



*Standards for State
and Territory Course
Accrediting Bodies*

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Introduction

Accredited courses address skill requirements for industry, enterprises and the community where these are not covered in nationally endorsed Training Packages. They also have the capacity to address changes in skill needs, and the needs of emerging and converging industries and industry sectors, in a responsive manner. A collaborative approach between national bodies concerned with the development and endorsement of national training packages and course accrediting bodies provides an effective and timely response to the changing needs of industry.

Accreditation means the formal recognition of a course by a course accrediting body in accordance with the *AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies* and the *AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses*.

Purpose of the Standards

The *AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies* apply to course accrediting bodies that manage course accreditation under state and territory legislation. These standards focus on national consistency, client service and responsive management systems as well as specifying quality indicators and operating protocols for course accreditation functions.

The standards support the national vocational education and training system by specifying:

- standards to be met by bodies accrediting courses
- quality indicators of performance against the standards
- operating protocols for undertaking accreditation.

The *AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies* must be read in conjunction with the *AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses* which set out the design requirements for accredited courses. These design standards are of particular relevance to course developers.

Each course accrediting body reports annually to the National Quality Council on its performance against the quality indicators using nationally agreed qualitative and quantitative data. These reports provide material to inform a national report on quality issues for the VET sector and the management of risks to sustainable quality outcomes.

All course accrediting bodies are also subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic independent audit of their performance against these standards as determined by the National Quality Council.

The operation of the national standards is supported by national guidelines and resources available through www.nssc.natese.gov.au.

Standard 1

Course accrediting activities ensure nationally consistent outcomes

- Element 1.1 National consistency in accreditation functions is continuously improved by acting on relevant data and benchmarking with accrediting bodies in other states and territories.
- Element 1.2 Links are maintained between national Training Package developers and course accrediting bodies to maximise their complementary roles in meeting industry needs.
- Element 1.3 Units of competency from nationally endorsed Training Packages are incorporated within accredited courses wherever appropriate to maximise the national portability of skills and certification.
- Element 1.4 Course accreditation meets the requirements of national frameworks, standards and guidelines.
- Element 1.5 Consistency of accreditation decisions is improved and maintained through national and state and territory moderation and professional development strategies.

Standard 2

Accreditation services meet the needs of industry and clients

- Element 2.1 Clients are informed about accreditation processes, requirements and decisions, and their place in the context of the National Skills Framework.
- Element 2.2 Accreditation services are monitored and continuously improved by acting on feedback from clients and stakeholders.
- Element 2.3 Industry regulators and occupational licensing bodies that rely on certification from the VET sector are appropriately engaged in course accreditation arrangements.
- Element 2.4 Complaints and appeals about accredited courses and accreditation services are addressed efficiently and effectively in accordance with National Quality Council policy.

Standard 3

Management systems are responsive to the needs of the VET sector

- Element 3.1 The management of accreditation functions is continuously reviewed and improved by acting on relevant data and benchmarking with other course accrediting bodies.
- Element 3.2 Accreditation functions are managed through a defined and documented quality system that is regularly reviewed to ensure its continuing suitability and effectiveness.
- Element 3.3 Where accreditation functions are delegated by the course accrediting body, it will ensure the delegate complies with the *AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies* and the *AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses* to ensure national consistency in accreditation decisions.

Quality Indicators

Each course accrediting body will report annually to the National Quality Council on its performance in relation to these standards and on quality issues relating to course accreditation.

Five quality indicators have been identified for reporting performance against the Standards. For each quality indicator, the course accrediting body will provide qualitative and quantitative data that will be specified annually by the National Quality Council. The five quality indicators reflect principles which underpin contemporary approaches to regulation.

Consistency

The extent to which the course accreditation processes and outcomes from each course accrediting body are consistent with:

- national frameworks, standards and guidelines
- accreditation outcomes of other course accrediting bodies.

Effectiveness

The extent to which course accrediting bodies ensure that only courses meeting the *AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses* are accredited.

Proportionality

The extent to which regulatory processes on course accreditation are guided by identified risks.

Responsiveness

The extent to which course accreditation services are responsive to client needs and the changing needs of the national VET system.

Transparency

The extent to which course accrediting bodies ensure that:

- copyright holders are informed of their obligations under the *AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses*
- the basis for a decision on course accreditation is documented and communicated to the course owner.

