Australian Quality Training Framework

part 4

learning and assessment strategies

resource guide

This **Resource Guide** provides further information and case studies to help explain the process of developing, documenting and reviewing learning and assessment strategies, a requirement of the Australian Quality Training Framework *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*. This **Resource Guide** also includes links to other relevant sources of information.

engaging enterprises/industry in developing and validating learning and assessment strategies

Australian National Training Authority

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foreword

This *Resource Guide* provides practitioners within the vocational education and training (VET) sector with a range of practical tools and resources for engaging with enterprises/industry when developing and validating learning and assessment strategies.

This guide features sixteen case studies that reflect the wealth of good practice already taking place throughout the training system. It is an optional resource that provides resources to support aspects of Standard 9 of the Australian Quality Training Framework *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*. It does not carry the authority of the Standard and should not be read as definitive or prescriptive. Its intention is to be useful and to encourage consistent practice in response to the Standard. However, its status as advice only should be clearly understood. The writing team would like to thank the people who participated and provided these examples of good practice.

The writing team would also like to thank all the individuals and organisations who generously provided advice and their time to review this guide.

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overview of this guide

Enterprises are key consumers of the outputs of the national vocational education and training (VET) system. They employ the people who complete nationally recognised qualifications and are major users of the assessment and training products and services offered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). It is very useful to engage with them in the process of developing quality assessment strategies in line with industry requirements and appropriate for their needs. This builds confidence in the assessment decisions made by RTOs among workers, industry and the broader community and enhances the standing of qualifications delivered through the national training system.

The focus of this guide is on the processes and tools that can be used in the development and validation of assessment strategies. Central to these processes is effective engagement between RTOs, enterprises, industry and other key stakeholders. This can be achieved in a number of ways, dependent upon what is appropriate for the RTO. The process of engaging enterprises/industry is about consulting and working closely with employers and end-users of the outputs of the training delivery and assessment strategies. This may mean working with the training department of a large multinational corporation to agree on appropriate strategies or with the owner of the local hairdressing salon that has employed three apprentices. In some areas of VET it will be less clear who the consumers of the outputs are, for example, adult and community education. It may also be necessary at times to consult with other stakeholders in industry. The flexible nature of the proposed models and the broad range of case studies in this guide are relevant to RTOs operating in a range of contexts.

The important contribution made by enterprises/industry is recognised in the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

Standard 9.1b requires enterprise/industry consultation in the development of assessment strategies.

This guide will provide RTOs with practical advice and assistance on engaging enterprises and other stakeholders in the development of delivery and assessment strategies. While primarily directed at RTO staff involved in developing assessment strategies, it may also be relevant for RTO personnel involved in working with enterprises and industry organisations, people involved in RTO auditing under the AQTF, and industry representatives interested in promoting stronger linkages between enterprises/industry and RTOs.

Chapter One of the guide discusses the benefits for participants, enterprises/industry and RTOs that stem from enterprises/industry participating in the development of RTO assessment strategies.

Chapter Two of the guide focuses on how RTOs can identify enterprises/industry and other stakeholders that may be involved in consultation and validation activities. This includes consideration of the importance of enterprise/industry involvement, the level of participation of other stakeholders and potential barriers, as well as ways of encouraging enterprise/industry involvement.

Chapter Three of the guide describes the key features of delivery and assessment strategies. It:

- outlines the requirements in the AQTF for RTOs to establish delivery and assessment strategies for qualifications in their scope of registration
- describes the information that must be included in delivery and assessment strategies
- explains the process involved in developing delivery and assessment strategies
- explains how delivery and assessment strategies relate to the endorsed components and support materials of a Training Package
- outlines different ways of documenting these strategies.

Chapter Four of the guide identifies the different approaches that RTOs can use to engage enterprises and industry in the development of assessment strategies. It:

- outlines a framework for engaging enterprises/industry
- provides RTOs with advice on selecting consultation approaches for varying delivery and assessment contexts
- describes the approaches that different RTOs have used to engage enterprises and industry in the development of their assessment strategies
- describes how outcomes of consultation can be used to inform the development of delivery and assessment strategies.

Chapter Five of the guide focuses on assessment strategy validation. It is designed to assist RTOs to:

- explain the purpose of validation
- identify the focus of validation activities
- identify who should be involved in validation activities
- identify and select appropriate assessment validation activities
- review and maintain their approach to assessment validation.

This guide includes a range of case studies that illustrate how different RTOs have engaged with enterprises and industry to develop quality delivery and assessment strategies. It also includes a number of templates that RTOs can use when engaging enterprises in developing delivery and assessment strategies and validating these strategies.

1. engaging enterprises

Enterprises engage with the training system because they expect that training will assist in achieving business objectives, such as:

- acquiring new skills
- bolstering productivity and profitability
- improving production quality
- staying ahead of the competition
- addressing staff turnover and skill shortages
- adapting to new technology and changes in work practices
- meeting quality system requirements
- complying with regulatory and licensing requirements
- improving safety
- keeping their customers through offering improved customer service.

Enterprises view delivery and assessment as business tools. They want to be treated as customers and expect RTOs to respond to their needs with the right product, accurately described, reasonably priced and professionally presented.

In this environment, RTOs are expected to offer workplace-oriented, demand-driven delivery and assessment solutions that:

- directly address enterprise needs
- are informed by a knowledge of the enterprise and the industry in which it operates
- are sequenced to fit in with enterprise production and work schedules
- accommodate the needs of casual, shift and part-time workers
- reflect enterprise policy, procedures and work practices
- produce clear business outcomes
- offer the benefits of national recognition.

Engaging with enterprises/industry and involving them in the development of their assessment strategies will help to meet these needs.

The form of engagement varies from one situation to the next. In some contexts, enterprises/industry and RTOs may be working in close partnerships where the enterprise has significant, direct input into the design of the RTO's delivery and assessment solutions. This is typical of situations where an RTO has been contracted by an enterprise to deliver a particular service. In other contexts, the links between the enterprise/industry and the RTO may be more tenuous. For example, many RTOs deliver fully off-the-job programs to school leavers and other people who are not currently in employment. While the participants may not be employed, they are contributing to the national skills pool from which enterprises select staff. Participants need to be sure that they have the appropriate skills, and employers need to be confident that prospective employees can perform at the required standard. RTOs offering these programs need to consult with enterprises/industry and other stakeholders to ensure that assessment strategies are appropriate. The form of engagement may be less direct and rely on RTOs meeting with relevant enterprises, conducting employer surveys or canvassing enterprise views on the programs they offer.

While the form of engagement may vary, it is critical that all RTOs involve enterprises/industry in the development of their assessment strategies. This ensures that the programs offered by RTOs are appropriately targeted, provide participants with the skills and knowledge required by enterprises/industry and reflect current work practice and standards of performance. It also helps to build confidence in the outputs of the national training system.

The AQTF and enterprise engagement

The AQTF is the nationally agreed quality framework for the vocational education and training system in Australia. The key objective of the framework is to provide a basis for a nationally consistent, high quality VET system.

The Standards of the AQTF are in two parts:

- *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*
- *Standards for State and Territory Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies*.

To gain and maintain registration to deliver nationally recognised qualifications, RTOs must meet the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

Standard 9.1b of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* requires RTOs to consult with enterprises/industry in the development of assessment strategies. This focus on engaging enterprises and other stakeholders ensures that RTO assessment strategies meet industry needs.

Benefits of enterprise engagement

Many RTOs have longstanding relationships with enterprises, industry and other stakeholders. These include:

- RTO/enterprise partnerships for workplace delivery
- enterprise/industry involvement in assessment panels
- enterprise/industry membership of course committees
- enterprise/industry involvement in the design of RTO delivery and assessment plans
- enterprise/industry involvement in the preparation of delivery and assessment materials.

Traditionally, RTO/enterprise engagement has been driven by the realisation that enterprises, RTOs and their clients benefit when enterprises and RTOs collaborate on the development of delivery and assessment strategies.

Benefits for RTOs

Some of the benefits to RTOs of enterprise/industry engagement include:

- strengthening business networks and contacts
- ensuring that delivery and assessment materials and processes reflect contemporary work practices
- confirming that performance standards are consistent with enterprise requirements
- providing up-to-date information for RTO trainers and assessors
- understanding the business culture within enterprises
- understanding the needs of small to medium-sized enterprises
- gathering information on the way in which skills are developed and enhanced in the workplace.

Experiences from the field

Benefits of engaging enterprises/industry

A private training provider has first-hand experience of the benefits that flow to RTOs, enterprises and trainees from effective industry engagement.

As an RTO specialising in the delivery of traineeships, particularly in the furnishing industry, this provider engages with its clients in a very direct fashion when planning delivery and assessment strategies.

Whenever an enterprise decides to employ a trainee, a consultant from the RTO visits the workplace, meets with key staff and undertakes a review of the enterprise's capacity to train and assess. Through this process the RTO and the enterprise identify which competencies to include in the training program, which aspects of the program can be delivered and assessed on-the-job, and which support services, such as language, literacy and numeracy support, may be required.

The key benefit of this process is that the RTO and the enterprise are able to shape a program that meets the requirements of both the enterprise and the trainee and makes best use of the available resources. The RTO benefits through gaining first-hand knowledge of the enterprise's work practices that enable it to stay up to date with developments in the industry. The trainee benefits through the establishment of a clear plan that ensures access to the best available delivery and assessment, whether this is provided on or off the job. The enterprise benefits through gaining access to the skills it requires.

