

# Newsletter

Please ensure that this Newsletter is distributed to all members of your staff – it provides a valued source of information to assist you in managing your obligations under the PQS Agreement.

## Contract Connector

Issue 33 – September 2014

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**NOTE:** Throughout the Newsletter Pre-qualified Suppliers (PQS) are able to access website information through the inclusion of hyperlinks.

Should a link not work when clicked – copy and paste that portion of the link that has “broken” and sits on the next line of the article – place this into the browser. Check that the full pathway has been copied across – then activate the hyperlink as normal. It should work.

## GENERAL

### COMMUNITY LEARNING – 2014-15 SECOND FUNDING ROUND OPENING AND PROJECT SITE VISITS <sup>(1)</sup>

The Department will open the 2014-15 second round for Community Learning funding on **1 October 2014, with a closing date of the 31 October 2014.**

The Community Learning team has conducted more than 20 project site visits to newly funded projects across the South East to see how they are progressing.

Discussion on the visits has focussed on barriers or issues that have been encountered by organisations to date including with participant eligibility, screening and general administration issues and consultation and feedback from visits conducted to date has been extremely positive.

While there will be a short break from visits in preparation for the approaching funding round, the Community Learning team will be recommencing visits in early October.

For more information about Community Learning contact DETE on 1300 369 935 or visit the website at [www.training.qld.gov.au/communitylearning](http://www.training.qld.gov.au/communitylearning)

### UNIQUE STUDENT IDENTIFIER (USI) – COMING SOON <sup>(2)</sup>

The Australian Government is delivering improvements to the skills and training system to ensure students can move more easily from training into paid jobs that boost national productivity.

The *Student Identifiers Act 2014* was proclaimed on 27 June 2014, paving the way for the 1 January 2015 commencement of the Unique Student Identifier (USI) scheme.

Students will be able to apply for their unique number to build an online record of their vocational education and training (VET) attainment and qualifications.

Registered training organisations (RTOs) will be required to collect and verify a USI for each student and include this in their AVETMISS reporting.





The USI scheme will make it easier for an estimated three million VET students and nearly 5,000 training organisations to access and share training information.

RTOs are encouraged to talk to their student management system developers to ensure the USI can be included in enrolment and student management processes.

The Department of Industry will work with training providers and key stakeholders over the coming months to assist with preparation for implementation.

For more information visit the [Unique Student Identifier website](#) or email the [USI Taskforce](#).

### SUBSCRIBE TO SKILLS UPDATE <sup>(3)</sup>

PQS are reminded they can subscribe to the department's training e-newsletter *Skills update* and its associated *Skills Alert* service.

Subscribing is one of the best ways to keep up to date with the training announcements from the department and other updates of interest across the VET sector.

The *Skills Alert* service provides details on major initiatives and funding programs as they are announced.

Subscribe online and view previous issues of *Skills update* at [www.training.qld.gov.au/about/news/index.html](http://www.training.qld.gov.au/about/news/index.html)

### MONTHLY DATA SUBMISSIONS <sup>(4)</sup>

In line with your PQS Agreement please note that a PQS will only receive payment for a data submission which is error free and meets the standard Departmental validations for the relevant program.

Please note that **payments will be made monthly**.

In order for payments to be processed in a timely manner it is vital to ensure end of month AVETMISS submissions are complete, **submitted on time** and error free. You are encouraged to submit your data more frequently to achieve an error free status – but it must occur before the last working day of the month.

To be compliant PQSs are reminded they have:

- 90 days to make a claim for training delivery from the date the competency has been achieved for the 2010-2015 User Choice Program; and,

- 30 days to make a claim for training delivery from the date the competency has been achieved for the VET Investment Plan.

**Failure to adhere to this timeframe may result in your organisation not receiving payment.**

### PQSs RESPONSIBILITY <sup>(5)</sup>

PQSs are reminded of their responsibility to ensure compliance with all policy guidelines and agreement requirements. In particular:

Any changes to a PQSs Scope of Registration <sup>(a)</sup>

- Where qualifications are either added to or removed these changes must be advised to Contract Management and Performance immediately. Notification can be provided by email and then by submitting a variation request through Variations Online (VOL) to either remove the qualification from your Schedule or remove your organisation from being published.

