

ANNUAL REPORT
2005-2006



Training Accreditation Council

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

To the Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In accordance with Section 30 of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*, I submit for your information and presentation to Parliament, the Annual Report of the Training Accreditation Council for the period commencing 1 July 2005 and ending 30 June 2006.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, sweeping lines that form a stylized, somewhat abstract shape.

Ian C Hill
Chairman
Training Accreditation Council

17 August 2006

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CHAIR'S REPORT

I am pleased to present to you the Training Accreditation Council's 2005/06 Annual Report. Throughout the 2005/2006 reporting period, the Council has continued to operate within a framework of continuous improvements to provide a range of services to manage the quality assurance of vocational education and training in Western Australia.

In executing its functions under the Act in 2005/06, the Council has undertaken 292 audits of registered training organisations, accredited 126 new courses and issued 43 trade equivalence certificates.

The Council welcomed the decision of the Executive Council of Western Australia in December 2005, to formally transfer the administration of Part 4 Division 1 – The Training Accreditation Council, of the VET Act 1996, from the Department of Education and Training to the Department of Education Services. The formal integration of TAC into the Department of Education Services consolidates the key regulatory functions for the registration/accreditation of registered training organisations, higher education providers, non government schools and providers of education services to full fee overseas students. Having all regulatory services consolidated in the one agency will in many ways improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided.

A major initiative of the Council this year has been the development of a revised process for the provision of Trade Skills Recognition Services. Under the new policy, the Council will recognise Registered Training Organisations for the purpose of making recommendations for trade equivalent certificates, underpinning the policy is the requirement that there will be ongoing, robust industry involvement in the development and implementation of trade skills recognition processes. It is envisaged that the new policy will assist in addressing the current skills shortage within the trades areas by opening up access to and encouraging increased utilisation of existing infrastructure and accelerating the Trade Skills Recognition Process, whilst still maintaining the level of quality required by industry.

Throughout the period, the Council has focused on delivering products and services to improve the quality of vocational education and training in Western Australia. This has included delivering workshops on various aspects of the Australian Quality Training Framework, and development of a comprehensive range of resources to assist RTOs in conducting their business.

The Council would like to extend its thanks to the Office of the Training Accreditation Council for their ongoing dedication in supporting the work of the Council and also acknowledge the commitment of Western Australian Registered Training Organisations to providing quality vocational education and training through their implementation of the Australian Quality Training Framework.

Western Australia has also played a leading role in the national development of a revised outcomes-based auditing model and stronger outcomes-based quality standards for registered training organisations as requested by The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) at its meeting of 10 February 2006. Given the maturity of the Australian Quality Training Framework in Western Australia and the commitment of WA RTOs to continuous improvement, Western Australia is well positioned to implement the outcomes based model.



Ian C Hill
Chairman
Training Accreditation Council

About this report

This report fulfils the requirements of Section 30(1) of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996* by reporting the operations of the Training Accreditation Council to the Minister for Education and Training for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006.

As the Council's strategic business plan is prepared on a calendar year basis and this report is prepared on a financial year basis, activities from both the 2005 and 2006 business plans that were achieved within the reporting period are included in the report.

In late 2005, as part of its planning process, the Council developed 9 Key Goal Areas that will be the focus of their work over the medium term. The Key Goal Areas complement the existing high level outcomes determined by the Council and are reported against in the three main sections of this report:

- Management of Council functions and legislative responsibilities
- Effective Working Relationships with Key Stakeholders and Clients
- Effective AQTF Support Services to Registered Training Organisations

Where possible, data for the 2005-2006 reporting period and the 2004-2005 reporting period have been provided to allow a comparative assessment of the activities and achievements of the Council to be made.

INTRODUCTION

VISION STATEMENT

The Training Accreditation Council is committed to:

- Assuring the quality and consistency of training delivery in the provision of vocational education and training.
- Being the national leader in the strategic management of the recognition of quality assurance of training, including associated policies, processes, services and standards in the vocational education and training sector.
- Providing practical, efficient and responsive support to Government, the State Training Board, industry, registered training organisations and the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Training Accreditation Council:

- Will be open, accountable and transparent;
- Is clear on its role as a regulatory body;
- Will embed an outcomes focus;
- Is fair and equitable; and
- Will maintain a culture of continuous improvement

FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council's functions are detailed in Part 4, Section 27 of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*. They focus on quality assurance and recognition in respect to vocational education and training in Western Australia.

Under the Act, the functions of the Council are to:

- register and de-register training providers;
- accredit and vary and cancel the accreditation of courses and skills training programs and the qualifications gained from such courses and skills training programs;
- recognise skills and qualifications obtained by individuals in this State or elsewhere, in industry, the workplace or educational institutions; and
- determine the minimum competency to be provided by accredited courses and skills training programs.

The Council is also required to provide advice to the State Training Board on matters relating to the functions specified above.

The Council has an established complaint procedure to support its functions. Provision for appeals against Council decisions is available through the State Training Board under Section 31 of the Act.

MEMBERSHIP

The Training Accreditation Council has seven members who are appointed by the Minister for Education and Training in accordance with the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*. They are selected on the basis of their expertise, qualifications and experience in accreditation, curriculum, training organisation registration or skills recognition.

In July 2005 new members Ms Liz Harris and Mr Iain McDougall were appointed to the Council.



Mr Michael Keep
Alcoa World Alumina
Australia



Ms Lorraine Carter
Big W (WA) Pty Ltd



Dr Irene Ioannakis
Caterpillar Institute (WA) Pty
Ltd



Mr David Wood
Curriculum Council



Mr Iain McDougall
Hospitality Group Training



Ms Liz Harris
Challenger TAFE



Mr Ian Hill
Chair

THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE COUNCIL WORKS

The Training Accreditation Council is an independent statutory body that provides for quality assurance and recognition processes for vocational education and training in Western Australia. The Council operates within the National Skills Framework and is the Western Australian Registering and Course Accrediting Body under the Australian Quality Training Framework.

The Australian Quality Training Framework is comprised of two sets of standards - the Standards for Registered Training Organisations and the Standards for Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies.

The Council is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations and for complying with the Standards for Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies.

The Council is supported through the services of the Office of the Training Accreditation Council located in Osborne Park. One of the Office's key roles is to process applications for registration of training organisations and accreditation of courses and skills training programs. The Office of the Training Accreditation Council also provides substantial support to the work of the Council on policy issues.

The Council formally met 21 times over the twelve months to 30 June 2006.

The Council holds full meetings on a monthly basis to consider applications from organisations and holds monthly Executive Committee meetings, two weeks prior to its standard monthly meetings, to consider additional applications. This results in a quick turn around time for applications submitted to the Council for consideration.

PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

In order to carry out its functions, the Council uses an outcomes based planning and reporting framework.

The framework consists of a strategic business plan for the Council that is prepared annually, a corresponding business plan for the Office of TAC, an Annual Report on the achievements of the Council and a Quality Training Report published in January each year.

In supporting the work of the Council, the Office of TAC's business plan addresses the priorities outlined in the Council's business plan. The Office of TAC regularly reports progress to the Council.

This approach ensures comprehensive monitoring and reporting of the Council's achievements against the planned outcomes and provides a sound methodology for monitoring progress against the respective business plans.

In September 2005, the Council endorsed a three year strategic planning and reporting framework to guide the Council's operation from 1 January 2006 – 20 December 2008. The Council used the outcomes of consultations with key stakeholders as well as other information to develop nine Key Goal Areas that will be the focus of their work over the medium term.

KEY GOAL AREAS

- Role Clarity – To clarify the role of the Council and its relationship to other agencies
- Communication, Advocacy, Feedback – To improve communication and the public face of TAC
- One VET – To achieve a one VET approach for all providers
- Championing Self Improvement & Good Practice Examples – To achieve improved quality through Good Practice Examples

- A learning outcomes focus – To enhance audit processes to include the outcomes of training
- Audit Processes – To develop audit processes so the performance of Registered Training Organisations and the VET system is improved
- Skills Recognition – To improve access to skills recognition through the Training Accreditation Council
- Accreditation – To strengthen the integrity of Course Accreditation
- National Consistency – To improve national consistency in the application of the AQTF.

Sitting underneath the Key Goal Areas are annual Strategies and Measures of Progress that the Council uses to meet and measure their goals. In addition, Guiding Principles have been developed that communicate to the Council's stakeholders the way in which the Council intends to undertake its business.

OUTCOME 1 - Management of Council functions and legislative responsibilities

Outcome Description

The Training Accreditation Council's success in achieving outcome one is demonstrated by the extent to which:

- Council functions are carried out in an appropriate and timely manner through deployment of clear and transparent policies and processes; and
- legislative requirements are met.

Outcome On e Underpinning Priorities

- The Council has appropriate processes for managing its responsibilities under the Act and Government legislation.
- The Council fulfills its requirements under the National Training Framework with respect to the Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies.
- The Council ensures effective audit services are conducted.
- The Council monitors the performance of Registered Training Organisations in maintaining the Australian Quality Training Framework standards.

Key Goal Areas

- One VET – To achieve a one VET approach for all providers
- A learning outcomes focus – To enhance audit processes to include the outcomes of training
- Audit Processes – To develop audit processes so the performance of Registered Training Organisations and the VET system is improved
- Skills Recognition – To improve access to skills recognition through the Training Accreditation Council
- Accreditation – To strengthen the integrity of Course Accreditation
- National Consistency – To improve national consistency in the application of the AQTF.

REGISTRATION OF TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

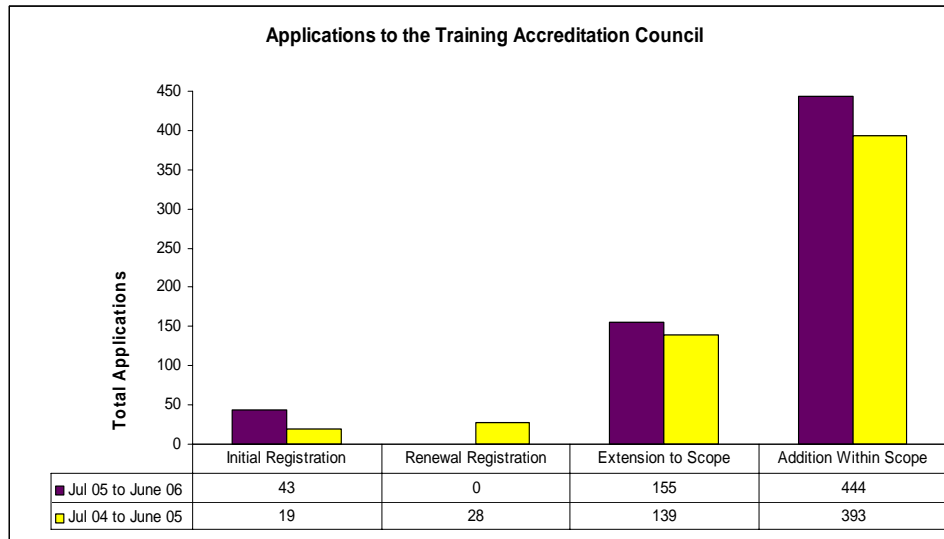
There were 1228 training organisations registered to deliver training in Western Australia on 30 June 2006. A total of 413 of these organisations were registered with the Council and a further 815 were registered to deliver in Western Australia under mutual recognition arrangements. Although the number of organisations registered with the Council has only increased slightly there has been an increase in initial registration by over 60% over the previous reporting period. The number of registered training organisations delivering in this State under mutual recognition has also increased over the last twelve months.

During the 2005/06 year, the Council endorsed the following applications:

- 43 new registrations;
- 0 renewal of registrations;
- 155 extension to scope; and
- 444 notifications received from registered training organisations adding courses/qualifications within their current scope.

The Council De-Registered 2 RTOs within the reporting period.

