PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BRIEF

To establish a draft national definition, principles, technical standards and glossary for e-assessment in vocational education and training

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Submission date and time:
By 2:00pm on XXXXXXXXXXX

Submission location:
Electronically to annie.fergusson@sa.gov.au

Brief issue date:
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
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1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

The client for this project is the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework) in partnership with the National Quality Council. The Framework provides the vocational and education system with e-learning skills, resources and support to meet today's increasingly technology-driven learning environment. The National Quality Council oversees quality assurance and ensures national consistency in the application of the Australian Quality Training Framework standards for the audit and registration of training providers. This project will be managed through the Benchmarking and Research component of the Framework.

The Professional Services Brief (“Brief”) sets out the South Australian Government’s requirements in relation to the engagement of a Service Provider to undertake consultations and research on behalf of the Framework that will inform the development of a draft national definition of e-assessment, principles for e-assessment and a glossary of e-assessment terms. It is envisaged that this will lay the foundation for improved quality and consistency in e-assessment within the national vocational education and training sector.

In this context, e-assessment covers all activities in which digital technologies are used in assessment. These activities include the designing and delivery of assessments, marking – by computers or assessors assisted by scanners and online tools – and all processes of reporting, storing and transferring of data associated with public and internal assessments.

As such, e-assessment may be seen as the end-to-end electronic assessment processes where ICT is used for the presentation of assessment activity and the recording of responses. This includes the end-to-end assessment process from the perspective of learners, trainers, Registered Training Organizations, industry regulators and the general public.

E-assessment products and services may be used to support diagnostic, formative or summative assessment. In diagnostic assessment, e-assessment products and services are used to identify candidate's strengths and areas for improvement. This form of assessment often occurs at the commencement of a training program. In formative assessment, evidence is used to provide developmental feedback to learners on their current skills and knowledge relative to a defined standard. This information may also be used by trainer so that instruction may be modified to suit learner needs. In summative assessment or assessment of learning, e-assessment products and services are used to assist assessors gather evidence and make judgements about the competence of the candidate. Such assessment often leads to the awarding of a Statement of Attainment or qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

There is a growing stock of e-assessment products and services, which include assessment tools for particular units of competency, e-portfolios and computer based assessment recording and reporting tools. In addition there is increasing demand for both Registered Training Organisations and assessors to adopt e-assessment. At this stage there is little national guidance for Registered Training Organisations, assessors, AQTF auditors and product developers on e-assessment. It is envisaged that the definition, principles and glossary for e-assessment developed through this project will promote the development of best practice approaches to e-assessment in the national vocational education and training system.
Respondents must lodge submissions that comply with this brief.

1.2 Background

The Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology ("the Department") is seeking a Service Provider to undertake research and consultations including:

- a targeted review of national and international literature on the definition, principles and technical standards for e-assessment, with a particular focus on e-assessment in vocational education and training.

- targeted consultations with VET practitioners in private, public and enterprise Registered Training Organisations, enterprises, industry bodies, Industry Skills Councils, State and Territory training authorities, and VET assessment agencies on best practice approaches to e-assessment in vocational education and training that will inform the development of a national definition, principles and technical standards for e-assessment.

- consultations with organisations beyond the VET system, including schools, ACACA agencies, assessment providers, ACER, and higher education institutions, which have developed or implemented best practice approaches to e-assessment that have implications for the use of e-assessment in the vocational education and training system.

- identification and analysis of a number of case studies which illustrate [1] best practice features of e-assessment practice that have relevance to the VET system, [2] the diversity of e-assessment applications including diagnostic, formative and summative assessment, [3] the range of modes of e-assessment such as online quizzes, e-portfolios, blogs, wikis, and simulation, and [4] the range of contexts in which e-assessment is used ie: workplace, institutions, online / distance delivery.

- development of a definition of e-assessment, national principles for e-assessment illustrated by case studies, and a glossary for e-assessment to promote national consistency in e-assessment in the vocational education and training system.

- collaboration with the E-standards Experts Group (EEG) to ensure that the proposed national definition, principles and glossary for e-assessment are consistent with the technical standards for e-learning.

- consultation with DEEWR, national VET regulator, State and Territory Training Authorities and peak industry bodies, including ACTU, ACCI and AIG, on the proposed national definition, principles and glossary for e-assessment.