Any changes to a PQSs Legal Name or a change in control <sup>(b)</sup>

- Must be notified to Contract Management and Performance before the changes occur.

Failure to advise the Department will result in a situation where no valid Agreement is in place and no payments will be made. It is at the Department's discretion as to whether it consents or refuses to consent to any change in Control of the PQS.

#### ACTIONS:

- [ ] Have you confirmed with your Student Management System (SMS) developer that they are USI "geared up"?
- [ ] Subscribe now - Skills Update?



## USER CHOICE

### EOFY PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS <sup>(6)</sup>

PQSs will receive **two (2) payments** under their Pre-qualified supplier (PQS) agreements for data submitted during July to September and paid with the August to October payments. These payments support the closing of the 2013-2014 data.

- The first payment to be processed and paid will cover your 2013-2014 financial year data.
- The second payment to be processed and paid will be for the 2014-2015 financial data.

PQSs will note a delay between these payments due to validation of data for each financial year.

#### Pre-qualified Suppliers note:

Once the 2013-2014 financial year data has been finalised after 30 September 2014, you will return to receiving one payment for data submissions from November onwards.

### END OF FINANCIAL YEAR CLOSURE <sup>(7)</sup>

The User Choice PQS agreements run for a 5 year period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2015 maintaining the same Agreement Number throughout the program. In order to manage the data flow throughout the 5 year program period, the Department's payment system separates the training activity for each financial year.

In order to finalise training activity at the end of the financial year, PQS have 90 days (until 30 September) to submit error free data.

Data errors appearing on the Validation Report **MUST** be addressed to ensure payment will be made for all training delivered up to and including 30 June 2014.

Where errors relate to a student's Training Contract, such as cancellations and amendments etc, PQS need to follow up with the relevant Training Queensland Regional Office.

**No extensions will be granted to submit AVETMISS data under User Choice for the financial year 2013-2014 beyond 30 September 2014.**

### DECLARATIONS <sup>(8)</sup>

The following qualifications have been approved for User Choice funding:

### UEG11 – Gas Industry Training Package.

Qualification	Code	Priority
Certificate III in Gas Supply Industry Operations	UEG30114	1

**Note:** All declared apprenticeships/traineeships and details about User Choice funding can be found on Queensland Training Information Service (QTIS) located on the Departments Home Page <http://qtis.training.qld.gov.au/TrainingNews>

**Remember:** You must have scope of registration before applying for the addition of any qualification to your Schedule A/Delivery Schedule. Only when scope has been approved can you then apply for the qualification to be added to your Schedule A/Delivery Schedule through Variations on Line using your Purchasing on Line (POL) account. Failure to do this will result in no payment.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISING REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS (SRTOs) <sup>(9)</sup>

The [Further Education and Training Act 2014](#) (the FET Act) was implemented on 1 July 2014, repealing the *Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000* (the VETE Act).

Whilst the responsibilities of SRTOs under the FET Act remain largely unchanged, there are some matters of which SRTOs need to be aware. The main points affecting SRTOs in regard to apprenticeships and traineeships are summarised below.

#### (i) [Declaration of apprenticeships and traineeships policy](#)

The new policy outlines the requirements for each apprenticeship and/or traineeship declared in Queensland under [the FET Act](#) and provides SRTOs with an overview of:

- the minimum requirements for registering a training contract in Queensland, and
- the minimum requirements for supervision, facilities and training of an apprentice or trainee under a training plan.

SRTOs must ensure that they adhere to the requirements for each apprenticeship or traineeship.

The [Queensland Training Information Service \(QTIS\) database](#) has been updated to reflect the requirements stated in the declaration policy, as well as the particular requirements for school-based arrangements. A review



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of the structure of information provided in QTIS is currently underway with a view to improving readability.

(ii) Training plans

Under the FET Act, the SRTO for an apprentice or trainee must take all reasonable steps to ensure a training plan is signed—

- if it is the initial training plan, within 3 months of the start of the apprenticeship or traineeship (previously before the end of the probationary period)
- if it is because the SRTO has been replaced, within 28 days after the replacement of the SRTO (previously within 14 days)
- if it is because of a permanent, temporary or statutory transfer to another employer, within 28 days after the transfer of the training contract.

