the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of audit reports.

Maintaining RTO and PQS risk profiles
Risk profiling of PQS is an important early detection tool for potentially non-compliant behaviour. A PQS risk profile is determined through an analysis of a range of risk indicators that are assigned to performance risks — categorised as either:
- Systemic risks: inherent risks that apply to the system and are not restricted to an individual PQS and include qualifications aligned to licenced occupations and high risk industries (e.g. child care and aged care)
- Supplier risks: based on historical performance (compliance and complaints history), emerging and predictive indicators (scope of registration, student cohort, delivery attributes and PQS governance).

PQS are assessed against these parameters and classified as high, moderate or low risk. A planned audit program and schedule is developed from the risk review.

The audit approach considers the PQS, risk classification and those PQS classified as high risk are subject to greater oversight.

Maintaining the risk profile of PQS requires comprehensive data analysis and input of other market intelligence for accuracy and currency of PQS profiles, in order to inform audit planning and other oversight controls.

Managing enforcement and sanctions
Audit outcomes can result in:
- recovery of funds not earned in accordance with program conditions and revenue penalties as outlined in the relevant PQS policy
- referral of possible breaches of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (2015) to ASQA
- referral to DET regions for further investigation
- planned re-audit
- suspension or termination of an agreement/s
- or a combination of any of the above.

A recommendation for sanctions, suspension or termination is moderated by a PQS Review Panel, which includes senior DET officers, prior to determination. A register of terminated PQS is maintained containing details of associated compliance issues which led to termination, and is used to inform moderation meetings and maintain consistency in outcomes.

PQS that have had their agreement/s terminated enter an exclusion period, during which they are not permitted to apply for an agreement. Further exclusion can be applied to associated individuals of the training organisation entity that held PQS status.

Partnering with the national regulator
With a view to providing effective audit coverage and minimising overlaps, DET maintains a communication protocol with ASQA to share information and work closely to better coordinate oversight activities.

ASQA provides a heightened level of regulatory response to referrals from DET on PQS considered to be not complying with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (2015). Many of these referrals lead to regulatory audits by ASQA that may result in cancellation and other sanctions.
Introduction

Quality in VET is a shared responsibility between the Queensland government, Australian government, industry, suppliers and students.

While DET has responsibility for the design, monitoring and review of the Queensland Government’s VET investment programs, a number of other stakeholders play important roles in maintaining integrity within the VET system at both the state and national level.

The stakeholder responsibility matrix on page 15 outlines those responsibilities against the five key elements for Queensland Government funded VET activity. Responsibilities against the four underlying building blocks for a national VET system are included to indicate the importance of a strong foundation for VET nationally.

The role of stakeholders is outlined below.

Queensland Government

Department of Education and Training (DET)

DET is responsible for the strategic direction of Queensland’s VET sector to enable all Queenslanders to gain the necessary skills to contribute to the economic and social development of Queensland.

Jobs Queensland

Jobs Queensland is an independent statutory authority providing strategic industry advice to government on skills demand and future workforce planning.

It gives industry and employers a voice in identifying training and skills priorities.

Future investment in VET will be guided by advice from the Jobs Queensland Board to the Minister for Training and Skills.

Office of Fair Trading

For complaints that cannot be resolved by DET, the Office of Fair Trading may assist. Its role is to:
- promote the rights of consumers
- provide information to consumers and businesses
- help resolve disputes in the marketplace.

They are unable to act on every complaint. The more information provided by consumers, the quicker and more accurately they can assess the appropriate course of action.

Queensland Training Ombudsman

The Ombudsman provides a free, confidential and independent service to review and resolve enquiries and complaints from apprentices, trainees, students, employers and other stakeholders in relation to the VET system.

The Ombudsman aims to help stakeholders to navigate the complex VET sector and find the best way to address concerns. It provides free and impartial advice about rights and responsibilities within the VET sector and also has an advocacy role for the VET sector by reporting systemic issues and advising the Queensland Government on ways to improve Queensland’s VET system.