Benefits for enterprises/industry

Some of the benefits to enterprises/industry of engagement with RTOs include:

- keeping in touch with the latest developments in delivery and assessment
- understanding what the enterprise can expect from people with competencies and qualifications
- influencing the way in which training is sequenced and delivered
- influencing the way in which evidence is collected and assessment decisions are made
- gathering information on different training strategies for the enterprise
- gaining insight into whether it is preferable to hire people already trained, train them in-house or contract training services
- accessing expertise and advice on ways of making national training and qualifications available for their staff
- contextualising performance standards
- closer integrating of enterprise policies, procedures and work practices with the relevant industry competency standards
- better integrating of evidence collection and work activities.

Benefits for candidates

Some of the benefits to candidates of RTO enterprises/industry engagement include:

- increased confidence that the training delivered meets the relevant standards and enterprise requirements
- increased likelihood that assessment reflects the standard of performance required by enterprises
- improved quality and consistency of assessment, which improves portability and acceptance of qualifications
- greater awareness and acceptance by enterprises of the qualifications issued by RTOs
- greater willingness of RTOs to accept workplace evidence presented by candidates for assessment purposes
- better understanding by employers of the demands placed on candidates by RTOs
- better understanding by RTOs of the demands placed on candidates by enterprises/industry
- more accurate information on the special needs of candidates.

Experiences from the field

Benefits of engaging enterprises/industry

A small regional RTO has built a reputation by working with people who have been displaced by the closure of major industries, such as mines and steelworks. Consultation is undertaken according to the RTO's own methodology (design, management, research, development and communication).

An annual festival that attracts heritage wooden boats from around Australia was the focus for a project for the Certificate IV in Museum Practice. The event provided an opportunity for 35 program participants between the ages of 24 and 58 to develop a project in consultation with local businesses, the local library and a regional museum and heritage centre. Tasks included commercial curation of shop windows based on the theme of heritage boating and tourism, performances, heritage tourism award, events and exhibitions.

The project-based delivery mode meant that the cognitive and affective aspects of learning were part of program delivery, review and assessment opportunities. Participants developed knowledge and skills through working on a project that included all aspects of the units of competency for the relevant qualification. Providers developed strong support for the program because of its community interest aspect.

The training program functioned as an integrated project management system with participants learning about self-management and teamwork as part of developing and delivering a project. Action-based learning was used to develop knowledge through the process of planning, acting, observing and reviewing.

2. strategic enterprise/industry engagement

In addressing the requirements in the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* for enterprise/industry engagement, RTOs could identify the consultation strategies that they already have in place, examine the effectiveness of these strategies and identify whether the current strategies need to be enhanced. The decision to engage enterprises/industry results in benefits for candidates, enterprises/industry and the RTO.

Strategic engagement

Selecting enterprises to engage

A strategic approach is one in which RTOs directly engage those enterprises/industry stakeholders that can add most value to the RTO's assessment strategies. Consultations with other stakeholders are then conducted to confirm the outcomes of initial consultations, test ideas and gather additional information. They may involve direct contact, such as interviews and focus groups, or indirect contact, such as questionnaires, website surveys and literature searches.

The enterprises that are most likely to "add value" to an RTO's assessment products and services are those that employ or are likely to employ people who are assessed by the RTO. These include enterprises that:

- currently use the RTO's delivery and assessment services
- employ people who have been trained and assessed by the RTO
- the RTO sees as desirable employers of its graduates
- the RTO sees as potential future clients
- have used the RTO's delivery and assessment services in the past
- operate in the industry area(s) identified in the RTO's scope of registration. In some cases these are easy to identify, for example, a quarry in the extractive industry or a nursery in the horticulture industry. In other cases, identifying appropriate enterprises may be more difficult. For example, some qualifications are broad and cross all industry boundaries. The Certificate II in Business, for instance, could be used by enterprises in any industry sector.

Experiences from the field

Adding value through enterprise/industry engagement

A large public provider delivers a range of programs to small and medium-sized enterprises in the horticulture industry based on the standards in the Horticulture Training Package. As these standards are designed to apply flexibly to all enterprises in the industry, the performance criteria may not provide precise descriptions of the required standard of performance. For example, a standard may require candidates to identify a range of plants or lay an area of paving, yet there is no indication of how many plants a candidate should be able to identify or the size of the area to be paved. This can lead to differences in the way in which RTOs and enterprises interpret the standards.

To add enterprise value, the horticulture team within the RTO commenced meetings with representatives from horticulture enterprises to gather enterprise views on the standards of performance required across the industry. The meetings include representatives from different sectors of the industry, smaller and larger businesses, and enterprises from metropolitan and regional areas. While the enterprises that participate in these meetings may have different views, the RTO assessors are able to use the meetings to identify standards of performance that are generally acceptable to the industry. As well as setting the industry standard, this process has contributed to greater consistency in assessment and improved communication between the RTO and its enterprise clients.

Many RTOs choose to consult with larger enterprises when developing assessment strategies because they have specialist staff who are able to participate in consultation processes and have operations that cut across several industry boundaries. For example, a large retail enterprise is likely to have a dedicated training manager and staff employed in administration, logistics, training and information technology as well as retail operations.

While larger enterprises are important and should be consulted, RTOs should also consider consulting smaller organisations.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) employ over 80 percent of the Australian workforce and RTOs that take a strategic approach to enterprise engagement make sure that they canvass the views of SMEs when developing their assessment strategies. When engaging SMEs, these RTOs take special care to ensure that consultations are purposeful, make minimal demand on the time and resources of the organisation and focus on matters of interest to the enterprise.

Building relationships

As well as identifying the appropriate enterprise, RTOs that take a strategic approach to engagement also work on building strong relationships with each business. The key rules for establishing such relationships include:

- choosing the right person in the enterprise to act as the contact between the RTO and the enterprise — someone who has influence and commitment
- being flexible, that is, working within the timeframe and constraints of the enterprise
- ensuring regular contact with the enterprise and being prepared to invest time in developing the relationship
- establishing credibility through experience, knowledge, using the right language and providing solutions to problems
- recognising that different people in the enterprise have different expertise and that being able to tap the expertise of both management and workers is critical for effective engagement.

Refer to *Training Package Assessment Guide 6: Assessment approaches for small workplaces* for further information on engaging small workplaces.

Barriers to enterprise engagement

While there is much to be gained from RTOs engaging enterprises in the development of assessment strategies, there can be significant barriers to business participation, especially among SMES. In some cases these barriers relate to the enterprise itself. These include:

- human, financial and time constraints
- concern about the enterprise's capacity to "add value" to the RTO's existing delivery and assessment strategies
- lack of confidence in the value of formal delivery and assessment
- mistrust of external providers.

In other cases, the barriers relate to the RTO. These include:

- a failure to focus on the issues of direct concern to enterprises, which means that consultations may lack value for business

- inflexible consultation strategies, which means that enterprises, especially SMEs, are unable to participate in meetings and other activities
- inadequately developed business networks, which means that potential enterprise participants are not identified or the same enterprises keep being invited to participate in consultation and validation activities
- the use of technical and jargon-laden materials that exclude people who do not have a background in training and education.

RTOs that successfully engage enterprises recognise these barriers and look for ways of lessening their impact. Some of the strategies that RTOs have adopted to minimise these barriers are highlighted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Ideas for engaging enterprises

Barriers to engagement	Possible RTO responses
Human, financial and time constraints	■ Use short, concise consultation strategies. ■ Engage in purposeful consultation that focuses on critical enterprise issues. ■ Provide support services.
Enterprise capacity to add value	■ Provide evidence of impact of enterprise input on RTO delivery and assessment. ■ Identify areas in which enterprise has capacity to add value.
Lack of confidence in formal delivery and assessment	■ Use intermediaries with credibility. ■ Provide evidence of impact of formal training on enterprise performance.
Mistrust of external providers	■ Use informal/formal networks for referral. ■ Provide honest, realistic estimates of time required for consultation.
Lack of focus on business concerns	■ Structure consultations around key enterprise issues. ■ Distinguish between macro issues, i.e., broad approach to delivery/assessment and micro issues i.e. program level.
Inflexible consultation strategies	■ Conduct consultations at times that suit enterprises. ■ Use direct and indirect consultation strategies. ■ Use face-to-face consultations conducted on site.
Limited business networks	■ Use intermediaries to target enterprises and individuals. ■ Target key influences, i.e., friends, suppliers, customers.
Technical and jargon-laden materials	■ Use plain English documentation. ■ Provide targeted summaries of key documents. ■ Provide information on key aspects of training system.

Tips for facilitating enterprise/industry engagement

Consultative RTOs view enterprise/industry engagement as part of the way in which they do business. They are constantly seeking to extend their contacts with enterprises/industry and are looking for ways of engaging these contacts in developing their assessment strategies. Some of the strategies they use to engage enterprises/industry in these activities include:

- approaching enterprises/industry that already have business relations with the RTO
- explaining in straightforward terms why the enterprise's/industry's views on assessment are needed
- ensuring that consultations are purposeful and that outcomes are communicated back to the participating enterprises/industry
- making sure that enterprises/industry benefit from participating in consultation activities
- developing strong businesslike personal relationships.

Some of the things that the RTOs do *not* do are:

- restrict consultation to the same enterprises/industry all the time
- establish new committees or structures when existing groups or networks could be used for consultative purposes
- conduct special purpose surveys when additional questions may be added to routine customer satisfaction surveys.

These RTOs place a high value on engaging enterprises/industry. RTOs should recognise that industries are made up of large, medium and small enterprises and that at least some enterprises, preferably a range of relevant larger and smaller enterprises, should be consulted. Advice from industry groups can also be useful in developing assessment strategies.

New Apprenticeships Agreements and the Training Plan

In the case of regulated training, a key aspect of RTOs and enterprises engaging is the formal agreement for regulated training, the Training Agreement. This agreement is between the apprentice/trainee and the employer. Attached to all such agreements is a Training Plan. The Training Plan must by signed by the RTO as well as the apprentice/trainee and the employer. The Training Plan must be completed and submitted with the "Training Program and Application for Commonwealth Incentives for New Apprenticeships" within three months of commencement of the employment of the apprentice/trainee. (Please note: this may not be the case in all jurisdictions.)