Graph 1: Registration activity July 2005 – June 2006

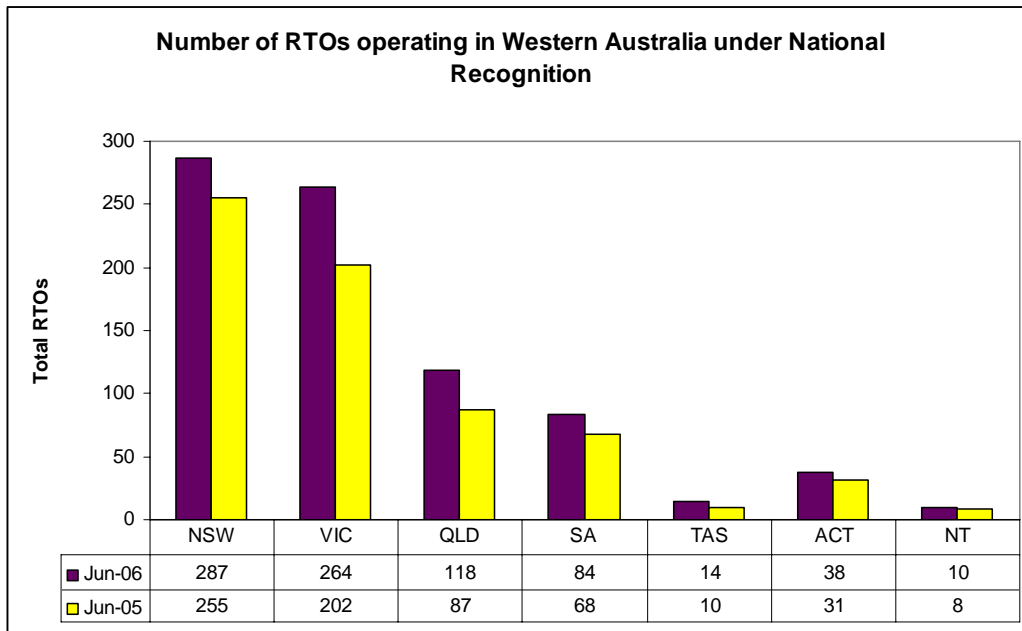


There were no renewal of registration audits undertaken during the reporting period. This is a result of the introduction of a new five year registration period when the AQTF was introduced in July 2002. All RTOs previously registered under the three year registration period proscribed by the Australian Recognition Framework were renewed under the five year registration of the AQTF by 30 June 2005, consequently no renewal of registration audits will be conducted until 2007.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION

In addition to training organisations registered by the Council, there were 815 interstate registered training organisations who operate, or plan to operate within Western Australia on 30 June 2006. Graph 2 shows registered training organisations by State of registration operating in Western Australia.

Graph 2: Interstate registered training organisations operating in Western Australia

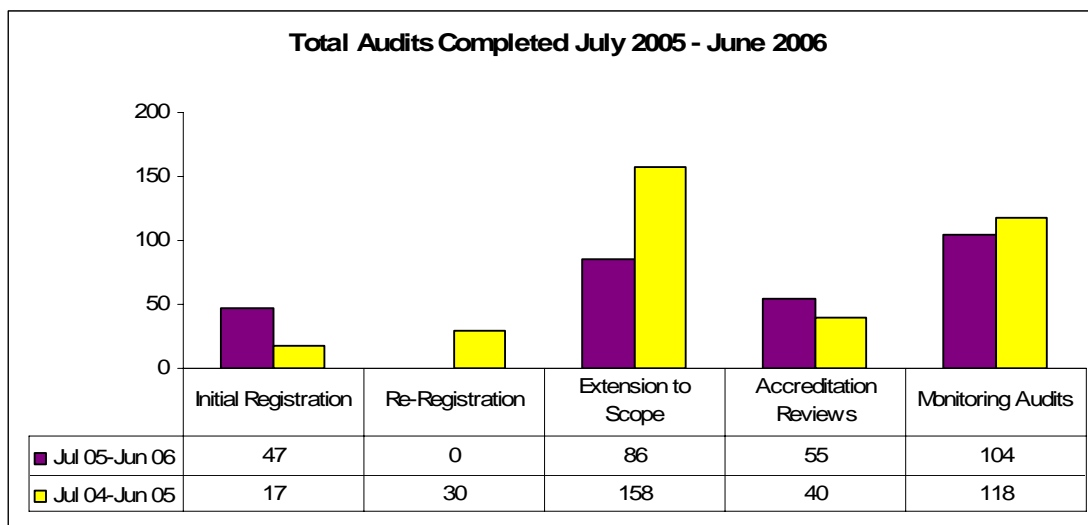


MANAGEMENT OF THE ANNUAL AUDIT SCHEDULE

The Council is responsible for undertaking audits of registered training organisations against the 12 standards specified in the Australian Quality Training Framework. The Council's annual audit strategy incorporates registration audits as well as strategic industry audits on the basis of identified risks. Wherever possible, these audits are integrated with audits for compliance with the Department of Education and Training's Delivery and Performance Agreement held with private registered training organisations in receipt of public funds.

The Council's integrated approach to auditing minimises disruption to registered training organisations. Graph 3 provides information on the type and number of audits conducted in the reporting period.

Graph 3: Total audits July 2005 – June 2006



A total of 292 audits were undertaken in the 12 months ending 30 June 2006. Audits were undertaken in line with the 2005 and 2006 audit strategies. Audits were coordinated by the Office of TAC and carried out by the Council's external panel of auditors.

THE 2005 - 2006 AUDIT STRATEGY

The Council's annual Audit Strategy is endorsed on a calendar year basis. This report contains details on audits endorsed from both the 2005 and 2006 Audit Strategy. The Audit Strategy includes regulatory audits such as registration audits, follow up audits and audits in response to complaints. Also included are strategic audits and identified risk audits.

The strategic industry audits and the identified risk audits contained in the strategy are:

- Firearms Training;
- Outdoor Recreation;
- Offshore Delivery;
- Process Manufacturing;
- National Hospitality Industry Audit; and
- Registered training organisations who have not been audited in three years.

The Firearms Training and Outdoor Recreation strategic industry audits are expected to be completed in the next reporting period.

OFFSHORE DELIVERY

The Training Accreditation Council's 2005 Audit Strategy identified the need to audit RTOs delivering vocational education and training qualifications offshore. The audit had two distinct stages. The first stage was a survey of all Western Australian RTOs to define, quantify and characterise vocational education and training delivered offshore. The second stage is a

compliance audit of all RTOs who are delivering and/or assessing vocational education and training overseas. The second stage will be completed in the next reporting period.

The RTO survey identified that 26 (6%) RTOs deliver vocational education and training overseas. In addition, approximately 50 other RTOs identified that it was their intention to commence delivery overseas within the next three years. This means that potentially there will be 75 (18%) Western Australian RTOs delivering vocational education and training offshore by 2008.

For those Western Australian RTOs delivering offshore it was common that their offshore operation was significantly smaller than their domestic operation when comparing annual enrolments. The majority of these RTOs use Australian staff based at overseas locations and deliver employment based training at various client sites. The majority of RTOs currently delivering offshore have expressed a desire to increase their presence and delivery overseas.

Following the compilation of the survey findings, the Office of TAC has initiated the second stage of the process which is an audit of those RTOs that identified that they are either delivering or have delivered offshore in the past twelve months. RTOs have been notified of the audit, and the desk top audits will be conducted in the next reporting period.

In addition to monitoring the activity of RTOs, Western Australia has been active in working with other States and Territories and the Australian Government in contributing to the development of the Transnational Quality Strategy.

PROCESS MANUFACTURING

The Council agreed to undertake a Strategic Industry Audit of the Process Manufacturing Industry as part of the 2005 Audit Strategy. The audit was undertaken during 2005/06 and involved 16 RTOs delivering training to the Process Manufacturing Industry.

The audits identified that while there was a high level of compliance with the majority of the Australian Quality Training Framework standards audited, there was a high rate of non compliance with aspects of standard 8 (RTO assessments) and standard 9 (learning and assessment strategies).

