Standards for Vocational Education and Training Accredited Courses

Consultation Paper

March 2013

Disclaimer: this paper is a confidential document designed to inform discussions with selected stakeholders, and is not to be distributed any further or used for any other means. It does not represent the views of the National Skills Standards Council or NATESE, either collectively or as individual members or employees.
1. Introduction and Purpose

Overview

The National Skills Standards Council (NSSC) has developed Standards for Training Packages that were endorsed by the COAG Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTSE) on 16 November 2012 for immediate implementation.¹ These standards were a culmination of a number of years of collaborative work to ensure that the agreed recommendations from the COAG VET Products for the 21st Century Report² (endorsed by Ministers in 2009) were reflected in a new organising framework.

As a consequence, Standards for VET Accredited Courses now need to be updated to reflect recommendations from the COAG VET Products for the 21st Century Report and the new organising framework of Standards for Training Packages to synchronise the design and development of nationally recognised training products.

The development of Standards for Training Packages and Standards for VET Accredited Courses were out of scope for the broader review of the standards for the regulation of VET undertaken by the NSSC. Both of these standards specify the design of nationally recognised training products³ as distinct from standards for RTOs and VET regulators.

Purpose of the consultation paper

This paper is designed to seek written feedback regarding draft Standards for VET Accredited Courses developed by the NSSC, and potential transition arrangements and implementation implications.

Feedback to the paper will ultimately enable the NSSC to appropriately consider the draft Standards for VET Accredited Courses in context of the Standards for Training Packages.

How do I respond?

Please provide any feedback or comment by no later than 5pm on Wednesday, 3 April 2013.

Feedback should be addressed to Luke Behncke, Director, Office of the NSSC, and provided via any of the following ways:

By email: luke.behncke@natese.gov.au
By fax: (03) 6216 0359

Please contact Luke Behncke on (03) 9954 2601 if you have any questions or queries.

³ According to training.gov.au (February 2013) there are 1,593 accredited courses (containing 2,278 accredited course units/modules) currently available. This compares to 1,699 qualifications, 908 skill sets and 17,957 units of competency currently available within 68 Training Packages.
2. Background

Standards for Training Packages

On 16 November 2012, SCOTESE endorsed new Standards for Training Packages (see Appendix B) for immediate implementation with a three year transition period (see diagram 1 below).

The design and development specifications for Training Packages contained within the existing Training Package Development Handbook (TPDH) have now been superseded by the Standards for Training Packages.


Standards for the design of accredited courses in VET

VET accredited courses address skill requirements for industry, enterprises and the community where these are not covered in nationally endorsed Training Packages. They have the capacity to address changes in skill needs and the needs of emerging and converging industries and industry sectors in a responsive manner.

Once a VET course has been accredited, the VET Regulator registers the course on the National Register and can become available\(^4\) for use by registered training organisations.

The design of VET accredited courses that lead to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or statement of attainment is required to meet either the NVR Standards for VET Accredited Courses or the AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses.\(^5\)

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\(^4\) Availability is dependent on copyright licensing in place by the course owner.

The NVR Standards for VET Accredited Courses are based on the AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses. The AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses have not been revised since their implementation in 2007.

Depending on the VET Regulator, either the AQTF Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies or the SNR Standards for VET Regulators (Part 3 – Standards for accrediting courses) are used for the purposes of accrediting courses. These standards are included as part of the broader review of the standards for the regulation of VET being undertaken by the NSSC as they directly relate to the functions of VET regulators.

As a consequence of the reforms initiated by the COAG VET Products for the 21st Century Report that led to the recent endorsement of the Standards for Training Packages, VET accredited course standards now need to be updated to ensure that the design and development of nationally recognised training products (Training Packages and VET Accredited Courses) is synchronised within a consistent organising framework.


Note that outcomes as a result of consultation regarding the NSSC’s Position Paper may result in amendments being made to the Standards for Training Packages, and subsequently VET accredited course standards.
3. Draft Standards for VET Accredited Courses

At their 28 February 2013 meeting, the NSSC agreed to draft Standards for VET Accredited Courses at Appendix A being used as the basis for stakeholder consultation.

The development of the draft standards is consistent with the recommendations from the COAG VET Products for the 21st Century Report that, among other things, between Training Packages and VET Accredited Courses there should be a consistent organising framework, maximum portability of units of competency and reduced duplication.