The Training Plan should include:

- the qualification being sought and a full list of competencies to be obtained to achieve that qualification. Depending on the Training Package, the competencies to be chosen could be specified, or the rules of the qualification could allow for considerable choice to meet the specific training needs of the enterprise and the individual apprentice.
- the timeframe for achieving the competencies. This should be within the rules of the Declared Vocation/Approved Training Scheme, but they generally specify that times may be varied to suit the needs of the employer and the individual, providing they both agree.
- the duration of training to be undertaken (nominal hours or appropriate equivalent).

- delivery modes to be employed — whether on or off-the-job , online delivery etc.
- details of times allocated outside normal work duties and amount of time allocated in specified locations.
- parties responsible for the delivery and assessment of each competency (in certain cases the RTO may sub-contract components of the delivery and assessment to other RTOs) — identifying the people responsible.
- assessment details and arrangements including methods and approaches.
- a record of any recognition of prior learning (RPL) and cross-credit granted, recognising that it is a requirement that RPL is offered and its arrangements explained in all cases.

Note that this list is a general statement of requirements. RTOs should check in all cases for any variations that may apply in different States and Territories.

Enterprise/industry engagement and the ACE sector

Adult Community Education (ACE) providers [1], like other RTOs, gain from engaging enterprises/industry in the development of their assessment strategies. However, many of these providers are not as accustomed to working with enterprises/industry as other RTOs, and their relationships with industry are not always as clear.

In many cases, ACE providers are delivering mainstream VET programs and, consequently, enterprise/industry engagement is appropriate.

In other cases the relationship between the provider, participants and enterprises/industry is not as apparent. For example, a neighbourhood house offering "introduction to computers" to mature-age women or the "computer driver's licence" to young school leavers may see its aim as enhancing the individual's computer literacy. However, the program is also making an important contribution to developing the national skills pool. The significance of these programs in broadening the range of skills available to enterprises is recognised by the key players in the information technology industry including enterprises the Australian Computer Society, the Information Technology & Telecommunications Industry Training Advisory Body and the Information Technology Skills Hub.

Literacy and numeracy programs and preparatory courses, such as the Certificates in General Education for Adults, are designed to empower candidates, prepare them for future educational opportunities and boost their employability. In delivering these programs, ACE providers are expanding the range of skills available to enterprises. Enterprises and other industry stakeholders have a direct interest in the quality and consistency of the outcomes of these programs.

Personal development, general interest and hobby courses are often viewed as not having vocational outcomes and not relevant to industry. This is really a matter of perspective since they could just as easily be viewed as part of the community recreation industry. While there may be no immediate vocational intention, there is an increasing nexus between the activities that people engage in because of interest and their eventual occupation. For example, the personal development and mind-body-soul communities now constitute an identifiable industry sector, at least sufficiently substantial and coherent to conduct exhibitions and trade fairs on a regular basis.

Programs offered by ACE providers are of considerable relevance and importance to enterprises and industry. The AQTF requirement to consult with enterprises/industry can be seen as an important opportunity to extend their existing community consultation processes and, in doing so, enhance both the relevance and impact of their programs.

[1] By ACE providers we refer to any providers that offer ACE programs, regardless of whether this is their primary business. We also acknowledge that some states/territories do not have specialist ACE providers.

Experiences from the field

Enterprise engagement and the ACE sector

A small community centre in Melbourne, as an Adult Community Education (ACE) provider, delivers a range of programs, consults with local industry and has established partnerships with a number of local enterprises.

The centre engaged in a partnership with a local employment services organisation to train unemployed people to achieve a Certificate I or II vocational qualification. The partnership was successful because the centre offered an accessible venue for students and the supervisory role that the centre had as the RTO in the arrangement was beneficial to both parties. Via the centre, the employment services organisation had direct access to trained assessors and assessment administration support. The centre offered the enterprise flexible delivery, issued qualifications to competent students and committed its staff to the development of community projects.

"The only problem we've encountered when consulting with local enterprises and industry is the amount of hidden workload associated with coordination of partnership arrangements," said the centre's director. "Sometimes enterprises are not always clear about the exact training they want to provide for their workers, which can be very time consuming. As a small ACE provider we also find it hard to narrow our target groups for new business. This is difficult because we do not have any marketing expertise. A positive outcome is the number of our students that go on to future employment — even from hobby courses."

Engaging other stakeholders

RTOs can consider a wide range of other stakeholders including trade unions, employer associations and industry training advisory bodies when developing delivery and assessment strategies. By gathering the viewpoints of these groups, RTOs enhance the services that they supply to enterprises through:

- confirming that the RTO's approach to delivery and assessment is consistent with advice provided by peak enterprises and the practices of other enterprises
- providing information on how other enterprises approach delivery and assessment
- providing information on emerging developments, trends and issues related to delivery and assessment in the industry
- being up to date, informed about the broader industry in which the RTO's enterprise clients are operating and able to use the "language" of the industry
- being aware of solutions that other organisations have applied to particular assessment and delivery problems.

RTOs that employ a strategic approach to engaging enterprises and other stakeholders recognise that, while some specific stakeholders must be consulted, the views of others may be gathered through more indirect means. The approach that RTOs take to gathering the views of particular stakeholders may be influenced by:

- the capacity and willingness of the stakeholder to participate in RTO consultative processes

- whether the stakeholder's views on delivery and assessment can be easily accessed through indirect means, i.e., website survey
- the level of influence that the stakeholder has within the industry
- the level of involvement that the stakeholder has in setting standards and other strategies that impact on delivery and assessment in the industry
- the level of interest that the stakeholder has in industry delivery and assessment strategies
- the stakeholder's role in quality assurance within the industry
- the cost and time involved in consulting the stakeholder.

The structure of industries and the way they function vary considerably, so no one formula can be applied to determine which stakeholders RTOs should consult or the consultative processes that should be used. For example, an RTO delivering apprenticeship programs in licensed occupations would need to consult employers and employees at enterprise level, but could also give consideration to consulting the relevant regulatory authorities, trade unions and employer associations. In other new and emerging industries, such as those in e-commerce or biotechnology, RTOs may decide that it is important to consult with technical experts, government agencies and research centres as well as employers and employees in key enterprises.

Experiences from the field

Engaging other stakeholders

A large public RTO involves enterprises and industry in the development and outcomes of the Certificate IV in Property (Real Estate). The RTO recruits teaching staff who have a high profile in industry and who are representatives on various committees/reference groups, bringing industry credibility, contacts and extensive current knowledge and skills to the RTO. All teachers have the required Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training and are provided with additional mentor support. The RTO also invests in relationship marketing. As a result, industry contacts have actively promoted the courses through seminars and mail-outs, resulting in a substantial increase in enrolments.

The RTO consults with other stakeholders when formulating delivery and assessment strategies. Staff conduct three industry reference group meetings throughout the year to review all courses, and discuss enterprise/industry, market trends and student feedback. With the introduction of the new Training Package, the RTO also uses the real estate industry reference group meetings to develop a training book for students and work-assessment tasks that reflect industry and Training Package competency standards.

Students also undergo a thorough vocational career assessment program. "This is a mandatory component in over 85 percent of courses delivered by our faculty," said an RTO representative. "Industry benefits because the students are well matched to the organisational culture when they first enter the workforce. Our dropout rates are lower and students have a higher level of motivation."

There is a broad range of stakeholders that RTOs may wish to engage in developing their delivery and assessment strategies. Some of the key industry groups are identified in Figure 2 on the following page.

Figure 2: Key industry stakeholders

Stakeholder	Reasons for engagement
Industry training advisory arrangements	The national Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs) are the best sources of advice on interpreting Training Package assessment guidelines. A list of national ITABs may be found on the ANTA website. The ANTA website also provides links to all State and Territory Training Authority websites. In many cases these bodies are the best source of advice on particular State/Territory regulatory requirements.
Broad industry associations	Employers are represented by the following groups: ■ The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a good source of advice and information on broad employer requirements. There are State, Territory and Local chambers that represent employers including many small employers. ■ The Australian Industry Group is another broadly based employer organisation (being the amalgamation of the former Chamber of Manufactures and Metal Trades Industry Association) with a strong membership in trade areas. ■ The Business Council of Australia tends to represent very large employers. The Council has regular input into national discussions on delivery and assessment, but detailed advice on RTO assessment and delivery strategies would be better sourced direct from member enterprises. In general, these groups could be contacted for advice on broad and/or cross industry qualifications that do fall into any specific industry category. This would include many business services qualifications.
Specific industry associations	Virtually all industry sectors have specialist associations, such as the Master Builders Association, representing the interests of employers. RTOs developing delivery and assessment strategies in specific industry sectors could seek input from the relevant group. However, many industry associations are also RTOs and may represent competition or perceive some conflict of interest in offering advice on RTO delivery and assessment strategies. This should not deter RTOs from approaching these organisations since they have a clear role to represent the interests and views of their members.
Trade unions	Trade unions have a direct interest in RTO delivery and assessment strategies since they may impact on the standing and progression of their members and industrial agreements. RTOs could seek input from the relevant trade union, at site or State level, regarding the development of delivery and assessment strategies.

