

# Registered Training Organisation User Choice Skills Assure Supplier 2020-21 Policy

Policy owner:	Deputy Director-General Investment Division
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Related policies and documents:	1. <i>User Choice 2020-21 Policy</i> 2. <i>Vocational Education and Training (VET) Skills Assure Supplier Agreement</i>
Version control:	Version: 1.1

All documents are available online at: [www.desbt.qld.gov.au/training](http://www.desbt.qld.gov.au/training).  
For definitions, refer to Appendix 1.

## Policy intent

### Background

In July 2010, the Queensland Government introduced the Pre-qualified supplier (PQS) system as a new methodology for funding User Choice training and assessment services in Queensland. Skills Assure, the next evolution of the PQS system, commenced from 1 July 2020.

The Skills Assure supplier (SAS) system provides a comprehensive central register of VET providers that have met Queensland's entry requirements. It provides performance requirements and guidelines for the selection of training and assessment providers for the delivery of vocational education and training (VET) services funded by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

Skills Assure approval applies to all registered training organisations (RTOs) directly contracted by the department to deliver User Choice training and assessment services.

There are no application or annual registration fees directly associated with the SAS system.

Based on national standards and department-specific requirements in quality management, the SAS process aims to provide industry, apprentices, trainees and their employers with a level of assurance that their chosen supplier is able to deliver quality training and assessment services in Queensland.



## Scope

### User Choice Skills Assure Supplier policy framework

The SAS process operates under the following policy framework:

- RTOs, including TAFE Queensland and Central Queensland University, that wish to deliver publicly-funded User Choice training and assessment services in Queensland must apply for, and be granted, SAS status by the department.
- SAS status is granted for successful applicants from the start date specified in the department's letter of authority advising an RTO of their success in obtaining SAS status.
- The department reserves the right to revoke an RTO's SAS status subject to the terms and conditions of the *Vocational Education and Training (VET) Skills Assure Supplier Agreement*.

### Eligibility requirements

- Only RTOs who have an active registration status in Queensland are eligible to apply for SAS status.
- RTOs must be registered to deliver full qualifications under their scope of registration in order to apply for SAS status.
- RTOs must meet, and agree to adhere to the requirements of the relevant funding program and its policies, to be granted SAS status.
- To be eligible for SAS status, the RTO must meet the requirements of the SAS application process and agree to terms and conditions contained within the *VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement*.

## Application process

- RTOs can only apply for SAS status online through the department's Purchasing Online (POL) system. POL is the department's web-enabled system for RTOs to apply to deliver publicly-funded training in Queensland.
- SAS applicants must complete and submit the online application via POL in order to be considered for SAS status. Within the application, RTOs will be required to nominate the qualifications they intend to deliver.
- Some qualifications, such as those considered as thin markets, are managed under special arrangements by the department. Funding for these qualifications is, at the department's discretion, excluded or restricted from the User Choice funding program. Only RTOs that hold SAS status and are specifically authorised by the department in writing can deliver publicly-funded User Choice training and assessment services for these qualifications.
- Skills Assure suppliers seeking to deliver training and assessment services for a restricted qualification can submit a business case to the department for consideration. The business case must demonstrate the RTO's capacity to grow the training market for the particular restricted qualification.
- As part of the application process for SAS status, applicants must print two (2) copies of the *VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement*, sign both copies and return them to the department as part of their application.
- The department will assess applications received for SAS status, which may include (but not limited to):
  - checking that the responses to the application questions are true and correct
  - seeking advice from the relevant industry engagement body regarding the RTO's application
  - considering any non-compliance issues, whether identified through audit or otherwise
  - checking the financial viability of the RTO
  - checking the RTO has a one-year minimum trading history in Queensland for each industry area nominated for training delivery and assessment
  - contacting employer and industry referees to verify student outcomes and industry support.
- SAS status will only be granted upon receipt and approval of an RTO's application and subsequent execution of the *VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement* by the department. Applicants for SAS status will be notified in writing of the department's decision regarding their application.
- Successful applicants will be advised of their authority to commence delivery against approved qualifications and will receive an executed copy of the *VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement* for their records.
- The department will publish business contact details and a list of approved qualifications on the Queensland Training Information Service (QTIS) and [Queensland Skills Gateway](#) for each successful SAS, unless otherwise requested in writing by the SAS and subsequently approved by the department.
- Any training or assessment services delivered by a SAS that commence prior to the period specified in the department's letter of authority cannot be claimed for, or receive, payment under the User Choice 2020-21 program.