Ultimately, the outcome of the development work for new Standards for VET Accredited Courses will be one set of design standards applying to all accredited courses, no matter whom it is regulated by.

Design

The draft standards continue to support VET accredited courses to responsively address skill requirements for industry, enterprises and the community where these are not covered in nationally endorsed Training Packages. However, they also continue to recognise and strengthen the role of Training Packages within the national training system. This is reflected in draft Standard 3 where VET Accredited Courses must comply with Standards 4 and 5 (units of competency), Standards 6 and 7 (Assessment Requirements) and Standard 8 (Qualifications) of the Standards for Training Packages.

The previous standard within the NVR and AQTF VET accredited course standards associated with restricting the duplication between VET Accredited Courses and Training Packages has been strengthened. Draft Standard 2: A VET Accredited Course must not duplicate, by code, title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed Training Package qualification, skill set or unit of competency ensures that code nomenclature and skill sets are now included.

Consistent organising framework

Compliance against specific standards within the Standards for Training Packages in draft Standard 3 ensures a consistent and articulated organising framework between Training Packages and VET Accredited Courses. It supports portability of training products between Training Packages and Accredited Courses for the purposes of workforce development.

Reference to specific standards in the Standards for Training Packages also allows a streamlined and synchronised approach to the maintenance of the draft Standards for VET Accredited Courses, in that, any relevant, future revisions to the Standards for Training Packages automatically take effect within the VET Accredited Course standards.

Course need and information

Draft Standard 1: A VET Accredited Course must be based on a demonstrated need for a nationally recognised vocational, education and training outcome provides a clear standard for development and design processes to meet. Draft Standard 4: A VET Accredited Course complies with the VET Accredited Course Template ensures that course classification and information conforms to a consistent structure for the purposes of accreditation.

Transition and implementation

It is important to ensure that the transition and implementation of the draft Standards for VET Accredited Courses synchronise as effectively as possible with the Standards for Training Packages because of their common design and inter-relationship.

It is proposed that, on endorsement by Ministers, VET Regulators are able to immediately implement the Standards for VET Accredited Courses and all VET Accredited Courses meet the new Standards for VET Accredited Courses within three years.
4. **Questions**

Below are a number of key questions where the NSSC would appreciate stakeholder views. However, these questions should not be seen as definitive or exhaustive and additional comments are most welcome.

**Question 1:** Is the design of the draft Standards for VET Accredited Courses consistent with the recommendations of the *COAG VET Products for the 21st Century Report* and the Standards for Training Packages? If not, how could the design be improved?

**Question 2:** Is the transition period of three years post endorsement of Ministers appropriate for all VET Accredited Courses to meet the draft Standards for VET Accredited Courses?

**Question 3:** What are the potential implementation implications of the draft Standards for VET Accredited Courses for your organisation?
Draft Standards for Vocational Education and Training Accredited Courses

Purpose of the Standards

The purpose of the Standards for Vocational Education and Training (VET) Accredited Courses is to ensure that VET accredited courses are of high quality and meet the workforce development needs of industry, enterprises and individuals.

National recognition and accreditation

VET accredited courses address skill requirements for industry, enterprises and the community where these are not covered in nationally endorsed Training Packages. They have the capacity to address changes in skill needs and the needs of emerging and converging industries and industry sectors in a responsive manner. Once a VET course has been accredited, the VET Regulator registers the course on the National Register.

The Standards for VET Accredited Courses apply to the design and development of courses for accreditation consideration by a VET regulator. These are the course design standards that must be met for accreditation. The accreditation of a VET Course may be cancelled if these standards cease to be met.

Standards for VET Accredited Courses

Standard 1: A VET Accredited Course must be based on a demonstrated need for a nationally recognised vocational, education and training outcome.

Standard 2: A VET Accredited Course must not duplicate, by code, title or coverage, the outcomes of an endorsed Training Package qualification, skill set or unit of competency.

Standard 3: A VET Accredited Course complies with Standards 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the Standards for Training Packages.