Stakeholder	Reasons for engagement
Professional associations	Professional associations represent the interests of practitioners and often have an interest in control of entry into their membership. Consequently, they are often consulted by RTOs on delivery and assessment strategies.
Regulatory agencies	In cases where qualifications are subject to government regulation, consultation with the relevant regulatory body is advised. Examples of these include the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and the Australian Communications Authority. Regulatory bodies may have legislative powers and be administered by government agencies or they may be industry self-regulators. Many regulators now express their requirements in terms of competencies. No RTO operating in a regulated area should plan assessments without close consultation with the appropriate body. The preferred situation is to ensure that competency assessment is aligned with the regulatory requirements in the industry.
Government departments and agencies	Apart from their regulatory function, many Federal, State and Local Government agencies are industries and employers in their own right. The Commonwealth Public Service for example is a significant employer. However many other departments contract out services while maintaining a close interest in the standards of the services delivered to the public. Other government departments have responsibility for promoting industries and run numerous relevant programs. The easiest way to review the activities of these organisations is to browse their websites.
Research and other sources of information on enterprises/ industry	While particular enterprises are the primary source of information about their own immediate needs, RTOs involved in developing assessment strategies may need to consider the outcomes of research into industry development and trends. The best source of information on research in vocational education and training is the National Centre for Vocational Education Research. There are many industry specific research organisations that often service new and emerging industries. Good sources of information on these sectors include the National Office on the Information Economy and Biotechnology Australia.
Community-based organisations	Community organisations (local organisations and representative peak bodies) have a direct and legitimate interest in their fields of concern. If the qualification to be assessed concerns services to people with intellectual disabilities it would be highly appropriate to consult with the National Council for Intellectual Disability about appropriate assessment strategies. Community organisations are also employers in their own right.

3. delivery and assessment strategies

What are delivery and assessment strategies?

All RTOs are required under the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* to

"...develop and implement strategies for training delivery and assessment for each Training Package qualification and accredited course within the RTO's scope of registration."

(Standard 9.1a)

These strategies describe RTO approaches to the delivery and assessment activities that candidates must undertake to achieve the relevant qualification. In establishing these strategies the RTO must ensure that it has access to appropriate documentation, staffing and other delivery/assessment infrastructure. There is no requirement in this standard that the RTO adopt particular delivery and assessment strategies or use specific delivery and assessment resources.

In establishing the delivery and assessment strategies for each qualification within its scope of registration the RTO should identify:

"...proposed target groups, delivery and assessment modes and strategies, assessment validation processes and pathways."

(Standard 9.1c)

To ensure that the outcomes meet the needs and requirements of industry, the assessment strategies to be used by the RTO:

"...must be developed in consultation with enterprises/industry "

(Standard 9.1b)

What information is included in delivery and assessment strategies?

There are significant variations in the scale of operation, the business structure and the clients and market segments serviced by different RTOs. They will develop varying delivery and assessment strategies depending on their clients' needs and the environment in which they are operating.

However, in each of these situations, the information included in the documented delivery and assessment strategy must at a minumum include the:

- proposed target groups
- modes and strategies of delivery and assessment
- assessment validation processes
- pathways.

The strategy is documented to provide a broad outline of how delivery and assessment is structured to meet the learners' needs.

As illustrated in Figure 3 on the following page, an enterprise-based RTO and a public RTO may deliver and assess the same qualification quite differently.

Figure 3: Alternative delivery and assessment strategies

TDT20197 — Certificate II in Transport and Distribution (Warehousing)		
Strategies	Enterprise RTO (on-the-job enterprise specific program)	Large public RTO (off-the-job program)
Program structure	Units of competency presented in a training program organised around key work activities, i.e., stocktaking, despatch operations and processing orders.	Units of competency presented in a training program organised around core modules focused on generic work skills, i.e., OH & S, and elective modules focused on industry specific skills, i.e., forklift.
Delivery timetable	Sequence of training is linked with timing of key work activities, i.e., stocktake training is delivered in May to coincide with major annual stocktake.	Sequence of training is negotiated with individual candidates. Flexible scheduling and self-directed delivery enable candidates to determine own schedules.
Delivery mode	Delivery is fully reliant on-the-job with competent workers "coaching" new workers.	Self-directed, fully off-the-job delivery at specialist industry training facility.
Evidence-gathering techniques	Evidence is gathered through candidates completing relevant workplace tasks and recording outcomes in an enterprise-developed training record book. Successful completion of tasks verified by workplace coach.	Evidence is gathered through completion of set assessment tasks that include: ■ demonstration of skills ■ knowledge based testing ■ problem-solving exercises.

The enterprise-based RTO illustrated in Figure 4 has structured and sequenced the delivery and assessment strategies for the Certificate II in Transport and Distribution (Warehousing) to meet the skills formation needs of its logistics area. In this case, delivery is organised around major work activities and is sequenced to fit in with the annual operations of the enterprise. For instance, stocktake training occurs in the period just before the major annual stocktake. In this case, "coaching" is the prime delivery method and assessment is focused on the successful completion of particular work tasks.

The large public RTO, while offering the same qualification, has designed a set of delivery and assessment strategies to meet the needs of off-the-job candidates. In this case, the training program comprises core modules that focus on generic work skills and elective modules that address industry specific skills. The sequencing of the program is determined through negotiation between the candidate and the program manager. As the delivery is self-directed and the RTO has a facility that enables different candidates to undertake different tasks at the same time, candidates are able to structure programs that suit their individual needs and interests. In this case, the timing of assessment is determined by the candidate and involves completion of set tasks including demonstration of skills, problem-solving exercises and testing of underpinning knowledge.

While the two RTOs will go about the delivery and assessment in very different ways, both consider the following questions:

- Who is the target group(s)?
- What are the needs of this group?
- What qualification will be offered? What is the correct title and code for the qualification?
- Which units of competency from the qualification will be offered? Do these comply with the qualification packaging rules in the Training Package?
- How will the units of competency be organised into a training program?
- How will the training program be sequenced?
- Which delivery modes will be used?
- How will evidence be gathered for each unit of competency?
- Which staff members will be responsible for delivery and assessment? Do they have the required competencies according to the Training Package and the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*? Will they be available at the required times?
- How will the evidence-gathering techniques and tools and the evidence leading to the judgement be validated?
- What infrastructure, such as documentation, equipment and facilities, will be required to support the delivery and assessment strategies? Does the RTO have verifiable access to the required infrastructure? Will it be available at the required times?
- Which pathways are available for people who undertake the qualification?

The answers to these questions will form the basis of the RTO's training delivery and assessment strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to provide a clear and concise outline of how the RTO will "approach" and "resource" the delivery and assessment of the relevant qualification. While the RTO's strategy will draw on the endorsed and support materials in the relevant Training Package, these questions cannot be answered by reference to the Training Package alone. The RTO must take into account a range of factors when determining its delivery and assessment strategy including client needs, workplace policies and procedures, resource availability and the capacity of enterprises to support delivery and assessment.

How are delivery and assessment strategies developed?

RTOs can develop delivery and assessment strategies in consultation with relevant enterprises and industry groups by taking into account:

- the needs of candidates
- the requirements and practices of enterprises and industry
- the specifications in the relevant Training Package
- their own capacity as well as the capacity of relevant enterprises to provide delivery and assessment opportunities for candidates
- the legislative regulations and requirements of industry.

This process usually involves eight key steps:

- Step 1: Establish the delivery and assessment context.
- Step 2: Identify participant and enterprise needs.
- Step 3: Select the relevant qualification and units of competency.
- Step 4: Determine the structure, mode and sequence of delivery and assessment.
- Step 5: Confirm staffing and infrastructure requirements.
- Step 6: Establish the assessment validation process.
- Step 7: Document the delivery and assessment strategies.
- Step 8: Validate the delivery and assessment strategies.

Step 1: Establish the delivery and assessment context

The delivery and assessment context has a significant impact on how RTOs engage enterprises and organise delivery and assessment. For example, RTOs delivering programs through "work based" pathways are usually able to engage enterprises in a direct manner. In such cases, RTOs normally have ready access to information on the enterprise's business objectives, policy and procedures and performance standards. RTOs can integrate this material with the relevant competency standards and tailor delivery and assessment strategies to meet enterprise requirements. However, RTOs delivering programs through "institutional" pathways often work with people who are not in employment. This may include school leavers, people returning to work, unemployed workers or those seeking to move to a new occupation or industry sector. In these cases, RTOs may need to engage with enterprises in more indirect ways, such as through course committees, industry visits and surveys, and develop delivery and assessment strategies that are not reliant on candidates having access to a workplace.

Establishing the delivery and assessment context is a critical first step in deciding how delivery and assessment will be organised. To do this RTOs could consider questions such as:

- What need is the program intended to address?
- Is this program directed at an enterprise, a group of enterprises or a broader audience?
- Will the program be offered through a "work-based" or "institutional" pathway?
- Who should be consulted about the development of this program?
- What is the best way to engage these individuals and organisations?
- What are the characteristics of the likely participants?
- Will they be in employment?
- Will they have access to workplaces?
- What are the occupational health and safety requirements?

The key outcome of this stage is a clear description of the purpose of the program and the delivery and assessment context.

Step 2: Identify participant and enterprise needs

Having established the delivery and assessment context, the RTO can then focus on identifying the needs of the participants and the relevant enterprises.

The first stage in this process involves developing an understanding of the particular enterprise, group of enterprises or industry with which the RTO is working. In the case of a single enterprise, this involves gathering information on:

- the nature of the enterprise
- the market in which it operates
- its key business objectives
- the challenges confronting the enterprise
- the skills held within the enterprise
- the approach taken to staff training and development.

This information is often most easily obtained by talking to key enterprise personnel (see template Enterprise Profile — Appendix 1). Other techniques include:

- face-to-face discussions
- reading reports, news items, articles and other printed information
- using formal questionnaires
- conducting telephone interviews with key personnel
- conducting a workshop with a range of key internal stakeholders (such a workshop will often be a two-way activity providing the internal stakeholders with insight into Training Packages and related assessment requirements, etc. while the RTO gains information about the enterprise to aid in the development of appropriate assessment strategies)
- reviewing broader industry information, surveys and reports
- consulting with industry experts on market trends in the enterprise's sector
- consulting with relevant industry groups and associations.