- consultation with the National Quality Council to:
  - ensure that the proposed national definition, principles and glossary for e-assessment are consistent with and complement the Australian Quality Training Framework and the emerging work on streamlined Training Packages; and
  - Consider their suitability for endorsement by the NQC.
collaboration with the Benchmarking and Research Business Manager at all phases of the project, including the dissemination of the findings across the VET sector

production of a final report for publication on the Australian Flexible Learning Framework and NQC websites.

A number of developments have given rise to the current project.

Earlier this year, the Australian Flexible Learning Framework released a report by Victor Callan and Berwyn Clayton, titled *E-assessment and the AQTF: Bridging the divide between practitioners and auditors*. This report highlighted the growth in e-assessment in the national training system. However it also noted concerns that some groups, including assessors and Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) auditors, have expressed about the quality of e-assessment. The report also revealed the relatively limited range of e-assessment strategies used by assessors, with online quizzes being the dominant form of e-assessment used in the system. The authors of the report argued that national guidelines are needed to ensure the quality of e-assessment and broaden the range of e-assessment approaches used in the national training system.

Problems with the quality of e-assessment have also been raised in another recent study undertaken for the Australian Flexible Learning Framework by Blue Dog Training. In this study, Blue Dog Training, which is an RTO that has been involved in delivering online training and assessment since 2006, highlighted a range of common problems associated with the design, authenticity and security of online quizzes. In response to this situation, Blue Dog Training has developed a guide for assessors and AQTF auditors on the design and security of online quizzes. This work illustrates the need for the developed of trusted e-assessment systems that are underpinned by consistent nationally applicable principles and robust technical standards.

The demand for better guidance on e-assessment is also being driven by the introduction of the *AQTF Essential Standards for Registration*. These standards are designed to ensure that Registered Training Organisations establish assessment arrangements that meet the requirements of the Training Packages and / or accredited courses and are consistent with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence. The standards highlight the need for assessors to have skills in identifying, developing and applying quality assessment processes and materials. Increasingly this will involve the use of e-assessment materials and processes.

Finally, the *2008-2011 Framework Strategy* has a particular focus on making e-learning, which incorporates e-assessment, an integral part of the national training system through embedding e-learning in the normal practices of training providers and businesses.

The current project is a direct response to these calls to improve the quality of e-assessment, broaden the range of e-assessment options, improve assessors skills in developing and implementing e-assessment materials and processes, and ensuring that e-assessment forms part of the learning and assessment strategies developed by Registered Training Organisations and their clients.
2. Scope of the Services

2.1 Objectives and Terms of Reference

The research will

- employ a variety of research methods (e.g. literature review; key respondent interviews; case studies and consultative workshops) to gather information on best practice in e-assessment in vocational education and training as well as other the schools, industry and higher education in Australia and overseas. This information, which will be informed by case studies of best practice in e-assessment, will be used to develop a discussion paper which will set out a draft definition, principles, technical standards and glossary for e-assessment.

- engage key stakeholders, including assessors, Industry Skills Councils, enterprises, Registered Training Organisations, peak industry bodies and AQTF auditors, through a series of national consultative workshops and key respondent interviews, in considering the draft definition, principles, technical standards and glossary for e-assessment. It is envisaged that the outcomes of these consultations will inform the development of a statement setting out a national definition for e-assessment, set of principles and technical standards for e-assessment and a glossary for e-assessment terms. It is envisaged that this statement will be considered by the National Quality Council or its successor organisation for endorsement.

The project will be completed in collaboration with the Framework and its E-standards Expert Group (EEG), and the National Quality Council.

Deliverables will include

- a progress report detailing the outcomes of the literature review
- a discussion paper that identifies a draft definition, principles, technical standards and a glossary for e-assessment.
- the national consultative workshops of the discussion paper
- a final report that details the outcomes of the literature review, the consultation process, the final version of the national definition for e-assessment, set of principles and technical standards for e-assessment and glossary for e-assessment terms and a set of recommendations.

It is anticipated that the specification relating to the range and identity of training providers to be consulted will be negotiated between the successful Service Provider and the Business Manager.

