

# Training Accreditation Council FACT SHEET

## Industry Engagement

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is about skilling people for the workplace and the industry with the outcome of the education and training being work ready, which means that training and assessment should accurately reflect workplace requirements. The TAC Users' Guide provides a comprehensive discussion of these requirements.

This Fact Sheet explores the idea of industry engagement approaches to ensure that training and assessment faithfully reflects the needs of industry. This Fact Sheet should be read in conjunction with the [Vocational Competence & Industry Currency Fact Sheet](#) and the [Amount of Training Fact Sheet](#).

### Industry Engagement Explained:

Industry 'owns' the qualifications, skill sets and specific units of competency that you deliver. These are set through the industry developed Training Packages or accredited courses. When an RTO issues a certificate it should reassure industry that the training and assessment provided is relevant and meets its expectations. Industry engagement is a strategy to provide a direct relationship between the RTO and the industry it serves for the mutual benefit and confidence of each party. There are two main ways to engage with industry which is outlined below.



#### Outgoing

**The RTO goes out into industry to learn of current industry practices and processes**

This approach supports the current industry skills of VET trainers and assessors (Clauses 1.6b and 1.13b), and will contribute to the industry relevance of the training, assessment tools and practices (Clause 1.6a).



#### Incoming

**Industry comes to the RTO to review RTO practices and processes**

This approach enables RTO trainers and assessors to confirm that the strategies and resources they have developed or selected are consistent with current industry practices and expectations.

## Common misunderstandings, challenges, risks and compliance issues

RTOs frequently ask industry representatives to read and review delivery and assessment plans and their assessment strategies and tools as a primary strategy for industry engagement. This is a great method for affirming industry relevant content but RTOs should be aware that most industry representatives do not have a VET background and should not be expected to be able to make comment on VET specific requirements eg training package requirements.

Instead, engagement with industry representatives should be used to inform the RTOs delivery and assessment plans and their assessment strategies and tools to ensure relevant to the industry, reflect industry practices, are current and in line with legislation etc.

There is also a common assumption that training and assessment staff of an enterprise RTO do not need to engage with the wider industry, and that their day-to-day

dealings with a real workplace is sufficient. While it seems reasonable to expect that employees should only be trained in the ways of their employer, the qualifications are nationally recognised, so the training and assessment resources need to reflect the range of contexts that may apply nationally.

Most VET trainers have at some time worked within their industry, but such experience may be limited to certain contexts or involve out-of-date practices. The national qualifications they are delivering must reflect current practice over the broad scope of industry.

Finally, there is a frequently held view that reading industry journals and participating in industry forums provides a sufficient basis for industry engagement on its own. These sources are all at 'arm's length' and are not an adequate substitute for direct, personal observation and participation in real workplaces as the ONLY method of industry engagement.

## Suggestions for good practice

Industry expectations are reflected in training packages or accredited courses. These products are written by industry representatives to define the current skills and knowledge required for safe and productive employment.

Direct industry engagement can be achieved through observation and participation in a range of workplaces that utilise the competencies being delivered and assessed. This could involve a schedule of visits to observe current workplace practice of experienced workers or trainees. For example while observing a trainee at a workplace, you could use this opportunity to have a conversation with industry experts to assess if the current practices of the RTO align accordingly with industry. In order to contribute to the range of

strategies required under Clause 1.6, and learn of industry practice beyond the RTO's immediate location, you may wish to consider reading industry journals, participating in web conferences, undertaking product training, sharing with RTOs in other regions and contributing to the national discussion.

Finally, RTOs need to invite representatives from industry to review and reflect on their training and assessment resources. As they are not likely to be qualified trainers and assessors or be familiar with the *Standards for RTOs*, the focus should be on whether the content faithfully and adequately reflects the reality of current industry processes and practices.

## Industry engagement should involve a combination of the following strategies:



Based on the findings of the industry engagement, the RTO should use the information gathered through the engagement process to:

- design strategies for training and assessment; and
- select suitable resources for delivery and assessment
- assure the relevance of the RTOs practices,
- assure the industry currency of trainers and assessors knowledge and skills.

### What will the auditor be looking for?

Evidence for audit to show that industry engagement had occurred could include plans for industry engagement, industry personnel consulted, minutes of meetings, records of interviews, narratives of worksite visits, feedback from industry and improvements to training and assessment resources. RTOs will also need to be able to show evidence on how this industry engagement has informed their current practices such as;

- the skills and knowledge required for trainers and assessors to hold;
- the amount of learning and practice that would typically be required to develop skills that would be at industry standard; and
- the strategy, resources and practices the RTO uses for training and assessment.

Industry consultation may also impact on the Amount of Training your RTO determines is appropriate for a learner group. More information on this is available in the [Amount of Training Fact Sheet](#).

Ultimately the effectiveness of industry consultation will be revealed through the quality of an RTO's training and assessment products.