Building an understanding of the enterprise enables RTOs to develop relationships with key personnel, identify how the enterprise operates and establish skills-development requirements.

Having gathered this information, the RTO is in a better position to focus on the training delivery and assessment requirements of the enterprise. This is often viewed as a two-stage process. The first stage focuses on establishing the enterprise's "macro-level" requirements (see template Enterprise "macro-level" requirements — Appendix 2):

- the broad areas in which training is required, e.g., customer service, OH & S, quality control
- the training delivery mode, e.g., self-paced delivery, coaching, learning syndicates
- the enterprise and the RTO's capacity/willingness to deliver and assess
- customisation of the Training Package to meet enterprise conditions
- the sequencing of delivery and assessment
- the recognition of prior learning
- the situations in which simulation may/may not be used in evidence gathering
- evidence collection, i.e., collected by assessor/candidate
- the ways of catering for candidates with special needs, e.g., literacy, numeracy and disability.

Once these matters are clarified, the second stage involves identifying the enterprise's "micro-level" requirements (see template Enterprise micro-level requirements — Appendix 3) such as:

- the specific competencies to be developed through the program
- discussing and understanding the different aspects of the units of competency
- integrating enterprise operating procedures and performance standards with the relevant industry competency standards
- the design of assessment tools and processes
- scheduling delivery and assessment activities
- deciding which competencies will be delivered and assessed on-the-job and off-the-job
- establishing communication links between the RTO and the enterprise
- establishing record-keeping strategies
- providing participants with information on the program
- appeals and reassessment.

The form that these discussions take will vary depending on the delivery and assessment context. For example, in a work-based program involving a single RTO and a single enterprise, this information can be obtained through direct contact between the RTO and the enterprise, whereas an RTO delivering a publicly funded program via an institutional pathway may have to use more indirect ways of gathering this material. This may be through:

- visits to enterprises that may ultimately employ the program participants
- focus groups of relevant industry stakeholders
- feedback obtained from employers who have employed graduates of previous programs
- program advisory committees.

In addition, RTOs need to identify the expressed and potential needs of participants in the program. This involves identifying participants':

- work activities and performance requirements
- current skills — vocational and generic
- skills-development needs
- preferred learning styles
- special needs.

This information may be obtained through a variety of sources, such as:

- interviews with participants
- interviews with employers or agencies referring participants to the program
- the outcomes of initial assessments of the participants
- reviews of previous programs conducted for similar client groups.

The key outcome of this whole stage is a concise overview of:

- the nature of the enterprise
- the enterprise's preferred approach to delivery and assessment
- the enterprise's skills development requirements
- the participants' needs.

Step 3: Select the relevant qualification and units of competency

Having confirmed both participant and enterprise needs, the RTO next identifies the Training Package, qualification and combination of units of competency that best meet these needs. This involves:

- identifying the appropriate Training Package, qualifications and units of competency
- interpreting and analysing the unit/s of competency
- checking the assessment guidelines to ensure that proposed assessment approaches are consistent with the advice provided in the Training Package
- checking the packaging advice in the Training Package to ensure that the required combination of units of competency is permitted
- reading the customisation guidelines in the Training Package to identify what changes can be made to the qualification and units of competency to ensure that enterprise and participant needs are met
- identifying relevant support materials, such as learner guides and assessment tools
- confirming the selection of Training Package, qualifications and units of competency with the enterprise, if appropriate.

As illustrated in Figure 4, the key outcome of this stage is a concise statement that identifies the Training Package, qualifications and units of competency that best meet the participant and enterprise requirements (see template Sample qualification structure — Appendix 4).

Figure 4: Sample qualification structure

Name of RTO	*Logistics Training Australia*
Training Package	*Transport and Distribution*
Title of Qualification	*TDT20197 — Certificate II in Transport and Distribution (Warehousing)*

Delivery and assessment context
This qualification has been designed to meet the needs of participants seeking employment in the warehousing industry. The qualification will be delivered entirely off-the-job at the RTO's specialist logistics facility.

Selection of units of competency:

Code	Title of Unit of Competency
TDTD197A	*Shift materials safely*
TDTD297A	*Use manual handling equipment*
TDTE397A	*Participate in workplace communication*
TDTE597A	*Carry out workplace calculations*
TDTF197A	*Follow OH & S procedures*
TDTF297A	*Conduct housekeeping activities*
TDTG197A	*Work effectively with others*
TDTA11G	*Package goods*
TDTA1297A	*Pick and process order*
TDTA1397A	*Receive goods*
TDTA1497A	*Use product knowledge to complete work operations*
TDTA2097A	*Replenish stock*
TDTA2197A	*Dispatch stock*
TDTA2297A	*Participate in stocktakes*
TDTI297A	*Apply customer service skills*
TDTD10A97	*Operate a forklift*

Step 4: Determine the structure, mode and sequence of delivery and assessment

Once the appropriate qualification and combination of units of competency are identified, the RTO establishes its specific delivery and assessment strategy. This involves making decisions about the:

- structure of the training program
- mode of delivery
- evidence-gathering techniques and tools
- sequence of delivery and assessment.

As illustrated in Figure 5, the units of competency can be organised into a training program in a number of ways. Units of competency are outcome statements that describe particular aspects of work. RTOs may choose to deliver and assess each unit independently. However, this can lead to situations where:

- delivery and assessment strategies do not conform with the way in which work activities are organised in an enterprise
- too much evidence is collected as assessors and participants feel that it is necessary to gather multiple items of evidence for each unit of competency

In response to these issues, many RTOs choose to cluster the units of competency for delivery and assessment purposes. As shown in Figure 5, units of competency may be clustered around key work activities or around key areas of underpinning knowledge and related work activities.

Figure 5: Alternative ways of structuring training program

Training program structure	Example
Independent unit **Suitable for:** *assessment only pathways to recognise skills of existing workers*	Each unit of competency is delivered and assessed independently. **Units of competency** *AUM8011A Provide customer service* **Training program** *AUM8011A Provide customer service*
Work activity cluster **Suitable for:** *work-based training*	Units of competency are clustered to correspond with specific work activities. **Units of competency** *TDTA1297A Pick and process* *TDTA1197A Package goods* *TDTE597A Carry out workplace calculations* *TDT1297B Apply customer service skills service* → **Training program cluster** *Processing customer orders*
Project cluster **Suitable for:** *a diverse range of skill development, i.e., Indigenous community projects, regional community projects, complex project, i.e., putting on a fete*	Units of competency are selected and clustered to reflect the learning and work activities that take place within a specific project. For example, a community provider may establish a project to build or restore a local facility, i.e., develop a wetlands area. A training program may be established for the people associated with various aspects of the project, i.e., administration, construction and community relations. It could also include general work related and literacy/numeracy training depending on the needs of the client group. *Managing the environment* *Building skills* *Literacy program* **Community project** *Community relations skills* *OH & S* *Administration skills*

Training program structure	Example
Common knowledge cluster **Suitable for:** *using underpinning knowledge, i.e., solving a maths problem, fluid flow*	Key areas of underpinning knowledge are identified as being common to a number of units of competency, for example, OH & S legislation and regulations. This material is delivered and assessed as a separate study. The application of this knowledge is assessed in other components of the program that focus on specific work activities. In this case, participants must successfully complete both components of the program to be deemed to be competent in OH & S. **Underpinning knowledge module** *OH & S legislation* → **Application modules** *AUR10170A Service braking systems* *AUR10166A Repair braking systems* *AUR07170A Service transmission (automatic)* *AUR07166A Repair transmission (automatic)*
Knowledge and application cluster **Suitable for:** *traineeships and/or apprenticeships.*	Key areas of underpinning knowledge are identified as being common to a number of units of competency, for example OH & S legislation and regulations. This material is delivered and assessed as a separate study. The application of this knowledge is assessed in other components of the program that focus on specific work activities. These comprise structured training and a period of work experience during which time candidates are able to practise and refine their skills in live work situations. In this case, participants must successfully complete both components of the program to be deemed to be competent in OH & S. **Underpinning knowledge module** *OH & S legislation* **Work experience** *Structured work experience involving servicing and repairing automatic transmission* **Application** *Structured training in the service and repair of automatic transmissions*

As well as determining the program structure, the RTO needs to confirm the mode of delivery and assessment.

Programs may be delivered through any combination of on-the-job or off-the-job delivery and use a variety of delivery modes such as self-paced instruction, facilitator-delivered sessions, learning syndicates and work-based learning. There is no set mode of delivery. The approach selected may be influenced by factors such as:

- the preferences of enterprises and participants
- the learning style of participants
- the availability of plant, facilities and equipment
- the number and location of participants
- the availability of qualified staff
- the cost of delivering the program.

RTOs may choose to use any combination of techniques for gathering the evidence needed to make assessment decisions. The key factor here is that the units of competency form the benchmarks for assessment, and the evidence-gathering techniques selected must enable candidates to demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skills specified in the standards. The evidence-gathering techniques that are selected need to be documented and clearly linked to the relevant unit or cluster of units of competency.

Having established the structure of the program, the delivery mode and the evidence-gathering techniques, the RTO establishes the sequence of delivery and assessment. This may be influenced by the:

- enterprise production or business cycle
- availability of key staff
- availability of plant, facilities and equipment
- time constraints on participants
- need for participants to acquire prerequisite knowledge or skills
- sequence in which key work activities are normally learned.