SRTOs must ensure they provide a copy of the signed training plan to the parties within 14 days after they sign it (previously 7 days).

The FET Act allows SRTOs to make minor changes to the training plan without the need for the employer or apprentice/trainee to sign a new training plan. A minor amendment may be deemed as not changing how, when or where training and assessment will be undertaken – for example, a changed title of qualification.

(iii) Suspension of a registered training contract

The FET Act allows the parties to a registered training contract to mutually agree to apply to suspend the contract for up to 1 year. During the period of suspension, all training and assessment under the training plan is suspended and the apprentice or trainee must not undertake any institutional training in the apprenticeship or traineeship during the period of suspension.

(iv) Resources

All DETE resources related to apprentice/traineeship training contracts have been reviewed and are available from [DETE's website](#). These resources include a range of new forms and information sheets. Also available is a new version of the Guide for Supervising Registered Training Organisations, which details the requirements and processes related to the FET Act.

For the full range of responsibilities and changes to apprenticeship and traineeship provisions, please refer directly to [the FET Act](#).

**HARMONISATION PROJECT – NATIONALLY CONSISTENT TRAINING PLAN TEMPLATE <sup>(10)</sup>**

As part of Australian Government reform, a national harmonisation project has been underway regarding Australian apprenticeship regulation, rules and pathways.

One of the harmonisation principles related to agreement by States and Territories regarding a nationally consistent training plan template.

Agreement has been reached and a national training plan template is now available.

As per the *Further Education and Training Act 2014*, all training plans in Queensland must be in the approved form. The national training plan template is the current approved form in Queensland.

SRTOs are encouraged to directly use the national training plan template published by the department, or alternatively, develop their own template to meet their individual requirements ensuring that the training plan contains all the information contained within the approved version.

There is no requirement for existing apprentices and trainees to be immediately transitioned to the national template. The expectation is that the national template will be utilised in instances where a new training plan is required, and for existing apprentices and trainees, phased in when a change to the existing training plan occurs.

The new template can be found on the [training.qld.gov.au](http://www.training.qld.gov.au) website at – <http://www.training.qld.gov.au/training-organisations/srto/index.html>

Should you require any further information, please contact Suellen Retschlag on telephone (07) 3328 6833 or email [suellen.retschlag@dete.qld.gov.au](mailto:suellen.retschlag@dete.qld.gov.au).

**ACTIONS:**

- [ ] Start using the “nationally consistent Training Plan template”?





## 2014 – 15 VET INVESTMENT PLAN

### QUEENSLAND TRAINING SUBSIDIES LIST <sup>(11)</sup>

It is the responsibility of PQSs to regularly check the Queensland Training Subsidies List.

Updates to this list occur as new qualifications become available and funding is approved in line with the Reform Agenda approval processes.

The most current version is Version 4 (effective 22 August 2014).

### SUB-CONTRACTING – New <sup>(12)</sup>

PQSs are reminded to familiarise themselves with Clause 16 s. 16.4 of their *VET Pre-qualified Supplier Agreement* which states:

“The PQS must not subcontract or enter into an arrangement whereby the Contractor promotes, markets or advertises the Program or the Supplier’s status as a Pre-qualified Supplier for the Program.”

Additionally:

- DETE’s policy is that **only the PQS** is permitted to advertise or market DETE’s funding programs and the PQS’ approval to deliver training supported by this funding. It is imperative the PQS has full and close control over the content of any advertising or marketing to ensure accuracy and market certainty.
- This approval does not extend to a **third party** which is any entity/organisation/person that is not a part of the RTO entity awarded PQS status (i.e. not employed by the PQS, nor within its organisational structure such as a director). A third party operates as a separate entity in the marketplace, either with or without a contract with the PQS.
- A third party does not include:
  - a separate entity, who has expertise in marketing or similar, engaged by the PQS to provide advice to, or assist the PQS to market the PQS in line with the department’s marketing instructions;
  - any entity/person that refers its clients or associates to a PQS it recommends (provided that entity/person does not engage in any marketing of the PQS).