As well as a range of good practice in the delivery of training to the process manufacturing industry, the audit identified that there were a the number of registered training organisation not delivering process manufacturing training, although they were registered to do so.

Based on an analysis of the compliance and non compliance levels against each standard, management actions have been recommended to improve the quality of training delivered to the process manufacturing industry in Western Australia.

These actions include:

- ongoing monitoring of registered training organisations who removed process manufacturing from their scope of delivery prior to the audit;
- conducting follow up audits for organisation considered high risk: and
- working between government and industry to develop improved approaches and professional development to address issues with validation, moderation, learning and assessment strategies and assessments.

It should be recognised that all RTOs considered non compliant were required to address all identified issues and will be subjected to a review to ensure AQTF compliance.

NATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY AUDIT

The Training Accreditation Council was responsible for the management, in collaboration with other State and Territory RCABs of the National Strategic Industry Audit into training in the hospitality industry.

The national steering committee responsible for managing the audit identified the following qualifications from the Hospitality Training Package (THH02) as the focus of the audit: THH21802 Certificate II in Hospitality (Operations); THH22002 Certificate II in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations) and THH31502 Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery)

The NTIS identified 32 Western Australian RTOs with scope of registration for one or more of the three qualifications targeted for audit. Based on a nationally agreed selection criteria, which included results from a preliminary survey, 12 of the RTOs were audited. The audit sample was representative of the total number scoped for the agreed qualifications and included six private providers, three TAFE/Universities, two schools, and one government agency.

The hospitality audits in Western Australia were conducted by two RTO Auditors from the Western Australian audit panel to provide consistency and rigour to the audit process. The audit provided the opportunity to pilot the use of a technical adviser to provide to the Auditor with expertise on industry specific technical issues. The technical adviser used in the audit was a local restaurateur with many years of industry experience and is the president of the Western Australian Restaurant and Catering Industry Association. The industry advisor was used to verify RTO capacity and facilities for the Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery).

The results of the audit show that all 12 RTOs were found to be non compliant in at least one of the AQTF Standards at the site audit. The number and detail of non compliance varied. The audit included eight of the 12 AQTF Standards and the most non compliances were in Standard 8.1 (75.0%); Standard 1.5 (58.3%); Standard 9.1 (58.3%); Standard 9.3 (58.3%); and Standard 9.2 (50.0%).

The key recommendations of the audit report related to the responsibility of RTOs to meet the requirements of quality learning and assessment as prescribed by the AQTF Standards and Training Package requirements. The recommendations were not driven by compliance only but were intended to develop the capacity of the RTOs and trainers and assessors to improve the quality of training outcomes in the industry. It was recommended that this be achieved through targeted professional development and ongoing support in the development of learning and assessment resources.

TAFE COLLEGE FOLLOW UP AUDITS

In late 2003 and early 2004 eight TAFEWA Colleges were audited as part of the renewal of registration process. As a result, the Council registered all eight TAFEWA Colleges, subject to the conduct of a follow-up audit with in 12 months. Due to the heavy audit schedule for 2004, the follow-up audits were postponed until 2005.

The follow-up audits focused on areas of non-compliance identified from the renewal audits, Colleges ongoing compliance with the AQTF and the overall effectiveness of their quality systems in meeting requirements. In addition, the audits also identified 'system wide' issues impacting on TAFEWA Colleges and at the individual College level, areas of 'good practice' and 'opportunities for improvement'.

The majority of TAFEWA Colleges (75% or 6 out of 8) recorded non compliances in less than 11 per cent of standards audited during the 2005 Follow-up audits. The outcome of the 2005 audit indicates that most TAFEWA Colleges have made significant progress in implementing and deploying the AQTF, with a culture of continuous improvement evident.

In comparing the outcomes from the TAFEWA College Re-registration audits with the outcomes of the 2005 Follow-up audits, improvements have been noted in the majority of the comparable AQTF standards audited (standards 1, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10).

In particular, significant improvements have been noted in standards 8 and 9 in the recorded percentage of non compliances. The improvements could be due to a range of factors including increased commitment and emphasis on core business and continuous improvement, more focussed and relevant professional development, and a better understanding by TAFEWA Colleges of the requirements of the AQTF.

RECOGNITION OF SKILLS AND TRADE EQUIVALENT CERTIFICATES

During the 2005/06 reporting period the Council recognised skills and issued trade equivalent certificates through an established process in conjunction with selected Industry Training Councils (ITCs). Under this arrangement the ITCs provide skills assessment services for trade qualification purposes.

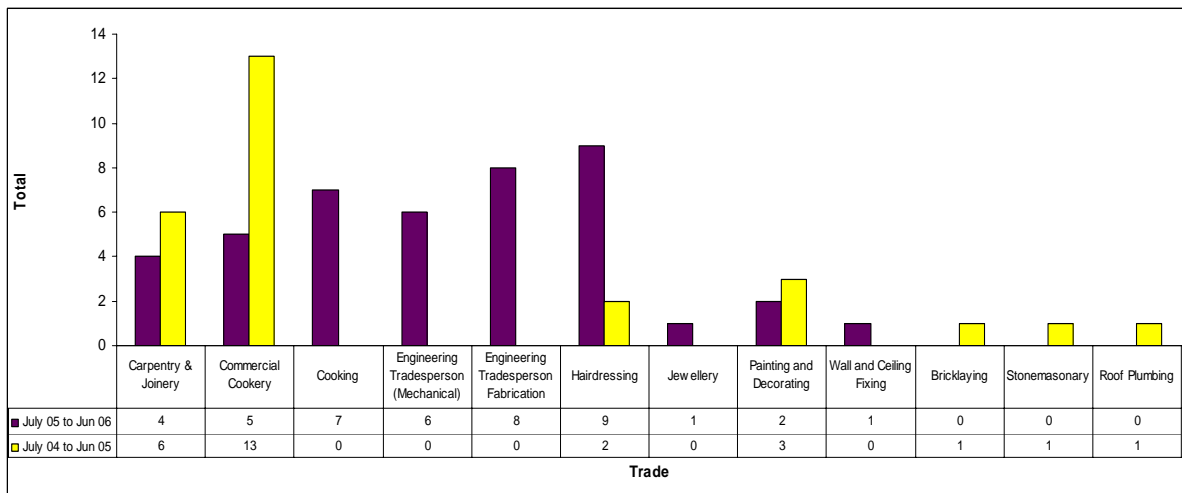
Up to 30 June 2006, six industry training councils had been endorsed by the Council to offer skills recognition services. These were:

- Hospitality and Tourism ITC;
- Light Manufacturing ITC;
- Metals, Manufacturing and Services ITC;
- Wholesale Retail and Personal Services ITC
- Western Australian Food and Beverage ITC; and
- Building and Construction ITC.