Standard 4: A VET Accredited Course complies with the VET Accredited Course Template.
# VET Accredited Course Template

## Copyright and course classification information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COPYRIGHT OWNER</th>
<th>Provide the name of the legal entity who owns copyright of the course(s) being submitted for accreditation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COPYRIGHT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>Ensure copyright approval for any units of competency not owned by your organisation. Provide details of any copyright restrictions related to the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LICENSING AND FRANCHISE</td>
<td>Specify if this VET course may be used under licence or franchise and state requirements for use by other parties. Provide contact details for these arrangements. Where no arrangements exist insert: <em>No licensing or franchising arrangements apply to this course at the time of accreditation.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVETMISS INFORMATION</td>
<td>Provide AVETMISS classification codes that describe the industry, occupational group and field of education for which the course is intended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZSCO (Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations)</td>
<td>Insert code and description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCED (Australian Standard Classification of Education) code – 4 digits (Field of Education)</td>
<td>Insert code and description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National course code</td>
<td>To be provided by the VET Regulator once the course is accredited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Classification codes for AVETMISS data may be found on the NCVER website at www.ncver.edu.au]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD OF ACCREDITATION</th>
<th>Accreditation dates will be entered by the VET Regulator if the course is accredited.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| VET Regulator use only | |
## Course information

| **CODE**<br>Mandatory field | The code contains the three alpha characters relating to the course outcomes; followed by either (i) a numeric character identifying the AQF level, or (ii) the numeric character ‘0’ identifying that the course outcome does not have the breadth and depth required for a qualification; a two numeric sequence identifier; and two numeric characters identifying the year the course was accredited. It must comply with the length specified in the AVETMIS Standard. |
| **TITLE**<br>Mandatory field | A unique title that reflects the course outcomes. It must comply with the length specified in the AVETMIS Standard (no more than 100 characters). |
| **DESCRIPTION**<br>Mandatory field | A description of the intended purpose commensurate with the course outcomes is required. Information must include target audience, and vocational and/or educational outcomes. Any licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification considerations. Where none exist insert: *No licensing, legislative or certification requirements apply to this qualification at the time of publication.* |
| **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**<br>Optional field | Specifies any mandatory entry requirements. |
| **PACKAGING RULES**<br>Mandatory field | Specifies the number of core and elective units. Specifies the total number of units of competency required to achieve the qualification/statement of attainment. Lists all core and elective unit codes and titles, including prerequisite units where they apply. |
| **MAPPING INFORMATION**<br>Mandatory field | Specifies code and title of any equivalent course, if appropriate. If no equivalent insert: *No equivalent course.* |
| **CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS**<br>Mandatory field | Specifies existing credit arrangements between the course and other VET accredited courses, Training Package qualifications or Higher Education qualifications in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework. Where there are no direct credit arrangements in place the following statement is inserted here: *At the time of accreditation of this course no national credit arrangements exist.* |
| **IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION**  
| **Mandatory field** | Information on the key features of the course and the industry that will impact on the selection of training pathways.  
| | Information relating to validation of any qualifications against the AQF specifications for that qualification type.  
| | Pathways advice.  
| | Access and equity considerations.  
| | Foundation Skills.  
| | Advice on any health and safety implications in the industry.  
| | Resource and equipment lists relevant to the course  
| | Legal considerations for learners in the workplace/on placements.  
| | Learning strategies guidance, describing the diversity of learners and learning strategies.  
| | Knowledge guidance, identifying contextual information such as knowledge requirements and resources.  
| | Assessment strategies, providing guidance on implementation of assessment requirements.  
| | Other information relevant to implementation of the course.  
| **UNITS OF COMPETENCY LIST**  
| **Mandatory field** | List the code and title for each imported unit of competency and/or the content of new units of competency.  

Standards for Training Packages

This document is one of three products that form the organising framework of standards that support the development of industry Training Packages.

The Standards for Training Packages were endorsed by the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment on 16 November 2012.

The Standards for Training Packages and their underpinning policies can be found on the NSSC website:
www.nssc.natese.gov.au/training_packages

The organising framework of standards includes:

- NSSC - Standards for Training Packages
- NSSC - Training Package Products Policy
- NSSC - Training Packages Development and Endorsement Process Policy

Version: 1.0

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The details of the relevant license conditions are available on the Creative Commons website as is the full legal code for the CC BY 3.0 AU license: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/legalcode

The document must be attributed as the NSSC - Standards for Training Packages.
Purpose of the Standards

The purpose of the Standards for Training Packages is to ensure Training Packages are of high quality and meet the workforce development needs of industry, enterprises and individuals.