Operating protocols for undertaking course accreditation

1 *Nationally Registered Training*

- 1.1 Accreditation has national effect. Each course accrediting body accepts the accreditation decisions made by any other course accrediting body.

2 *Applications for accreditation*

- 2.1 The course accrediting body recognises the endorsement of Training Packages as recorded on the National Training Information System (NTIS). Accordingly applications for course accreditation will not be accredited if the course duplicates, by title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed Training Package qualification. A course will not be accredited if the course:
 - outcomes can be achieved through the packaging rules applicable to a Training Package qualification, or
 - outcomes can be met by contextualising units of competency within a Training Package qualification, or
 - is a sub-set of a single Training Package qualification that could be recognised through a Statement of Attainment, or
 - includes competencies additional to those in a Training Package qualification that could be recognised through Statements of Attainment in addition to the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) qualification, or
 - is made up of modules that ultimately achieve the competencies of a Training Package qualification.
- 2.2 Courses that include units of competency from one or more Training Packages will only be accredited if:
 - there is clear evidence that the qualification meets an identified industry, enterprise, education, legislative or community need
 - it is consistent with the AQF in relation to qualifications or courses leading to a Statement of Attainment.

Note: in the case of a course leading to a qualification, drawn from units of competency from one Training Package, the course accrediting body notifies the Training Package developing body as soon as possible of the necessity for the review of the Training Package to meet the defined need.
- 2.3 A course accrediting body may determine that an application for course accreditation would be more appropriately assessed by the course accrediting body in another state or territory.
- 2.4 The course accrediting body will provide advice to relevant Training Package developing bodies and other stakeholders in identifying gaps in Training Packages where appropriate.

3 *Assessment of courses*

- 3.1 The course accrediting body will ensure that all applications for course accreditation are assessed for compliance against the AQTF 2007 *Standards for Accredited Courses*.

3.2 The course accrediting body will ensure that each course accredited by the body is assessed by a person or persons who, as a minimum, have:

- thorough knowledge of the relevant national frameworks, standards and guidelines
- thorough knowledge of the requirements of the AQF
- sufficient knowledge of the industry/enterprise/community area and relevant endorsed Training Packages (or have access to relevant advice as appropriate, based on a risk management approach) to determine that there has been sufficient consultation with and support from relevant industry, enterprise or community personnel
- sufficient and relevant experience and knowledge of competency standards development and course design in the VET sector to evaluate course documents.

Evaluation and course accreditation decisions

4.1 A person who has participated in the assessment of a course for course accreditation will not make, or participate in the accreditation decision.

4.2 Where course accreditation is granted, the course accrediting body will provide the copyright owner with a course accreditation document such as a letter or a certificate that includes the:

- course owner's legal and trading name(s) and, if relevant, national provider number
- code and title of the course
- confirmation of accreditation
- effective date of course accreditation and the term for which the course accreditation is valid.

The notification letter will also provide advice on the requirement of the copyright owner to advise the course accrediting body of significant course changes that are made during the accreditation period.

4.3 Any significant change to the course document during the course accreditation period will be evaluated against the standards for course accreditation. Where the intended outcomes of the course have not been altered, the revision may be approved without a full assessment for course accreditation process.

4.4 Any approval of course changes throughout the accreditation period will not extend the term of course accreditation.

5 National register

5.1 The course accrediting body will ensure that all course accreditation decisions, course details and changes in course details, as well as AVETMISS data are recorded on the NTIS in accordance with nationally agreed business rules for the NTIS.

6 *Reporting*

- 6.1 The performance of accreditation functions, including those conducted under delegation will be reported to the National Quality Council in accordance with nationally agreed quality indicators and reporting protocols.
- 6.2 Information on the performance of regulatory functions in accordance with the standards will be reported at least annually.

AQTF 2007 National Publications

State and Territory course accrediting bodies and course developers will use these documents

AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies

This document is a key tool for state and territory course accrediting bodies to manage course accreditation under state and territory legislation.

AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses

This document specifies the requirements to be met for a course to be accredited.

AQTF 2007 is underpinned by the principle of transparency. All stakeholders in the VET system should have access to documents detailing the different components of AQTF 2007. All national documents are available for download from the national website: www.nssc.natese.gov.au.