From July 2005 to June 2006 there were 43 trade equivalent certificates approved for issuance by the Council to individuals assessed as competent in a range of trade areas via the skills recognition process. This is more than double the number issued during the previous 12 months.

Graph 4 provides a breakdown of the trade equivalent certificates issued by the Council during the reporting period.

Graph 4: Trade equivalent certificates issued July 2005 – June 2006



COURSE ACCREDITATION

At 30 June 2006, there were 385 accredited courses in Western Australia. During 2005/06 the Council approved a total of 126 courses for accreditation.

Accredited courses meet the training needs not addressed by Training Packages. The trend in recent years has been for a reduction in the total number of accredited courses due to the continued implementation of training packages. In 2005/06 a reversal of this trend was seen for the first time since the introduction of the AQTF with the number of courses accredited by the Council increasing by 25. This increase is not seen as a significant deviation from the existing trend as the increase is due to the increase of basic level 'Course In' Accreditations that are not covered through Training Packages. These courses meet locally identified needs, and include bridging courses and enabling courses.

During the period, the Council considered 111 proposals to extend the accreditation period of courses which would have otherwise expired. The Council considers extensions to courses when the effort in developing a new course may not be warranted as it is expected that a Training Package qualification may replace the course in the near future or to permit an RTO reasonable change over time from one course to another.

Table 1: Accreditation Activity July 2005 – June 2006

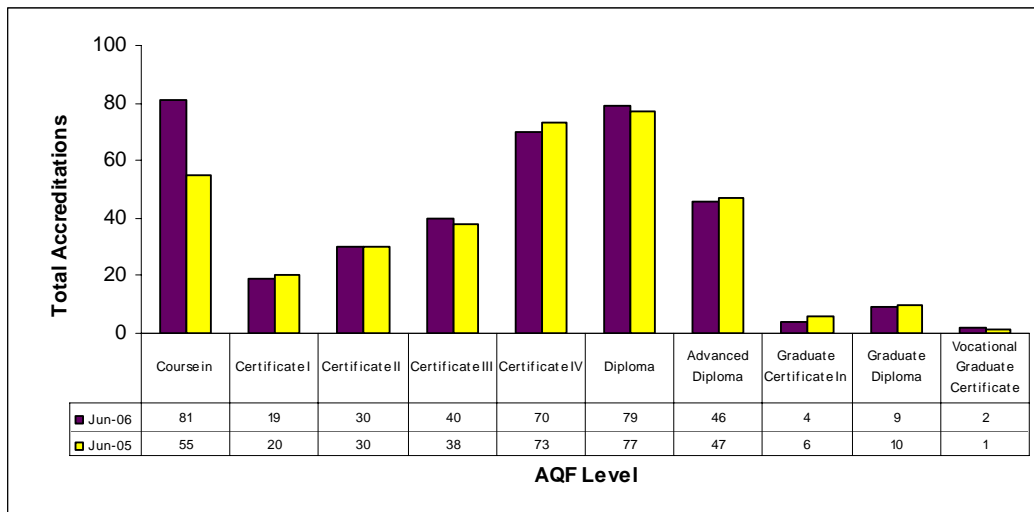
Table 1 and Graph 5 summarise the accreditation activity undertaken in the reporting period.

Table: 1

Activity	Number of Courses
Courses accredited	93
Courses re-accredited	33
Courses extended	111
Courses expired	93

Graph 5 shows a significant increase in the number of 'Course In' Accreditations. This refers to short basic level courses that are registered by the Council. All other levels of qualification remain substantially the same.

Graph 5: Accreditation by AQF level July 2005 – June 2006



QUALITY ASSURANCE - RCAB EXTERNAL AUDITING

Standard 1.4 of the *AQTF Standards for Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies* requires that the registering/course accrediting body arrange for the provision of independent advice to the National Training Quality Council (now through the Department of Education, Science and Training to the National Quality Council) on registration, audit and related processes. This advice is required so that the operation of the AQTF across Australia can be assessed.

The Office of the Training Accreditation Council contracted Ron Mazzachi from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) to undertake an audit of the functions of

the Office of the Training Accreditation Council against all of the standards for Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies.

The audit of the Office of the Training Accreditation Council was undertaken in November 2005. The Auditor's Report stated that there are appropriate processes and procedures in the Office of the Training Accreditation Council to either meet or exceed the requirements of the twenty-eight AQTF Standards for Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies. The Auditor reported that there are records to support these processes and procedures and as such the Training Accreditation Council is considered compliant with the AQTF standards.

The report identifies strengths, such as STARS and AuditorNet, performance management of Auditors, internal audits and integrated and monitoring audits. The report also identifies some opportunities for improvement and these will be addressed through strategies that are currently being put in place.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUDITORS

In January 2004 a panel of Australian Quality Training Framework auditors and accreditation reviewers was appointed through a tender process. In January 2006, contracts for each of the auditors and accreditation reviewers were extended for a further 12 months.

The primary role of the auditors is to undertake audits of registered training organisations to determine compliance with the *Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations*. In addition, audits of registered training organisations may determine compliance with contracts associated with receipt of public funding for training. Auditors appointed to the panel are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Panel of auditors and accreditation reviewers 2005/06

	Auditor	Company
RTO Auditors	Mr Steve Trice	Canington International Training
	Heli Donaldson	Heli Donaldson
	Julie Large	JAL Enterprises
	Russell Docking	Skills Resource Management Systems
	Claire Werner	Applic8
	Mairead Dempsey	Training Assessment and Research Services
	Helen McCarter	Helen McCarter Consultant
Accreditation Reviewers	Rhonda Stacy	RTO Solutions
	Steve Trice	Canington International Training
	Russell Docking	Skills Resource Management Systems
	Mairead Dempsey	Training assessment and Research Services

The Office of TAC implements a best practice performance management model for the panel of external auditors. Under this model, the Office of TAC provides moderation activities to ensure consistency in the approach to auditing. All contracted auditors are required to attend these moderation forums. During the reporting period four auditor moderation forums have been managed by the Office of the TAC.

In 2005/06 Auditors from the OTAC panel of auditors and accreditation reviewers have also participated in a National Audit Moderation Project co-ordinated by South Australia on behalf of the National Quality Council. This has seen WA auditors taking part in audits conducted in other states to identify good practice in auditing against the AQTF standards and to assist in the achievement of national consistency in auditing.

NEW TRADE SKILLS RECOGNITION POLICY

A significant undertaking of the Council this year has been the development of a new Trade Skills Recognition Policy. A review of the existing trade skills recognition process was undertaken in 2005. The review identified the need to redesign the Council's policy with a view

to ensuring parity between all trade certificates (whichever way they were achieved), increasing utilisation of existing infrastructure and improving the quality assurance of the process itself.