While competency-based delivery and assessment is not based on time, most programs operate within time and resource restraints. As a consequence the RTO can indicate an overall timeframe for the program and determine the sequence of delivery and assessment. In some cases the sequence will need to be highly flexible to take advantage of delivery and assessment opportunities that occur either on or off-the-job. However, in other cases, notably in institutional pathways, the sequencing of delivery and assessment may be quite rigid, reflecting the need to access particular resources and staff. An example of how one organisation has sequenced delivery and assessment is illustrated in Figure 6 on page 32.

Step 5: Confirm staffing and infrastructure requirements

Having established the structure, mode and sequence of delivery and assessment, the RTO now confirms that it has access to the staffing and infrastructure required to support the program.

The RTO must ensure that all training and delivery staff involved in the program have the required competencies as described in the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* and the relevant Training Package.

In addition, the RTO needs to ensure that it has verifiable access to the facilities, equipment and trainng and assessment materials needed for delivery and assessment. It is not necessary for the RTO to own the required resources, but it needs to show guaranteed access to the required infrastructure (e.g., letter of agreement between a facility's management and an RTO). In many cases, RTOs will use equipment provided by workplaces or will hire training rooms and other instructional equipment.

Step 6: Establish the assessment validation process

To ensure the consistency and quality of assessment, RTOs are also required to validate assessment strategies. This involves reviewing the assessment processes, tools and the evidence contributing to the judgements made by a range of assessors. Various validation strategies that RTOs can use are outlined in chapter 5.

Step 7: Document the delivery and assessment strategies

It is a requirement that delivery and assessment strategies be documented in a form that clearly shows the approach that the RTO will take to the delivery and assessment of the qualification. This is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

How are delivery and assessment strategies documented?

Standard 9.1d of the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* states:

"The RTO must document the strategies referred to in Standards 9.1a on application for registration and on extension of scope".

*(*AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* p.19*)*

This requirement may be met in a variety of ways. As illustrated in Figure 6, an RTO may prepare a written statement that sets out its delivery and assessment strategies (see template Delivery and assessment strategy outline — Appendix 5).

In this example, the RTO has established an assessment and delivery strategy for the Certificate II in Transport and Distribution (Warehousing) from the Transport and Distribution Training Package. The RTO has provided details on the:

- qualification and units of competency to be delivered and assessed
- nature of the client group
- delivery and assessment strategies including the alignment between the training program and the units of competency, the evidence-gathering techniques, the delivery modes and the scheduling of assessment and delivery
- ways in which evidence is gathered and the assessment is validated
- staff and infrastructure required to implement the program
- pathways available to candidates who undertake the qualification.

RTOs may document their delivery and assessment strategies a variety of ways. At a minimum RTOs must provide documented evidence that their strategies comply with the requirements of standard 9.1 of the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*. To assist RTOs to meet this requirement, ANTA has released a publication entitled *The Evidence Guide for Registered Training Organisations and Auditors — 2001*. This document states:

"Evidence must include strategies for training delivery and assessment for each Training Package qualification and accredited course within the RTO's scope of registration. Evidence must also include:

- *assessment strategies developed in consultation with enterprises/industry;*
- *delivery and assessment strategies identifying the requirements of Standard 9.1c; and*
- *documented strategies for training delivery and assessment as part of the RTO's application for registration or extension of scope."*

(The Evidence Guide for Registered Training Organisations and Auditors — 2001, p. 46*)*

Standard 9.1c states:

"The delivery and assessment strategies referred to in Standard 9.1c should indentify proposed target groups, delivery and assessment modes and strategies, assment validation processes and pathways."

(AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* p.19*)*

The following are samples taken from the *Evidence Guide for Registered Training Organisations and Auditors — 2001*, that RTOs could provide to comply with Standard 9.1c:

- client information outlining core and elective modules and how these will be delivered/assessed
- information to clients about the range of training/assessment options
- plan identifying a range of available delivery/assessment methods to suit a variety of needs, and evidence of its implementation
- demonstration of delivery and assessment strategies with clients
- assessment activities/instruments
- learning resources that use language and numeracy in line with specified workplace requirements
- alternative assessment methods, use of support staff and other examples of the provision of support to individual clients
- plans, agendas, meeting minutes that indicate reviews of delivery and assessment materials take place regularly
- feedback from stakeholders on assessment processes and resources
- revised assessment processes indicating action taken to improve the quality and consistency of assessment.

As illustrated in Figure 7 on page 37, one way of presenting this information is to compile an evidence record. This lists documented evidence that the RTO holds and identifies where individual items of evidence can be located if required for registration or audit purposes.

Figure 6: Sample delivery and assessment strategy — Option 1

Units or groups of units of competency	Target group of learners	Staff to be involved	Delivery modes	Training resources	Assessment methods/ evidence gathering
Notes:					
Units represent outcomes. Where the strategy for achieving the outcomes requires grouping units, indicate this and treat them together.	Indicate any special requirements of the group or particular individuals, such as reasonable adjustment	If staff are not fully qualified for the qualification, indicate the staff person supervising	On/off the job, projects, distance, online etc.	Learner guides, notes, log books, videos, project guides, assessment resources etc.	Evidence plan, observation, oral questions, written tests, projects, demonstration, portfolio, RPL.

Duration of program	Schedule of sessions	Locations of sessions	Validation approaches	Infrastructure requirements
Notes:				
Actual planned duration of formal activites (not nominal hours)	Plan of face-to-face contact, schedule of online contact etc.	In the case of online, indicate method of accessing site.	Select from range: benchmarking, networks, field testing, lead assessor, independent validator. See Fig. 10.	Facilities and equipment suitable to delivery method and evidence-gathering approaches

Figure 6: Sample delivery and assessment strategy — Option 2

Name of RTO	**Logistics Training Australia**		**Page 1 of 4**
Delivery period	**1.1.2002 — 31.12.2005**		
Code and title of qualification	TDT20197 — Certificate II in Transport and Distribution (Warehousing)		
Units of competency	**Code**	**Title**	**Core/Elective**
	TDTD197A	Shift materials safely	
	TDTD297A	Use manual handling equipment	
	TDTE397A	Participate in workplace communication	
	TDTE597A	Carry out workplace calculations	
	TDTF197A	Follow OH & S procedures	
	TDTF297A	Conduct housekeeping activities	
	TDTG197A	Work effectively with others	
	TDTA11GA	Package goods	
	TDTA1297A	Pick and process order	
	TDTA1397A	Receive goods	
	TDTA1497A	Use product knowledge to complete work operations	
	TDTA2097A	Replenish stock	
	TDTA2197A	Dispatch stock	
	TDTA2297A	Participate in stocktakes	
	TDTI297A	Apply customer service skills	
	TDTD10A97	Operate a forklift	
Client(s)	The key clients for this qualification are potential new entrants to the industry who require a broad orientation to the industry. This group may include: ■ school leavers ■ unemployed workers ■ recent migrants ■ those wishing to gain entry to a different industry sector.		
Delivery and assessment arrangements	**Duration** The program is delivered over a period of twenty weeks.		
	Organisation The sixteen units of competency in the qualification have been organised into an off-the-job training program that comprises three "general work skills" modules and four "industry-specific skills" modules. The program is organised so that candidates are provided with background information on general skills such as OH & S in the "general work skills" modules and are given the opportunity to apply these skills in the "applied industry skills" modules. For example, TDTF197A Follow OH & S Procedures appears in both the general work skills module — occupational health and safety — and the applied industry skills module — forklift operations. It is only when the candidate successfully completes both modules that he or she is deemed competent in the unit of competency TDTF197A Follow OH & S procedures. The alignment between the units of competency and the training program appears on the following page.		

Name of RTO	Logistics Training Australia	Page 2 of 4

Delivery and assessment arrangements (continued)

Alignment with units of competency

	Program Area	Unit(s) of Competency
General work skills	Occupational health and safety	TDTF197A
	Workplace communications and calculations	TDTE397A TDTE597A TDTI297A TDTG197A
	Materials handling	TDTD297A TDTD197A
Applied industry skills	Processing orders	TDTA11GA TDTA1497A TDTA1397 TDTA1297A TDTI297A
	Handling stock	TDTA2097A TDTA2197A
	Stocktaking	TDTF297A TDTA2297A TDTE397A TDTG197A TDTE597A
	Forklift operations	TDTD10A97 TDTF197A

Delivery modes

This program is delivered entirely off-the-job at the organisation's Logistics Skills Training Centre through a combination of face-to-face trainer-led theory classes and practical sessions involving small-group and individual activities.

Candidates are provided with training manuals for each module, which include all materials used in the training sessions, assessment materials (other than tests) and reference materials.

Evidence-gathering techniques — the numbers on this chart refer to the documented evidence-gathering techniques that are used in each module.

Program area	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Occupational health and safety					1		2	
Workplace communications and calculations			3	4				
Materials handling	5							
Processing orders	6	7						
Stocktaking	8							9
Handling stock	10					11		
Forklift operations	12						13	

KEY
A Demonstration
B Questioning
C Interview
D Scenario — problem solving
E Role play
F Case study — fault finding
G Written test
H Critical incident report

Name of RTO	Logistics Training Australia	Page 3 of 4
	Schedule	

Delivery and assessment arrangements (continued)

The training program is conducted over a twenty-week period. The shaded areas show the weeks in which particular modules are delivered.

The numbers refer to scheduled evidence-gathering techniques. These numbers indicate:

- when the evidence-gathering technique will take place, i.e., evidence-gathering technique 3 occurs in week 3
- the module that is being assessed, e.g., evidence-gathering technique 3 is focused on workplace communications and calculations
- the type of evidence-gathering technique, e.g., by referring to the table of evidence-gathering techniques it can be seen that technique 3 is an interview.