### VET INVESTMENT PLAN – Audio Visual Presentations <sup>(13)</sup>

To assist PQSs in gaining a better understanding of Queensland’s VET Investment Plan, a number of audio-visual presentations have now been uploaded to the Departmental website. To access these presentations please visit:

Queensland VET Investment Plan - overview  
<http://www.training.qld.gov.au/information/vet-investment-plan/index.html>.

User Choice  
<http://mediasite.eq.edu.au/mediasite/Play/ad27e1b207424c4ba3546274f5c982931d>

Certificate 3 Guarantee:  
<http://mediasite.eq.edu.au/mediasite/Play/de8f6b21669a418ca43acd16d9e5cbf01d>

Higher Lever Skills:  
<http://mediasite.eq.edu.au/mediasite/Play/c1becc91ebcb4255bb7b7b251f8e373c1d>

Indigenous Training Strategy:  
<http://mediasite.eq.edu.au/mediasite/Play/d24e29d6088941ffaae6f296c4102ed01d>

Industry Partnerships Strategy:  
<http://mediasite.eq.edu.au/mediasite/Play/b5f92d03f1a14b13a51546f83d632ec51d>

### ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT – QUESTIONS <sup>(14)</sup>

PQSs are encouraged to develop a standard range of “the right questions” to more clearly identify eligibility of students to participate in training under the Queensland VET Investment Plan program.

Possible questions to be considered **may** include, but are not limited to the following:

- Have you undertaken training previously? – if yes – seek details. It is the participant’s responsibility to go back to the previous training provider and collect and provide evidence;
- Do you have a Certificate 3 qualification or above? – provide evidence. Once more, it is the participant’s responsibility to go back to the previous training provider and collect and provide evidence.

It has been identified that Suppliers are only identifying if a full qualification has been obtained which is not capturing partial completion or skill sets.





PQSs are reminded that under the *Pre-qualified Supplier Policy 2014-15* Appendix 4 Reporting Conditions that the:

“PQS must report any unit of competency available for credit transfer as a credit transfer. It is the responsibility of the PQS to check a student’s Statement of Attainment when they have previously undertaken training, to determine if any completed units of competency can be counted towards the qualification in which the student intends to enrol.

If yes, the PQS must record the unit of competency as a credit transfer. It will be counted as part of the maximum number of units of competency payable for the qualification.”

## REPORTING ENROLMENT DATA <sup>(15)</sup>

Under the *Pre-Qualified Supplier Policy 2014-15 for Queensland Government subsidised training places – Appendix 4 Reporting Conditions* - when reporting training and assessment services to the department, the PQS must:

- C. submit compliant VET activity data in accordance with the following timelines:
- Report enrolments within **30 days** of the unit of competency enrolment
  - Report outcomes within **30 days** of completion of the unit of competency.

For more information about reporting data contact your Contract Manager directly or by email to [supplier.management@dete.qld.gov.au](mailto:supplier.management@dete.qld.gov.au)

## HIGHER LEVEL SKILLS PROGRAM POLICY - Change <sup>(16)</sup>

VET FEE-HELP is an Australian Government loan scheme to assist eligible students studying diploma level and above qualifications to pay their tuition fees, but not for other study-related costs such as accommodation or text books.

State subsidised VET FEE-HELP arrangements have been made available under the *National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform* and are being administered in Queensland under the Higher Level Skills program. Under the program, if the student and PQS are eligible, a VET FEE-HELP loan may be available to cover the student’s contribution towards the costs of training in eligible qualifications.

The Australian Government has recently advised the Department that some of the details in the *Higher Level*

*Skills Program Policy 2014-2015* may not be consistent with the requirements in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (the HESA Act), specifically that students must be able to defer their entire contribution through VET FEE-HELP.

As a result of this advice, the Department has revised the section of the *Higher Level Skills Program Policy 2014-15* relating to “State subsidised VET FEE-HELP loans” to ensure compliance with HESA, and has released version 2 of the policy.

To review the full changes to the policy please visit <http://training.qld.gov.au/resources/training-organisations/pdf/hls-program-policy.pdf>

## TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY 2013/14 – Completion of Survey <sup>(17)</sup>

**Overdue report:** As PQSs are required to survey each participant within three (3) months of finishing or discontinuing their training, we wish to advise that the report for participants who finished or discontinued their training between 1 January 2014 and 31 March 2014 was due to be submitted to DETE by 14 July 2014.