The Training Accreditation Council recognises the unique work done in trade skills recognition by the Industry Training Councils. However, the implementation of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) has increased the need to provide a process with greater flexibility and quality assurance. Meanwhile, current trade skills shortages have increased the pressure from Industry and State and Australian Governments for an accelerated trade skills recognition service.

Under the new policy, the Council will approve eligible RTOs for the purpose of making recommendations for trade equivalent certificates. Approval will be conditional upon the RTO demonstrating to TAC that there will be ongoing, robust industry involvement in the development and implementation of trade skills recognition processes. This involvement must be sufficient to ensure the integrity of the trade equivalent certificate and the confidence of Industry in the outcomes. RTO/industry collaborators wishing to apply to offer a trade skills recognition service as agents of TAC must meet criteria outlined by the Council in their *Trade Skills Recognition Application Guidelines*.

In addition all candidates must have the opportunity to achieve the Certificate III qualification aligned to the trade before being recommended for the trade equivalent certificate.

The existing system managed by the ITCs will continue to operate, however the ITCs must transition to a process in which their candidates achieve a Certificate III outcome prior to being recommended for a trade equivalent certificate.

Through its revised Trade Skills Recognition Policy, TAC is seeking to:

- Be assured of the close relationship between RTOs and industry partners;
- open up access to and encourage increased utilisation of existing infrastructure;
- accelerate the process;
- encourage best practice workplace assessment;
- increase the number of completions; and
- maintain quality assurance of trade skills recognition services.

MINISTERIAL GUIDELINES

Section 13 of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*, provides for the Minister for Education and Training to issue guidelines to TAC relating to the functioning of the State training system, the policy to be implemented and the procedures to be followed.

In 2006, revised and updated Ministerial Guidelines were prepared and endorsed by the Minister for Education and Training to provide advice to the Training Accreditation Council and training organisations on the policy framework that is applicable and the requirements that must be met for the registration and de-registration of training organisations, the accreditation of courses and the recognition of skills and qualifications under the Western Australian Vocational Education and Training System.

A copy of the Ministerial Guidelines is available to stakeholders on request.

REVIEW OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SUMMARY AND SUPPLEMENT TO THE AUSTRALIAN QUALITY TRAINING FRAMEWORK - GUIDELINES FOR COURSE DEVELOPERS.

The Western Australian Summary and Supplement to the *Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Guidelines for Course Developers* was first developed in 2002. The Supplement provides clarification to course developers in Western Australia when using the *AQTF Guidelines for Course Developers* and was reviewed in July 2005.

The primary aim of the review of the document was to ensure the integrity of Training Package qualifications, but in addition it provides guidance on preparatory courses, enabling courses,

general education courses, course for overseas students and vocational courses which fall outside of current Training Packages.

Changes to the Supplement were required in response to developments in the broader policy environment and to make course developers aware of the flexibility that exists to accredit a variety of types of course. The changes also protect the integrity of Training Package qualifications by providing better guidance on access and pathways, articulation and credit transfers and customisation.

FEES REVIEW

In July 2005, a Review Committee was established to consider fees for registration of training organisations and the accreditation of courses in Western Australia. The Review Committee comprised of representatives from the Office of the Training Accreditation Council and the Department of Education and Training. The Minister endorsed the Review Committee's findings and recommendations in March 2006, with fee increases effective from 1 July 2006.

Fees for Registration of Training Providers

Western Australia currently has one of the lowest fee structures for registration. The majority of States and Territories have reviewed their fees within the last 18 months.

The new fees structure is as follows:

Type	Current fees (as at Oct 2001)	New fees (as at 1 July 2006)
Application fee	\$375	\$430
Annual fee	\$375	\$430
Registration fee	\$1300 (up to 2 industry areas) \$400 each additional area	\$1500 (up to 2 industry areas) \$460 each additional area
Extension to scope of registration fees	\$800 (\$400 for each additional area)	\$920 (\$460 for each additional area)

Fees for the Accreditation of Courses

The charging of fees for the accreditation of courses is subject to legislative changes occurring in Western Australia. No fees for accreditation of courses were charged during the reporting period.

NEW QUALITY ARRANGEMENTS

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) at its meeting of 10 February 2006 agreed to 'accelerate the introduction of a national outcomes-based auditing model and stronger outcomes-based quality standards for registered training organisations in consultation with key parties including employers, regulators and unions.' The timeframe requires that the revised standards and an outcomes based model are agreed by October 2006 and implemented by July 2007.

The Training Accreditation Council has been working collaboratively with other states and territories authorities and with Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) officials to ensure that the COAG requirements are met and that states and territories recognition authorities can continue to perform their legislative role in regulating the training provider sector under revised national quality arrangements.

The revised AQTF Standards for registered training organisations will have a stronger focus on training outcomes both in standards and measures. There will be greater focus on continuous improvement with RTOs measuring and reporting their processes and outcomes and using this as a basis for improvement.

OUTCOME 2 – Effective Working Relationships with Key Stakeholders and Clients

Outcome Description

The Training Accreditation Council's success in achieving outcome two is demonstrated by the extent to which:

- stakeholders and clients are aware of Council requirements and priorities; and
- Council requirements are deployed by stakeholders and clients.

Outcome Two Underpinning Priorities

The following priorities were developed by the Council to underpin the achievement of outcome two.

- Ensure the Council communicates and promotes awareness of its requirements and is responsive to stakeholders needs.
- Ensure effective relationships within the vocational education and training in schools environment to better promote outcomes for students.
- Enhance communication with stakeholders to ensure client expectations are met.
- Ensure clients and stakeholders are kept informed of the Council's performance in meeting the requirements of the Vocational Education and Training Act 1996.
- Enhance co-ordination with relevant stakeholders to provide skills recognition services.

Key Goal Areas

- Role Clarity – To clarify the role of the Council and its relationship to other agencies
- Communication, Advocacy, Feedback – To improve communication and the public face of TAC
- Championing Self Improvement & Good Practice Examples – To achieve improved quality through Good Practice Examples
- National Consistency – To improve national consistency in the application of the AQTF.
- One VET – To achieve a one VET approach for all providers

Work undertaken by the Council to progress these priorities and to achieve outcome two is detailed in the following sections.

CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

During 2005/06 the Council actively consulted with a range of stakeholders including industry training councils, registered training organisations and TAFEWA Managing Directors to ensure stakeholders were aware of the Council's requirements and priorities with respect to the quality assurance and recognition of vocational education and training in Western Australia.