Week	Program structure		
1	Workplace communications and calculations		Occupational health and safety 1
2		Materials handling	2
3	3		
4		5	Handling stock
6			
7			10
8		Processing orders	11
9	4		
10			
11		6	
12	Stocktaking		
13			
14		7	Forklift operations
15	8		
16			
17	9		
18			12
19			
20			13

Name of RTO	Logistics Training Australia				Page 4 of 4
Delivery and assessment staff	**Program area**	**Staff**	**Delivery/ Assessment**	**Competencies of staff**	
				Technical	**Assess**
	Occupational health and safety	Julie Smith Tom Fredericks	D&A D&A	X X	X X
	Workplace communications and calculations	Julie Smith Toni Mizzi	D&A D&A	X X	X X
	Materials handling	Tom Fredericks	D&A	X	X
	Processing orders	Murray Goldhart	D&A	X	X
	Stocktaking	Gordon Coles	D&A	X	X
	Handling stock	George Smithers	D&A	X	X
	Forklift operations	George Smithers	D&A	X	X

Assessment validation process

The processes used to validate assessment in this program are:

- Program manager meets with representatives from enterprise clients on an annual basis to check that the performance standards required in the program are consistent with industry practice.
- Program manager convenes annual meeting of assessment panel, which comprises subject specialists in OH & S, communications and warehousing and one enterprise representative, to review evidence-gathering tools.
- External facilitator conducts two moderation meetings attended by all assessors. The first meeting, held in week two of the program, confirms the evidence-gathering techniques and the required standards of performance. The second meeting, held one week after the program, focuses on reviewing assessment tools and decisions.

Infrastructure requirements *(A tick indicates that the RTO has the required infrastructure.)*

- ☑ All staff, including full-time, part-time and casual staff involved in the delivery and assessment of this qualification, have direct access to the current version of the relevant Training Package, including the appropriate units of competency, assessment guidelines and qualification structure.
- ☑ All staff, including full-time, part-time and casual staff involved in delivering the program, have access to trainer, assessor and candidate support materials relevant to their areas of delivery and assessment.
- ☑ All assessors have access to print and electronic copies of the assessment tools that are used in this program.
- ☑ The RTO has access to staff and training/assessment resources to meet the requirements of candidates with special needs and has an assessment process that incorporates reasonable adjustment procedures.
- ☑ The RTO has reviewed the equipment and facility requirements for each unit of competency in the qualification and guarantees that it has access to the plant and equipment needed to implement the program.

Pathways

All candidates who undertake the Certificate II in Transport and Distribution (Warehousing) are provided with advice on employment and training options. As the program includes two additional units of competency at Certificate II level these may be counted towards the Certificate III in Transport and Distribution under the qualification packaging rules in the current version of the Transport and Distribution Training Package.

Program manager's endorsement:

Date:

Figure 7: Record of documented evidence of RTO delivery and assessment strategies

Name of RTO			
Qualification			
Name of RTO contact person		**Telephone**	

This organisation can provide the following documented evidence to show that it has developed training delivery and assessment strategies for this qualification that comply with Standard 9.1 of the Australian Quality Training Framework.

TYPE OF EVIDENCE *(Note: delete any information in this table not required by your organisation.)*	**YES**	**LOCATION OF EVIDENCE**
CLIENT NEEDS		
Surveys, research reports, statistical information on needs of client groups	☐	
Customised delivery and assessment strategies to meet client needs	☐	
CLIENT INFORMATION		
Outline of program structure and delivery/ assessment strategies	☐	
Client information on delivery/assessment options	☐	
DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT PLANS		
Delivery plan and evidence of implementation	☐	
Assessment plan and evidence of implementation	☐	
ENTERPRISE/INDUSTRY CONSULTATION		
Meeting minutes/notes to indicate enterprise/ industry consultation in development of assessment strategies	☐	
Letters acknowledging enterprise/ industry involvement in development of assessment strategies	☐	
DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT MATERIALS		
Delivery materials	☐	
Assessment materials	☐	
REVIEW PROCESSES		
Plans, agendas, minutes that indicate review of assessment and/or delivery materials	☐	
Plans, agendas, minutes that indicate review of assessment and/or delivery process	☐	
Revised assessment processes indicating action taken to improve quality and consistency of assessment	☐	
Stakeholder feedback on assessment processes	☐	
OTHER		
	☐	

Step 8: Review the delivery and assessment strategies

Validation involves reviewing, comparing and evaluating assessment processes, assessment tools and the evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same competency standards.

How do delivery and assessment strategies relate to the endorsed components and support materials of a Training Package?

The delivery and assessment strategies developed by RTOs must relate to the endorsed components of the relevant Training Package or an accredited course, when the area is not covered by a Training Package. "Assessment activities/instruments" in the form of support materials, can constitute evidence of assessment strategies and may be used for that purpose. For example, the purpose of a delivery strategy is to provide an approach or vehicle through which the candidate can acquire the competencies identified in the relevant qualification. Similarly, the assessment strategies are designed to enable the candidate to provide evidence, whether this is collected by the assessor or the candidate, which shows that the candidate has attained the competencies identified in the relevant standards.

Some RTOs will incorporate the support materials developed to facilitate the implementation of a Training Package into their delivery and assessment strategies. For example, an RTO may decide to use a set of nationally developed assessment tools or the training resources in the relevant ANTA developed Toolbox, as part of its assessment and delivery strategy. Alternatively, some RTOs may decide to develop their own assessment and delivery resources.

It may not be necessary for the RTO to provide copies of the full suite of assessment and delivery tools it will use when registering or seeking to extend its scope of registration. The RTO should provide evidence that it has an established delivery and assessment strategy. One way of doing this is to provide a statement, as illustrated in Figure 6, that outlines the RTO's approach. This identifies, but does not include, the specific delivery and assessment materials — learner guides, assessment tools, record books etc. that will be used in the delivery and assessment of the qualification.

4. approaches to consultation

The AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* require RTOs to consult with enterprises/industry when developing assessment strategies. The quality and value of these consultations will be influenced by:

- commitment of RTOs and enterprises/industry to the consultation process
- enterprises/industry that are involved
- techniques used to engage enterprises/industry
- amount and quality of information enterprises/industry are given
- form and language in which information is provided.

The intensity and scope of consultation will be influenced by factors such as:

- the number of enterprises and/or other stakeholders involved
- the level of risk associated with the assessment
- whether the assessment focuses on enterprise-specific or industry-wide competencies
- whether the candidates being assessed are employed by the relevant enterprises
- the commercial sensitivity of the aspect of work being assessed
- the cost of the consultative process.

A range of approaches to consultation

As illustrated in Figure 8, a range of approaches can be used by RTOs in consulting with enterprises/industry. The approaches they select reflect both the RTO's and the enterprise's commitments to engagement and their level of involvement in decision making. Approaches such as "joint decision making", involve a higher level of enterprise/industry involvement in decision making and participation in the consultation process than others.

Principles of consultation

Regardless of the approach adopted to consulting enterprises, RTOs should ensure that:

- purposes of the consultation are explained in clear, concise and simple terms
- enterprises involved in consultations are treated as significant stakeholders
- consultations are open, genuine and as broad and deep as is practical
- skills, resources and perspectives coming from enterprises are acknowledged
- people involved are given adequate explanations, information and time to respond
- enterprises are provided with models and alternatives to consider and are not expected to do the work of the RTO
- people consulted are speaking on their own behalf or with the endorsement of their enterprises
- meaning of unclear responses is clarified
- views obtained in the consultation process are reported accurately and incorporated in RTO assessment strategies, when appropriate
- records of all consultation activities are documented and stored appropriately.

Figure 8: Alternative approaches to consultation

High level of involvement of enterprises in decision making			***High level of enterprise participation, ownership***
	Joint decision making	Decisions are made by the RTO but reflect the views and solutions negotiated and agreed with enterprises.	
	Partnership in shaping decisions	The RTO seeks to build a genuine sense of shared responsibility with enterprises. It creates opportunities for sharing and exchanging diverse views and incorporates them into the development of assessment strategies.	
	Participation	The RTO creates opportunities for enterprises to formulate group views and takes these into account when developing assessment strategies.	
	Proactive consultation	The RTO segments its enterprise clients and builds contacts with networks of interested people. It actively seeks the views of these groups in response to specific questions and promotes dialogue with these groups about their concerns and those of their constituencies.	
	Passive consultation	The RTO collects group and individual views in response to surveys, notices and invitations. It records the responses and uses the information to inform the development of assessment strategies.	
	Information sharing	The RTO ensures that clear, accurate and comprehensive information about their assessment strategies is made publicly available and attempts to collect information about the needs, interests and concerns of enterprises and industry parties. No significant dialogue is involved.	
RTO makes the decisions with low or minimal enterprises/ industry input		*Adapted from a model devised by the Australian and New Zealand Food Authority*	***Low level of enterprise participation, ownership***

This is not to suggest that there is a hierarchy of approaches with "joint decision making" necessarily being more effective or desirable than "information sharing". Different approaches simply indicate that contexts may require different approaches to consultation. For example, "joint decision making" is highly suited to environments where the RTO is providing enterprise-based delivery and assessment services for a particular business. In this situation the enterprise has a high stake in the delivery and assessment strategies and will want to ensure that RTO's assessment strategies are clearly benchmarked against enterprise procedures and that assessment is conducted in a way that meets enterprise requirements and work practices. In this situation there is a very direct relationship between the RTO and the enterprise.