2.2 Tasks to be undertaken

The key tasks to be completed by the Service Provider are detailed in the following chart. The Project Manager will establish a Reference Group with members having specific expertise in relation to the project aims and will consult with the NQC and FLAG Secretariats in selecting members. The Reference Group will provide advice and feedback to the Service Provider.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Preparation of a work plan that outlines: • key project stages, activities and timeframes • approach to identifying best practice examples of e-assessment practice • approach to conducting consultations with key stakeholders, including RTOs, industry, STAs, assessment agencies, ACACA agencies and other bodies. • approach to engaging with EEG • approach to consulting with DEEWR, national VET regulator, State and Territory Training Authorities and peak industry bodies, including ACTU, ACCI and AIG, on proposed national principles for e-assessment.</td>
<td>End February 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted literature review</td>
<td>Completion of a targeted review of national and international literature on principles and technical standards for e-assessment, with a particular focus on e-assessment in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>Progress report including literature review End March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>• Consultations with VET practitioners in private, public and enterprise Registered Training Organisations, enterprises, industry bodies and VET assessment agencies on best practice approaches to e-assessment in vocational education and training. • Consultations with organisations beyond the VET system, including schools, ACACA agencies, assessment providers, ACER, and higher education institutions, which have developed or implemented best practice approaches to e-assessment that have implications for the use of e-assessment in the vocational education and training system. It is envisaged that the consultations will identify potential case studies that may be used to illustrate the proposed principles for e-assessment.</td>
<td>Consultation with Business Manager and Reference Group on individual and groups to be consulted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>Identification and documentation of case studies that illustrate: • best practice features of e-assessment practice that have relevance to the VET system, • key features of trusted e-assessment systems, • the diversity of e-assessment applications including diagnostic, formative and summative assessment, and • the range of modes of e-assessment such as online quizzes, e-portfolios, blogs, wikis, and simulation. • the range of contexts in which e-assessment is used ie: workplace, institutions, online / distance delivery.</td>
<td>Consultation with Business Manager and Reference Group on selection of case studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.3 Output

The following outputs are required by the due date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signed contract</td>
<td>End of February 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work plan</td>
<td>End of February 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress report</td>
<td>End of March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion paper</td>
<td>End of May 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final report</td>
<td>End of June 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Information to be submitted

In order for the Respondent to be considered, the Respondent must provide specific information on each of the items identified in this section. The **Respondent’s Submission must include numbered sections on each of the items identified below**.

1. Respondent’s Contact Person to answer queries which may arise during evaluation of the responses to the brief. The name, title, address, e-mail, telephone and facsimile numbers of that person must be provided.

2. An outline of the intended approach/methodology to the Professional Services including a proposed work plan (tasks and identified milestones etc).

3. The Curriculum Vitae of all the persons who will be employed on the work, including sub-contractors, and their hourly and daily fee rates.

4. An outline of the Service Provider’s qualifications and experience in relevant work.

5. Details of similar projects the Respondent has worked on including a list of reviews, references and samples of work.

6. Names and contact details of three referees.
7. A timetable for completing the Professional Services, including availability dates.
9. A statement that the Respondent will accept the terms of the attached simplified terms and conditions, or if the statement is qualified, details of the provisions the Respondent would seek to amend and the nature of the amendment sought.
10. A detailed breakdown of the costs.
11. Disclosure of any actual or future conflict of interest.
12. Any other details or information which is relevant.

4. Evaluation of Submissions

Submissions from Respondents will be assessed under the following Selection Criteria:

- Experience in conducting public sector projects, particularly those relating to research in assessment and e-learning in the national VET system
- Demonstrated knowledge and expertise in research in assessment and e-learning in the national VET system
- Knowledge and experience in providing policy advice in relation to vocational education and training
- Availability of key personnel
- Proposed work plan
- Value for money
- Experience of the Respondent’s nominated staff in carrying out the required Professional Services
- Availability to meet the Project time frame and flexibility should the Project timetable change
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively
- Compliance with draft Agreement.

If the Submission does not include all the information in the format required by this brief or is incomplete in any way, it may not be considered.