This year the Council extended the scope of their consultative processes to include the views of its major constituents and stakeholders to provide input into the annual planning process. Discussions were undertaken with constituents and stakeholders within the framework of the key functions of the Council.

A range of stakeholders contributed to the consultations including, an online survey to 50 Registered Training Organisations; representatives from the Department of Education and Training; a selection of ITCs; the Curriculum Council; Association of Independent Schools; Catholic Education Office; Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and representatives from other RCABS.

Most stakeholders held positive perceptions of the work of the Council and recognised the difficulty of fulfilling a compliance role. What was also clear from the consultations is that there is a lack of understanding of the role of the Council. The Council undertook to review its communication strategy in response to this feedback to ensure greater understanding of the role and ultimately of the quality of training in Western Australia.

The Council also collects feedback from registered training organisations following completion of the audit process. The feedback is incorporated into the Council's continuous improvement processes and is reported on a biannual basis. The survey results for the January to June 2006 period showed that 90% of respondents found that the audit process added value to their business.

EFFECTIVENESS OF COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS

One of the important functions provided by the Office of TAC is the investigation of complaints made by sector stakeholders. Complaints may result in registered training organisations being audited but are often resolved through discussion with the affected parties.

Forty five complaints were received during the reporting period, four more than for the previous reporting period. Of the 45 complaints received, five complaints were lodged against registered training organisations from other jurisdictions and subsequently forwarded to the appropriate registering body. Five complaints were withdrawn and required no further action. The remaining 35 complaints were investigated by the Office of TAC. Seven of these complaints remained open and were under investigation as at 30 June 2006.

Table 3 shows the breakdown of complaints that were investigated by the Office of TAC during the period.

Table 3: Complaints categories July 2005 – June 2006

Type of Complaint	No. Received
Systems for quality training and assessment	3
Issuance of Statements of Attainment and Qualifications	11
Use of national and State and Territory Logos	5
Ethical Marketing	8
Issuance of Statements of Attainment and Qualifications	3
Recognition of Prior Learning	1
Assessor competence, assessment judgements and issuance	13
Recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs	1
Total Complaints	45

TRANSITION OF SCHOOLS FROM REGISTERED TRAINING PROVIDERS TO REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

In August 2005, the Minister for Education and Training released the Ministerial Policy Statement on Vocational Education and Training for School Students in Western Australia. The new policy enables public schools to deliver VET programs, either as RTOs or in partnership with an RTO, to a certificate level appropriate to the needs of both the students and industry.

Thirteen schools submitted applications with the Council to transition from Registered Training Providers to RTOs.

At the December meeting, the Council agreed to register 11 schools as RTOs from 1 January 2006 until the expiry of their current registration period as per the Council's endorsed transition strategy. This number is in addition to the 5 public and 1 private agricultural colleges who were already operating as RTOs under the provision of the former Joint Ministerial Policy Statement on VET in Schools.

From 1 January 2006 – 30 June 2006 the Council registered an additional 3 schools. As at 30 June 2006 there were 20 Schools registered as RTOs in Western Australia.

RCAB CHAIRS MEETINGS

Two meetings of the Chairs of State and Territory Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies (RCABS) were held during the reporting period. The meetings were held on 17 November 2005 in Perth and on 4 May 2006 in Brisbane. Agenda items discussed included:

- The Framework for Excellence in VET
- AQTF National Compliance Guidelines;
- National AQTF Consistency Project;
- National Quality Strategy for Australian Transnational Education and Training; and
- National Moderation of the introduction of the Training and Assessment Training Package.

These meetings provide RCABs with the opportunity to discuss issues relating to the functions of the RCABs and initiatives to ensure and promote national consistency.

PROVISION OF CONSUMER INFORMATION

The Council actively undertakes information provision including the development of support materials to promote and ensure the quality of vocational education and training in Western Australia. It is important that clients and stakeholders are fully aware of quality assurance and recognition arrangements.

A range of activities were undertaken during the year to provide information to stakeholders. These included:

PUBLICATION OF ALL OTAC DOCUMENTS ON ONE CONVENIENT CD

All documents listed on the Council's website were published to one convenient CD and distributed to RTOs and prospective RTOs. This information also included templates and forms to assist with the registration and accreditation process undertaken by OTAC.

PUBLICATION OF COUNCIL NEWSLETTERS

The Council electronically publishes the *TAC Update* newsletter. The newsletter provides relevant, up-to-date information and advice on all aspects of the vocational education and training system related to the Council's functions.

COUNCIL WEBSITE

The website is the Council's main communication tool and as such the content for the website is regularly reviewed and refined. The content of the website focuses on the Council's core business and provides links to other organisations that provide relevant related information for its clients and stakeholders.

Feedback received by the Office of TAC to date confirms that the new website is easier to use and contains relevant information for the Council's clients.

PARTICIPATION IN THE TRAINING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Each year, Council members either Chair or participate on judging panels for the Training Excellence Awards.

PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING FORUMS

The Council provided an information stand at the Training Forum conducted by the Department of Education and Training in May 2006.

RTONET

RTONet was designed to provide registered training organisations with a central point of access to the various Departmental business operations and provide a better overall service to clients. Now registered training organisations can view their details through the *State Training*

and Recognition System by accessing *RTONet*. *RTONet* is a direct link to all systems within the Department of Education and Training through one gateway that shows all its activities.

Registered training organisations can view their registration details with the Council including their contact details, scope of registration and delivery profile. They can also view qualifications/course details and the Training Records System on traineeships and apprenticeships. *RTONet* has proved a successful resource for registered training organisations in monitoring their registration activities.

SUPPORT PRODUCTS

A range of printed material is available to assist applicants seeking registration with the Council, including guides for applicants and application templates. A significant amount of this material is available on the Council's website.

OUTCOME 3 – Effective AQTF Support Services to Registered Training Organisations

Outcome Description

The Training Accreditation Council's success in achieving outcome three is demonstrated by the extent to which:

- Registered training organisations are aware of the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations; and
- Registered training organisations implement the Australian Quality Training Framework requirements for RTOs.

Outcome Three Underpinning Priorities

The following priorities were developed by the Council to underpin the achievement of outcome three.

- Provision of information to registered training organisations and perspective providers on the Australian Quality Training Framework standards.
- Review delivery and content of workshops and information sessions.
- Provision of comprehensive and accessible information on the Council website.
- Review of existing publications and production of publications as required.

Key Goal Areas

- One VET – To achieve a one VET approach for all providers
- Communication, Advocacy, Feedback – To improve communication and the public face of TAC
- National Consistency – To improve national consistency in the application of the AQTF.
- Championing Self Improvement & Good Practice Examples – To achieve improved quality through Good Practice Examples

Work undertaken by the Council to progress these priorities and to achieve outcome three is detailed in the following sections.