We would appreciate that you submit any outstanding Training and Employment Outcome Surveys to assist the department to develop a more complete data set.

The Certificate 3 Guarantee Program Policy 2013-14 Appendix 1 Key Performance Indicators and Appendix 2. Training and Employment Survey required all PQSs to obtain from each participant, within three (3) months of finishing or discontinuing their training a completed survey

Your signed agreement with the Department highlights your obligations regarding KPIs. Failure to comply with the clause below is a breach of your agreement and the consequence of not responding may result in termination.

Under the PQS Agreement 2013-14 Clause 3 Suppliers obligations, note:

3.2 (f) ‘Meet the key performance indicators and performance standards in the Departments’ policies for Pre-Qualified Suppliers and the Funding Program.’”

## TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY 2013-14 AND 2014-15 <sup>(18)</sup>



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The department has now completed the analysis of reports submitted by PQSs for participants who finished or discontinued their training between 1 July and 31 December 2013.

In summary, the analysis indicated that overall results were very positive, with 65% of participants responding to the survey. Of these respondents, 98% reported they were satisfied with the quality of the training, 60% completed the training and 55% reported an improved employment status.

Of note is that there was a low response rate in Business Administration, Home and Community Care, Disability, Children's Services, Retail Operations and Hospitality. These same sectors, with the addition of Business and Aged Care also reported low completion rates. Additionally, low employment outcomes were reported in Business, Business Administration, Disability and Retail Operations.

The department has also identified that in some instances, PQSs have understated the survey group by not considering all students who have completed or discontinued their training during the reporting period. This means that PQSs may not be surveying the full number of eligible reportable participants for the period, and in turn may be under reporting outcomes achieved. Alternatively, it may also mean that PQSs are incorrectly reporting completion rates, as the base number they are reporting against will be different to what is captured in the department's systems as completing a qualification.

A key element of the recently released 2014-15 Annual VET Investment Plan is that government investment is focused on training for jobs that are in demand in Queensland's critical industries. As a part of ongoing efforts to ensure this, the department will monitor the outcomes of the survey responses as they relate to both the Certificate 3 Guarantee and the new Higher Level Skills program. With performance standards for PQSs in 2014-15 requiring the achievement of minimum outcomes for students including a qualification completion rate of 65 per cent of all enrolled students, and an achievement of 55 per cent of all students gaining an employment benefit, it is imperative that surveys are conducted in a timely manner and responses reported with integrity and diligence.

The department will continue to regularly provide PQSs with a summary of student employment surveys results through the Contract Connector, and is initiating a process to write to those PQSs with performance below satisfactory levels under 2013-14 Agreements and in the future, under 2014-15 Agreements. The student employment survey process is critical to the ongoing

management of the skills market in Queensland, and will be used to identify qualifications that are not supporting adequate outcomes for students, which may lead to a withdrawal or reduction of subsidies, and also PQSs that are not meeting benchmark levels of performance, which may lead to suspensions or cancellations at the qualification, program or agreement level.

**ACTIONS:**

- [ ] Check Subsidy List.
- [ ] If you are breaching Third Party Guidelines – **STOP NOW**
- [ ] Eligibility for Certificate 3 Guarantee – do your questions catch all the information?
- [ ] Survey Results – Due 14 July 2014 – are you in breach?

*Experience is the child of Thought,  
and  
Thought is the child of Action.*

**Benjamin Disraeli**



# Appendix 1 Key Performance Indicators Training Satisfaction and Employment Outcomes

To be used by PQS to report Participant responses to the Training and Employment Survey at a qualification level. (2013 -2014 Template)

Qualification Code	Qualification Description	Participant Numbers Enrolled	Question 1				Question 2				Question 3		Question 4					
			To help me find a job	To support my current career and improve my chances for promotion	To help me change careers	General interest	Very satisfied with the overall quality of the training	Somewhat satisfied with the overall quality of the training	Somewhat dissatisfied with the overall quality of the training	Very dissatisfied with the overall quality of the training	Yes	No	Not employed before training, employed after training	Not employed before training, not employed after training	Underemployed/employed before training, improved job outcome after training	Underemployed/employed before training, no improvement in job outcome after training		