5. Reservation of Rights and Conditions

The Department reserves the right:

- not to proceed with the appointment of a Service Provider, either in total or part, and reserves the right to vary the contracting process
- to appoint as a Service Provider any person or company irrespective of whether such person or company has submitted a response to this brief, and whether or not its Submission is a complying Submission
- to accept part or all of the Submission
- to select a preferred Service Provider and to negotiate the final terms of the agreement (including the fee) with the preferred Service Provider
- to accept any submission subject to such conditions as it thinks fit
- to suspend, alter or terminate the evaluation, selection or negotiation process at any stage
- to negotiate with one, some or all Respondents after the close of Submissions on any matter which the Department, at its discretion, considers relevant to the formation of a contract
The validity period for this Brief shall be 90 days from the Closing Time and may be extended by mutual agreement.

The submission by the Respondent of a Submission does not give rise to or amount to a contract.

The decision to accept a Submission rests with the Department in its absolute discretion and no further correspondence will be entered into.

The Department does not bind itself to accept the lowest priced Submission nor any Submission.

No Respondent shall make any announcement (public or otherwise) concerning the acceptance of any Submission or any other matter concerning this Brief without the prior written consent of the Department.
6. **Costs of Submission**

   Each Respondent is solely responsible for all of the costs, expenses and losses incurred by it in relation to the preparation and submission of its Submission and in undertaking any negotiations in relation to its Submission.

7. **Timeframe and Availability**

   It is anticipated that the successful Service Provider will be selected in (insert date) and will commence shortly after (subject to a successful outcome of any negotiations).

   This project is expected to run for a period that will be negotiated with the successful Service Provider. However, it is expected that the main report of the project will be submitted by (insert date).

8. **Conditions of Engagement**

   The successful Service Provider will be required to enter into an agreement with the Department in accordance with the draft agreement attached to the Brief.

   The Professional Services must be carried out at the offices of the Service Provider or other offices specified from time to time.

   The Service Provider or the Department may be required to provide the facilities listed in the draft agreement.

   The Service Provider must report to the Project Manager, Benchmarking and Research, who will manage the work on a day-to-day basis.

   The work shall be done during normal office hours, although the exact working hours will be subject to agreement.

   If at any time during the provision of these Professional Services to the Department, the Service Provider becomes aware of any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest, it must immediately advise the contact person in writing.

   A conflict of interest may be grounds for terminating negotiations and the Department may terminate any contract that has been executed by the Department and the successful Service Provider without any obligation on the State to make any payment. Termination will be at the sole discretion of the Department.

9. **Fees and Conditions of Payment**

   The Service Provider will be engaged on the basis of time plus expenses subject to an agreed limiting fee to complete the Professional Services as outlined in this Brief. Unless otherwise stated, Total Cost will represent the limiting fee.

   The Service Provider is requested to submit prices as per Table 1, inclusive of GST, including all expenses and disbursements that may be required (identified under the following categories: travel and accommodation, administration, other overheads etc), and the name, daily rate and total cost of the Service Provider.

   The components contributing to the limiting fee shall be fully itemised in the Submission and related to the tasks of the Assignment.
Table 1: Breakdown of Total Costs / Limiting Fee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Daily Rate</th>
<th>Number of Days</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Names of Service Provider</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Total number of days)</td>
<td>(Total Cost / limiting fee unless otherwise stated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Service Provider must complete the work under the contract for an amount of payment not exceeding the limiting fee subject to adjustments for approved variations.

The Service Provider is requested to submit a schedule of progress payments as per Table 2. The progress payments must correspond with the project methodology. It is expected that the total costs provided in both tables will correspond.

Table 2: Schedule of Progress Payments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress Payments (Milestones)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Total Cost / limiting fee unless otherwise stated)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On completion of the Professional Services, including the submission of the written report, the Service Provider shall submit a final itemised account for payment detailing the total cost of the work, the time spent, the daily rates, any approved expenses and disbursements and the final outstanding amount.

10. Intellectual Property

For the avoidance of doubt, all Intellectual Property Rights in materials developed by the Service Provider as a result of the delivery of the project ("Project Material") will vest, upon the creation of such, in the Commonwealth of Australia. The Service Provider must not publish or otherwise deal with the Project Material without the express consent of the Minister. For the purposes of this Professional Services Brief, Intellectual Property Rights means any patent, copyright, trademark, trade name, design, trade secret, know how, semi conductor, circuit layout, or other form of intellectual property right whether arising before or after the execution of any contract between the Service Provider and the Minister, and the right to registration and renewal of those rights.