The Standards for Training Packages apply to the design and development of Training Packages for endorsement consideration by the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC).

Training Packages – products

Standard 1: Training Packages consist of the following:

1. NSSC endorsed components:
   - units of competency;
   - assessment requirements (associated with each unit of competency);
   - qualifications; and
   - credit arrangements.
2. One or more quality assured companion volumes.

Training Packages – policy

Standard 2: Training Package developers comply with the NSSC Training Package Products Policy.

Standard 3: Training Package developers comply with the NSSC Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy.
Training Packages – components

Units of Competency

Standard 4: Units of competency specify the standards of performance required in the workplace.

Standard 5: The structure of units of competency complies with the unit of competency template.

Assessment Requirements

Standard 6: Assessment requirements specify the evidence and required conditions for assessment.

Standard 7: Every unit of competency has associated assessment requirements. The structure of assessment requirements complies with the assessment requirements template.

Qualifications

Standard 8: Qualifications comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework specification for that qualification type.

Standard 9: The structure of the information for the Australian Qualifications Framework qualification complies with the qualification template.

Credit Arrangements

Standard 10: Credit arrangements existing between Training Package qualifications and Higher Education qualifications are listed in a format that complies with the credit arrangements template.

Companion Volumes

Standard 11: A quality assured companion volume implementation guide produced by the Training Package developer is available at the time of endorsement and complies with the companion volume implementation guide template.

Standard 12: Training Package developers produce other quality assured companion volumes to meet the needs of their stakeholders as required.
### Unit of Competency Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>UNIT CODE</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mandatory field</th>
<th>The unit code contains the three alpha characters identifying the Training Package, followed by alpha and/or numeric characters. It must comply with the length specified in the AVETMIS Standard (no more than 12 characters).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNIT TITLE</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mandatory field</td>
<td>The title concisely describes the unit outcome. It must comply with the length specified in the AVETMIS Standard (no more than 100 characters)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **APPLICATION**<br>Mandatory field | The application section briefly describes how the unit is practically applied in the industry and in what context(s) the unit may be applied. It Includes:  
- a summary statement of unit content;  
- focused, useful information on how and where the unit of competency could be practically applied and who might use it; and  
- the unit of competency’s relationship to any licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements.  
Where no requirements exist, insert:  
*No licensing, legislative or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.* |
| **PREREQUISITE UNIT**<br>Optional field | List any unit(s) in which the candidate must be deemed competent prior to the determination of competency in this unit. |
| **COMPETENCY FIELD**<br>Optional field | Used only when the Training Package developer wishes to categorise a set of units within a Training Package in relation to a type of work. |
| **UNIT SECTOR**<br>Optional field | Used only when the Training Package developer wishes to categorise a set of units within a Training Package in relation to an industry sector. |
| **ELEMENTS**<br>Mandatory field | Elements describe the essential outcomes. |
| **PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**<br>Mandatory field | Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element. |
1. Elements describe actions or outcomes that are demonstrable and assessable.

1.1 Performance criteria clearly relate to the element.
1.2 They are expressed as a standard.
1.3 They specify the required performance in relevant tasks, roles, and skills.
1.4 They reflect the applied knowledge that enables competent performance.

**FOUNDATION SKILLS**

*Mandatory field*

This section describes those language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills that are essential to performance.

Foundation skills essential to performance in this unit, but not explicit in the performance criteria are listed here, along with a brief context statement.

Where all foundation skills essential to performance in this unit are explicit in the performance criteria insert:

*Foundation skills essential to performance are explicit in the performance criteria of this unit of competency.*

**RANGE OF CONDITIONS**

*Optional field*

Specifies different work environments and conditions that may affect performance. Essential operating conditions that may be present (depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts) are included.

Range is restricted to essential operating conditions and any other variables essential to the work environment.