WORKSHOPS FOR RTOs

Workshops have been provided to promote knowledge and understanding of national and State policies, including the concept of training packages, competency based assessment and processes for registration and accreditation. Specific workshops include:

REGISTRATION INFORMATION SESSIONS

OTAC has offered a free two hour Registration Information Session over the past few years for organisations/individuals considering becoming Registered Training Organisations. The session provides an overview of the opportunities and responsibilities under the AQTF associated with being a Registered Training Organisation and of the registration process. It is expected this session will help organisations make a decision whether to proceed or seek other options in relation to becoming a RTO.

The presentation of these Registration Information Sessions was reviewed during the reporting period and replaced with individual one on one appointments between OTAC staff and participants. These appointments be largely participant driven, with information based on the requirements of the individual. The sessions are flexible and aim to provide the participant with the information they require to continue on their chosen path. Key areas discussed include:

- ❑ National Skills Framework
- ❑ Rights and Responsibilities of RTOs
- ❑ Alternatives to Registration

- ☒ The Registration Process
 - The application process (incl. Self Assessment)
 - The Audit Process
- ☒ Course Accreditation (where appropriate)
- ☒ Where to from Here?

REGISTRATION STANDARDS WORKSHOPS

A full day workshop designed for training organisations that have decided to become a registered training organisation and existing registered training organisations going through renewal of registration. The workshops provide an understanding of the registration process, assistance in interpreting the registration standards and understanding the role of evidence in the submission process.

WORKSHOPS ON INTERNAL AUDIT

To assist the Council, the Department of Education and Training holds workshops designed to provide guidance to registered training organisations on internal audit. The workshops also assist registered training organisations to develop a risk management plan that will support compliance with Standard 1.8.

HELP – THE AQTF AUDITOR IS COMING!

In response to requests from registered training organisations for more information about how to best approach the audit process, the Council has implemented workshops that assist registered training organisations by describing what to expect from an audit and providing useful strategies to help them through the audit process.

The Council provided 35 workshops to registered training organisations during the reporting period. A breakdown of the type and number of workshops conducted is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Workshops delivered to RTOs July 2005 - June 2006

Workshop Name	Number delivered in 05/06
AQTF Registration Standards	6
Help – the AQTF Auditor is Coming	7
Information Sessions	22

In addition to delivering the workshops, the Office of TAC regularly reviews the content and delivery style of the workshops to ensure that the information provided is accurate and being delivered through the most appropriate medium.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

The website is the public face of the Training Accreditation Council, its policies, processes and functions; and the operations of the Office of TAC. The website is a source of reference for issues relating to registration of training organisations; the AQTF; accreditation of courses; the audit process; and a point of reference for other VET related issues.

The website is now the centre of the Council's communication strategy and provides the most up to date information about the operation of the Council.

The main users of the website are people from training organisations or prospective training organisations and as such, the website provides content that best suites their needs.

The Council's website has received positive feedback from a range of stakeholders who have confirmed that the interface provides them with the information they want when they need it.

APPENDIX 1 - Glossary of Terms

Accreditation means the formal recognition of a course by the State or Territory course accrediting body in line with the *Standards for State and Territory Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies*.

Accredited course means a structured sequence of vocational education and training that has been accredited and leads to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or Statement of Attainment.

Assessment means a process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed in the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards or the learning outcomes of an accredited course.

Audit means a systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining evidence to determine whether the activities and related outcomes of a training organisation comply or continue to comply with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

Auditor means an independent person recognised by the Training Accreditation Council to ensure that the AQTF standards for registration/accreditation have been adequately addressed by an RTO.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) means the policy framework that defines all qualifications recognised in post-compulsory education, vocational education and training and higher education within Australia. The AQF comprises titles and guidelines, which define each qualification, together with principles and protocols covering articulation and certification.

Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) means the nationally agreed quality arrangements for the vocational education and training system agreed to by the Ministerial Council.

Internal audit means audits conducted by, or on behalf of, the organisation itself for internal purposes.

Mutual recognition applies nationally and means:

- 1 The acceptance of the decisions of the registering body that has registered a training organisation, or the course accrediting body that has accredited a course, by another registering/course accrediting body, without there being any further requirement, including:
 - (a) the recognition by each registering body of the decisions of registering bodies in other States and Territories in relation to the registration of training organisations and the imposition of sanctions including cancellation of registration; and
 - (b) the recognition by each course accrediting body of the decisions of course accrediting bodies in other States and Territories in relation to the accreditation of courses.
- 2 The recognition by all State and Territory registering/course accrediting bodies of the national endorsement of Training Packages as notified on the National Training Information Service.

- 3 The recognition and acceptance by an registered training organisation of Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by other registered training organisations, enabling individuals to receive national recognition of their achievements.

National Training Framework (NTF) means the system of vocational education and training that:

- a applies nationally;
- b is endorsed by the ANTA Ministerial Council;
- c is made up of the AQTF and nationally endorsed Training Packages.

Nationally Recognised Training - means training and assessment, delivered by a RTO, which meets the requirements specified in national industry/enterprise Training Packages or in accredited courses.

National Training Information Service (NTIS) means the National Register for recording information about registered training organisations, training packages and accredited courses.

Non-compliance means failure to comply with one or more of the Australian Quality Training Framework standards.

Period of registration means the period for which an registered training organisation is registered. The period of registration is up to five years (unless cancelled or suspended).

Registered Training Organisation (RTO) means a training organisation registered by State/Territory Recognition Authorities as Nationally recognised, for the provision of training products and services.

Scope (of registration) means the range of training products and services, within one or more defined industry areas, that a training organisation is registered to deliver.

Statement of Attainment means a record of recognised learning which, although falling short of an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification, may contribute towards a qualification outcome, either as attainment of competencies within a Training Package, partial completion of a course leading to a qualification, or completion of a nationally accredited short course which may accumulate towards a qualification through Recognition of Prior Learning processes.

Strategic Industry Audit means the audit of RTOs operating in a specific industry or industry sector targeted on the basis of identified risks relating to that industry or sector.

Training package means a set of national training resources consisting of national competency standards, assessment guidelines and national qualifications. These components will be endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee and approved by Ministers. The package can also include non-endorsed components, namely: assessment materials, learning strategies and professional development materials.

Training products means Training Packages qualifications and accredited courses.

Training Provider School means a school registered with the Council under the Joint Ministerial Policy Statement.

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APPENDIX 2 - Acronyms

AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ITC	Industry Training Council
NTF	National Training Framework
RCAB	Registering and Course Accrediting Body
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TAC	Training Accreditation Council
VET	Vocational Education and Training