TAFE Queensland

TAFE Queensland has a proud 130 year history of providing high quality learning experiences to our students to enable their contribution to industry and the wider community. TAFE Queensland supports actions by the Department of Education and Training to improve quality and client confidence in the VET sector.

Australian Government

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)

ACCC is an independent Australian government statutory authority. Its role is to enforce the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Commonwealth) and a range of additional legislation, promoting competition and fair trading, and regulating national infrastructure for the benefit of all Australians.

ACCC’s priorities are reflected in their four key goals:
1. maintain and promote competition and remedy market failure
2. protect the interests and safety of consumers and support fair trading in markets
3. promote the economically efficient operation of, use of and investment in monopoly infrastructure
4. increase engagement with the broad range of groups affected by the work they do.

Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC)

AISC oversees the development of training products and endorses training packages for implementation. It also advises Ministers on the implementation of national training policies.

Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC)

ASIC is an independent Australian Government body established under the Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001 (ASIC Act). Most of ASIC's work is carried out under the Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth).

ASIC regulates Australian companies, financial markets, financial services organisations and professionals who deal with and advise in investments, superannuation, insurance, deposit taking and credit.
As the consumer credit regulator, ASIC licenses and regulates people and businesses engaging in consumer credit activities (including banks, credit unions, finance companies, and mortgage and finance brokers). It ensures that licensees meet the standards — including their responsibilities to consumers — that are set out in the National Consumer Credit Protection Act 2009 (Commonwealth).

ASIC has powers to protect consumers against misleading or deceptive and unconscionable conduct affecting all financial products and services, including credit.

**Australian Skills Quality Agency (ASQA)**

As the national regulator for the VET sector, ASQA seeks to make sure that the sector’s quality is maintained through the effective regulation of:
- VET providers
- accredited VET courses
- Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students providers, including those delivering English Language Intensive Courses to Overseas Students.

ASQA maintains the quality and reputation of Australia’s VET system through effective national regulation.

**Council of Australian Governments Industry and Skills Council (CISC)**

CISC members include Ministers from the Australian government, states and territories who have portfolio responsibilities for industry and skills. CISC meets throughout the year to facilitate consultation and cooperation between the Australian and state and territories governments in specific policy areas.

**Department of Education and Training (Australian Government)**

The Australian Government’s Department of Education and Training is responsible for policy formulation, managing key areas of reform and the administration of a national VET scheme. This includes the administration of the VET Student Loans program and secretariat functions to CISC.

**Industry**

Queensland boasts a rich and diverse economy that comprises a number of industry sectors. Industry sectors are segments of the economy with similar business activities (such as tourism and construction). Industry plays an important role in identifying the current and future skills that are needed to meet the future needs for our economy. Engaging industry in VET is crucial for ensuring students are suitably qualified to secure employment.

**Employers**

Employers benefit from the skills capability that employees bring to the workplace leading to industry productivity gains. Where the employer is a party to training arrangements for their employees they are responsible for assisting staff:
- to make an informed decision regarding the most appropriate qualification
- to choose the training provider that best meets their needs
- when they experience difficulty with their chosen RTO.

**Industry peak bodies**

An industry peak body is an association of industries or groups with allied interests. They are generally established for the purposes of developing standards and processes and often act on behalf of members to influence government policy and decisions and to promote the interests of members.

**Registered Training Organisations**

RTOs must comply with all components of the Vocational Education and Training Quality Framework regulated by ASQA, including the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

As RTOs are often the first point of contact by consumers they are responsible for assisting them to make informed decisions. For enrolled students, they are required to assist them when they experience difficulty with their learning experience.

In addition, RTOs that are also a PQS are responsible for ensuring their delivery of funded training and assessment services comply with requirements detailed in the:
- Further Education and Training Act 2014 (Queensland)
- relevant PQS agreements
- relevant DET program policy documents.
## Stakeholder responsibility matrix

### State funded VET activity

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<th>Queensland Government</th>
<th>Australian Government</th>
<th>Industry</th>
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<td>Exclusion criteria</td>
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<td>Assisting consumers to make informed decisions</td>
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<td>Assisting consumers when they experience difficulty</td>
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<td>Manage communication channels</td>
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