**UNIT MAPPING INFORMATION**

*Mandatory field*

Specifies code and title of any equivalent unit of competency. If no equivalent insert:

*No equivalent unit.*

**LINKS**

*Mandatory field*

Link to Companion Volume Implementation Guide.
# Assessment Requirements Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TITLE</strong></th>
<th>Assessment Requirements for [insert Unit of Competency Code and Title]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE</strong></td>
<td>• specifies the required product and process evidence.  &lt;br&gt;• specifies the frequency and/or volume of product/process evidence.  &lt;br&gt;• specifies the relationship between the product and process evidence and the performance criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KNOWLEDGE EVIDENCE</strong></td>
<td>• specifies what the individual must know in order to safely and effectively perform the work task described in the unit of competency.  &lt;br&gt;• relates directly to the performance criteria and/or range of conditions.  &lt;br&gt;• indicates the type and depth of knowledge required to meet the demands of the unit of competency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSESSMENT CONDITIONS</strong></td>
<td>• stipulates any mandatory conditions for assessment.  &lt;br&gt;• specifies the conditions under which evidence for assessment must be gathered, including any details of equipment and materials, contingencies, specifications, physical conditions, relationships with team members and supervisor, relationship with client/customer, and timeframe.  &lt;br&gt;• specifies assessor requirements, including any details related to qualifications, experience and industry currency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LINKS</strong></td>
<td>Link to Companion Volume Implementation Guide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Qualification Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>QUALIFICATION CODE</strong></th>
<th>Mandatory field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The qualification code contains the three alpha characters identifying the Training Package, a numeric character identifying the AQF level, a two numeric character sequence identifier, and two numeric characters identifying the year the qualification was endorsed. It must comply with the length specified in the AVETMIS Standard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>QUALIFICATION TITLE</strong></th>
<th>Mandatory field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A unique title that reflects the qualification outcome. It must comply with the length specified in the AVETMIS Standard (no more than 100 characters).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>QUALIFICATION DESCRIPTION</strong></th>
<th>Mandatory field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A description of the qualification outcomes. Any licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification considerations. Where none exist insert:  
*No licensing, legislative or certification requirements apply to this qualification at the time of publication.* |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ENTRY REQUIREMENTS</strong></th>
<th>Optional field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specifies any mandatory entry requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PACKAGING RULES</strong></th>
<th>Mandatory field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specifies the total number of units of competency required to achieve the qualification. Specifies the number of core and elective units. Lists all core and elective unit codes and titles, including prerequisite units where they apply.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>QUALIFICATION MAPPING INFORMATION</strong></th>
<th>Mandatory field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Specifies code and title of any equivalent qualification. If no equivalent insert:  
*No equivalent qualification.* |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>LINKS</strong></th>
<th>Mandatory field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Link to Companion Volume Implementation Guide.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Credit Arrangements Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS FOR [Insert Training Package Code and Title]</th>
<th>Qualification Code</th>
<th>Qualification Title</th>
<th>Credit Arrangement Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mandatory field | Mandatory field | Mandatory field | Specifies existing credit arrangements between Training Package qualifications and Higher Education qualifications in accordance with the AQF. Where there are no direct credit arrangements in place the following statement is inserted here:  

At the time of endorsement of this Training Package no national credit arrangements exist. |

| Links | Link to Companion Volume Implementation Guide. | Mandatory field |
### Companion Volume Implementation Guide Template

**COMPANION VOLUME IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR (insert Training Package Code and Title)**

#### OVERVIEW INFORMATION

- Version control and modification history.
- List of AQF qualifications, Skill Sets and units of competency in the Training Package.
- Unit mapping information, including equivalence table linking old to new units of competency.
- Qualification mapping information, including equivalence table linking old to new qualification.
- List of imported and prerequisite units in the Training Package.
- Key work and training requirements in the industry.
- Regulation and licensing implications for implementation.

#### IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION

- Information on the key features of the Training Package and the industry that will impact on the selection of training pathways.
- Industry sectors and occupational outcomes of qualifications.
- Explanation of any mandatory entry requirements for qualifications.
- Pathways advice, particularly in line with requirements of the AQF Pathways Policy.
- Access and equity considerations.
- Foundation Skills.
- Advice on any health and safety implications in the industry.
- Resource and equipment lists relevant to the Training Package.
- Legal considerations for learners in the workplace/on placements.
- Other information relevant to implementation of the Training Package.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINKS</th>
<th>Optional field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Resources supporting the companion volume implementation guide.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other companion volumes as required including:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Learning strategies guidance, describing the diversity of learners and learning strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Knowledge guidance, identifying contextual information such as knowledge requirements and resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Assessment strategies, providing guidance on implementation of assessment requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training Package developer’s quality assurance process for companion volumes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>