The Service Provider will procure any relevant third parties to grant the Minister and the Commonwealth of Australia licences to use, (including but not limited to by way of publishing, reproducing and adapting), all Pre-Existing Intellectual Property Rights in Project Material. For the purposes of this Professional Services Brief, "Pre-Existing Intellectual Property in Project Material" means material which was created, acquired or known by the Service Provider, or any third party, other than as part of the delivery of the project, (including prior to the commencement of any agreement between the
Service Provider and the Minister). The licences will be irrevocable, royalty free, worldwide, transferable, non exclusive and will include the right to grant sublicenses.

11. Public Disclosure of Contracts

Information regarding contracts between public authorities and the private sector will be made available to the public on the South Australian Government’s Tenders and Contracts website [http://www.contracts.sa.gov.au] in accordance with Premier and Cabinet Circular PC027.

A copy of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC027 is available from:

Contractors to the Government are required to consent to disclosure of the contract in accordance with PC027.

12. Auditor-General

The successful Service Provider must acknowledge the provisions of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1987 (SA).

13. Insurance

The Service Provider will maintain in force at its own expense during the Term:

a.) Public and Products liability insurance in the name of the Service Provider for not less than $10,000,000 for any one event (and in the aggregate for Products Liability in any one policy period) or such other amount as the Minister may reasonably require;

b.) Professional Indemnity insurance in the name of the Service Provider for not less than $1,000,000 for any one event and in any one policy period or such other amount as the Minister may reasonably require; and

c.) Workers compensation insurance in accordance with the applicable worker’s compensation legislation.

The Service Provider will ensure that the insurance policy referred to in clause 13.a.) includes the names of the Minister and the Crown in right of the state of South Australia as principal;

The insurances to be maintained by the Service Provider pursuant to this clause shall be with insurers satisfactory to the Minister.

The Service Provider will ensure that the insurance policy referred to in clause 13.b.) is renewed and maintained for a period of 2 years from the date of expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement.

Before commencing work or the delivery of services under this Agreement the Service Provider shall provide the Minister with insurance certificates of currency for the insurances required in 13.a.) and 13.b.).
Disclaimer

The Minister in specifying levels of insurance in this agreement accepts no liability for the completeness of their listing, the adequacy of the sum insured, limit of liability, and scope of coverage, conditions or exclusions of those insurances in respect to how they may or may not respond to any loss, damage or liability.

The Service Provider acknowledges and agrees that it is the Service Provider’s responsibility to assess and consider the risks and scope of insurances required under this Agreement.

13. SA Government Contracting Policy

The Government has a policy that requires Government contracts for the supply of goods, services or construction to Government agencies, to impose a contractual obligation on contractors and subcontractors that their employees in South Australia (who are engaged in duties directly in connection with performance of the contract) receive wages and conditions of employment not less favourable than those contained in the State Award or any collective agreement (whichever is the more favourable) that:

- was in existence immediately prior to the commencement of the Commonwealth Government’s Workplace Relations Act 1996 - the "Work Choices" amendments legislation, that came into effect on 27 March 2006, and
- that applied or was capable of application to the type of employment the employee has been engaged to perform

A clause setting out this contractual obligation (“the Contract Clause”) is contained in the draft copy of the indicative contract terms attached to this Professional Services Brief.

To give effect to the policy the Contract Clause must be included in the contract entered into with the contractor selected (if any) pursuant Professional Services Brief.

Tenders are required to indicate acceptance of the Contract Clause in every respect. Tenders that do not indicate acceptance of the Contract Clause will be regarded as non-conforming tenders.

15. Lodgement Requirements and Closing Date

Respondents must lodge the following when submitting their offer:

- One (1) original unbound document
- Electronic copy to be submitted to annie.fergusson@sa.gov.au

The documents must be contained in a sealed envelope which is clearly marked:

Brief for Research on development of national principles for e-assessment in vocational education and training
The envelope should also be marked "Confidential and Private". All pages must be numbered sequentially.

Lodgement details are provided on the front page of the Brief.

The Department may not accept submissions not lodged at the specified address or within the time frame. No extensions to the closing date can be given.

16. Enquiries

Any enquiries concerning this Brief must be directed to the contact person identified on the cover sheet. Where the Department requires it, requests for information must be in writing and sent to the contact person.

Contact with other officers of the Department must not be made. Respondent's who do not abide by this criteria might not be considered.