# Skills Assure supplier responsibilities

## ***VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement***

- Skills Assure suppliers will be subject to the terms and conditions of the *VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement*.

## **Maintenance of records**

- RTOs can make the following requests for correction and variation to a SAS application after submitting it:
  - Correcting errors in your application after submission, but prior to departmental approval.  
Submitted applications can only be modified by contacting the department in writing and requesting the specific changes you require.
  - Variations to approved applications.  
Variations to applications which have been approved by the department can be made online through the Variations Online (VOL) function of the department's Purchasing Online (POL) system. SAS can access POL at <http://www.desbt.qld.gov.au/training/providers/sas/pol>.

POL enquiries, such as password resets and requests for assistance in accessing the POL system, should be made to:

Email: [purchasingonline@desbt.qld.gov.au](mailto:purchasingonline@desbt.qld.gov.au)

Phone: (07) 3025 6626

VOL enquiries, such as how to add or remove a qualification from your delivery schedule, should be made to:

Email: [contractmanagement@desbt.qld.gov.au](mailto:contractmanagement@desbt.qld.gov.au)

Phone: (07) 3025 6689

All correction and variation requests are subject to written approval by the department.

More information on variations to agreements can be found at

<http://www.desbt.qld.gov.au/training/providers/sas/contract/variations>.

- A SAS who makes application to delete their SAS status will be subject to departmental approval and any other standard or regulation relating to the transition of any existing students.
- Skills Assure suppliers must agree that the department will take no responsibility for, and will not accept liability for, publishing any incorrect business contact or qualification information.
- Only RTOs with SAS status can make a claim for payment for the delivery of training and assessment services. The SAS status must be current at the time the training and assessment services are delivered and at the time funding is claimed in relation to that delivery.
- Skills Assure suppliers must maintain full registration for each qualification they are approved to deliver.

## Skills Assure supplier performance

- Skills Assure suppliers will be subject to key performance indicators (KPIs) detailed in the *User Choice 2020-21 Policy*.
- Failure to meet the KPIs required for the funding program may result in termination of the *VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement* and removal of SAS status.
- The department will undertake performance monitoring and evaluation activities, including SAS compliance audits, to ensure Skills Assure Suppliers are complying with the *User Choice 2020-21 Policy*, the *SAS Agreement*, and any other guidelines or documents as published by the department. The selection of Skills Assure suppliers for audits may be done randomly, target Skills Assure suppliers perceived to be higher risk, or be initiated in response to complaints made to the department or to the Queensland Training Ombudsman. Evidence requirements to be met are stated in the Department's *Audit Evidence Requirements (User Choice)*, including those requirements which will result in a recovery of funds and other action if non-compliances are identified during audit activities.

## Appendix 1. Definitions that apply

**Act** means the *Further Education and Training Act 2014*.

**DELTA** means the department's Direct Entry Level Training Administration database system.

**department** means the Queensland Government Department of Employment, Small Business and Training. Prior to 2017 machinery-of-government changes, it was the Department of Education and Training.

**funding program** means a departmental program for funding training and assessment services (for example, the User Choice 2020-21 program).

**new student** means a student:

- (a) recorded on DELTA as having an active registration number commencement date on or after 1 July 2010, or
- (b) who recommences an apprenticeship or traineeship on or after 1 July 2010.

**QTIS** means the Queensland Training Information Service.

**RTO** means a registered training organisation, as defined in the *Further Education and Training Act 2014*.

**Skills Assure supplier** or **SAS** means an RTO approved by the department as a Skills Assure supplier to deliver publicly-funded User Choice training and assessment services.

**training and assessment** means:

- (a) off-the-job vocational education and training provided in Queensland by the Skills Assure Supplier, and
- (b) assessment provided in Queensland by the Skills Assure Supplier to a student in accordance with the Act, Training Contract and training plan for the student.

**VET** means vocational education and training.

HISTORICAL DOCUMENT