Some RTOs will employ different approaches for consulting enterprises/industry on different programs that they offer. For example, a large, multi-sector RTO may adopt a "partnerships" approach when consulting enterprises on the development of assessment strategies for use in enterprise-based workplace training programs. However, the same RTO may adopt a "passive consultation" approach when planning the assessment strategies for an off-the-job training program delivered to school leavers. In other cases, RTOs may use a range of approaches to gather the views of different enterprises about the same program. For example, an RTO may combine "information sharing" and "proactive consultation" to gain a broad range of enterprise views on the assessment strategies used in a particular program or qualification. By combining the two approaches, the RTO gains the views of enterprises that are willing to participate in a network while providing those who are either unable or unwilling to join the network with a way of providing input into the RTO's decision making process. Each of these approaches to consultation provides a legitimate way of gathering the views of enterprises on RTO assessment strategies. The important question for the RTO is which approach best meets its own needs and those of its enterprise clients.

Following are detailed explanations of the six approaches to consultation identified in Figure 8.

Joint decision making

Description

In this approach, decisions about the RTO's assessment strategies are made by the RTO but reflect the views and solutions negotiated and agreed with enterprises/industry. This approach assumes a high level of enterprises/industry involvement in decision making and should produce a high level of enterprises/industry ownership and confidence in the assessment strategies developed by the RTO.

Consultation strategies

The consultation strategies that the RTO might use with this approach include:

- enterprises/industry specific, targeted direct communications based on knowledge of the enterprises/industry and its needs
- personal contact by phone and email, followed up by visits at times convenient to the enterprises to conduct interviews, focus groups and presentations
- joint working groups comprising RTO and enterprises/industry staff.

Application

This approach is most suited to consultations between an RTO and and enterprises/industry on the development of an assessment strategy for use within the enterprise.

When to use

This approach is particularly suited to situations where small RTOs or specialist units within larger RTOs are contracted to provide delivery and assessment solutions for individual enterprises.

Issues/considerations

RTOs should be responsive to enterprises/industry needs and requirements and have delivery and assessment expertise.

RTOs are advised to ensure that both their staff and the relevant enterprise personnel understand the advantages of utilising nationally recognised training and the flexibility it offers.

The approach is time- and resource-intensive and could be chosen by the RTO for liaison with companies with which they want to establish strategic alliances.

Case studies

Following the endorsement of the Financial Services Training Package, a private provider was engaged by a prominent insurance group to develop and implement a workplace assessment strategy across the organisation. This case study looks at the RTO and enterprise views on the resulting enterprise engagement.

Experiences from the field

Industry perspective

The RTO was approached by the insurance group because of its experience in working with enterprises and conducting workplace assessments. The project involved the development of an assessment strategy to be implemented for 700 staff across the organisation.

Key issues for the enterprise were to:

- set a national training benchmark for staff
- establish a consistent approach to assessment that has integrity and credibility
- design assessment procedures and tools specific to the organisation and the workplace context
- have both internal "content experts" and staff from the RTO in the workplace to conduct assessments and to interpret the insurance units of competence in the business context
- ensure quality procedures were followed by both parties
- establish training pathways within the organisation that allow for recognition of skill, gap training and the issue of nationally recognised qualifications.

Both parties worked together to develop a flexible, cost-effective, resource-efficient and uncomplicated approach to workplace assessment. Decisions were made at regular meetings, considering matters such as when to consult with staff, how to communicate with staff, the resources to use, the length of time the assessment should take, what evidence to gather, and the desired outcomes.

Enterprise staff were very satisfied with their engagement with the RTO. The RTO was responsive to the organisation's business needs and able to provide additional services, such as assessor training for staff. Enterprise staff felt supported by management as a result of the process and are reaping the rewards from this commitment to training. This approach has reduced the enterprise's overall training costs as it now has internal assessors who can assist in implementing the recognition process in consultation with its RTO.

Experiences from the field

RTO perspective

The RTO thoroughly researched the enterprise and the insurance industry at the onset. "Our main objective was to add value to our client's business goals while issuing a qualification," said the RTO's director. "We needed to understand what they were already doing well and build on their best practices."

The parties conducted information sessions and over 700 individual consultations for enterprise staff with each staff member receiving a customised assessment planner. RTO staff "lived" at the enterprise offices for the life of the initial assessments, learning the client's systems, interacting with staff and conducting assessments at appropriate times. Moderation meetings with all assessors at interstate branches ensured a consistent assessment approach was maintained. Holistic, customised assessment tasks were created for the enterprise using current procedures and real work tasks.

The RTO continues to invest resources for the maintenance of the assessment approach. It conducts annual assessments to ensure that staff members' competence is maintained. Assessment tools can be downloaded from the RTO website for enterprise assessors to ensure the consistency and quality of assessments. The success of the joint decision making process has cemented a long-term relationship between the parties.

"We see the RTO as a strategic business partner rather than a contractor," said the client's national human resources manager. "The traineeship system, together with the selection of a reputable RTO, provides the perfect foundation for developing a learning environment."

Partnership in shaping decisions

Description

In this approach, the RTO seeks to build a genuine sense of shared responsibility with its enterprises/industry clients. It creates opportunities for sharing and exchanging diverse views and incorporates them into the design of assessment strategies. While the RTO makes the decisions, it sees the enterprises/industry as active partners in decision making. This approach produces a high level of enterprises/industry confidence in the RTO's assessment strategies.

Consultation strategies

The consultation strategies that the RTO might use with this approach include:

- direct communications with enterprises/industry to establish their requirements
- personal contact with follow up by visits to conduct interviews, focus groups and presentations
- making contact through existing forums, conferences, committees and networks
- building relationships with people in industry representative groups
- providing targeted information to meet particular business needs and tailoring programs to the specific context.

Application

This approach is most suited to situations where RTOs are involved in customising qualifications to meet enterprises/industry requirements.

RTOs operating in a particular industry or locality may establish a network of enterprises and other industry stakeholders (or utilise an existing network where appropriate) to canvass enterprise needs and ensure that they are met through the RTO's current program offerings or by customising these offerings to suit particular needs.

When to use

This approach is useful when RTOs have a defined set of industry qualifications on their scope of registration that relates to an easily identifiable group of enterprises in a region.

Issues/considerations

This approach implies a fairly stable set of relationships that, once established, should ensure the industry needs are met. These consultation strategies can become too set and rely on individuals who do not always share their information widely.

Experiences from the field

A large food-processing company approached a local RTO to design and establish training and assessment systems for its processing staff.

During two years of collaboration, more than 100 workers received skills recognition for their competencies, providing an opportunity to map the training needs of the workforce. The RTO utilised this information to develop a plan for providing training where gaps existed. Included in this strategy was the development of enterprise specific resources, including Training Record Books, learning guides and assessment tools. Trainees were encouraged to gather evidence as they carried out their normal employment activities.

There were many positive aspects to this training program and a number of issues that required resolution. These included:

- **language and culture:** Approximately 90 percent of the workforce spoke very little English and possessed limited numeracy skills; interpreters assisted during training sessions, and observation checklists overcame some language barriers as trainees demonstrated competency during workplace activities.
- **changing pathways:** As workers moved from Certificate I to Certificate II level training, significant time was needed to map the skills required in each area and provide a match to suitable competencies from all electives in the Food Processing Training Package.
- **ownership of materials:** The RTO developed resources that were customised with the cooperation and assistance of enterprise supervisors; this work was largely carried out as a delivery obligation by the RTO; however, the resources now comprise commercially sensitive material, and the issue of intellectual property ownership is still being resolved.

This partnership has been a challenge for all involved. However, many successful workplace delivery strategies and models have been developed. The specialist skills and knowledge provided by the enterprise have highlighted the necessity for a sound knowledge and understanding of workplace requirements. From the RTO perspective, this has been a valuable learning experience providing the foundation for future negotiations for work-based delivery.

Experiences from the field

A partnership between a regional RTO and various mining sites ensures that there is a consistent approach to assessment across one State mining sector.

The revised Mining Act and Training Package has put the onus of developing delivery and assessment strategies onto the mining industry instead of the RTO. The mining sector is developing the resources and the contracted RTO for the sector acts as the "quality check" to ensure that delivery and assessment strategies match Training Package competencies.

Because of the mining sites' experience in training over many years, they can develop effective assessment and training strategies that are site-specific. Staff from the RTO regularly visit all sites and interact with the managers, trainers and learners to ensure they are all satisfied with their workplace assessment process.

"The key to success when dealing with the mining industry is not to tell industry what to do, but instead to inform them of what the RTO can do for them," said the RTO manager. "We've organised meetings with mining representatives to help them understand the implications of the new AQTF and to set competency benchmarks using the current Training Package standards. All assessments are done on the job so we need to be clear about what we are assessing and what performance level is competent in accordance with workplace standards. Because of our great relationship with industry, we are able to work through these issues together face to face on the various mining sites."

Participation

Description

The RTO creates opportunities for enterprises to formulate group views and takes these into account when developing assessment strategies.

Consultation strategies

The consultation strategies that the RTO might use with this approach include:

- meeting with representative bodies, councils, consultative groups, committees and networks to conduct discussions and revise positions regarding delivery and assessment strategies
- engaging in informal enterprise networks
- participating in enterprises/industry conferences, seminars and workshops
- preparing discussion papers for consideration by enterprise networks
- calling for representations, submissions and formal responses.

Application

An RTO may convene a forum or use sessions of an existing committee, council or State body to consider and canvass issues around the structuring of delivery and assessment.

When to use

This approach is useful in cases where qualifications have a broad application across several industries and are being delivered in a range of locations beyond a specific enterprise or region.

Issues/considerations

While this is a convenient and cost-effective, way of engaging with enterprises/industry, it may not involve the right people, or the people who will have direct knowledge about the way the competencies are acquired and the assessments conducted.

Experiences from the field

A private RTO specialising in hospitality engages local, national and international industry bodies and enterprises to participate in the development of its business and training objectives. It has various structures for enterprises/industry consultation including:

- a Board of Directors, comprising industry representatives, that focuses on the general operation of the RTO to ensure it meets industry needs
- a ten-member advisory board, comprising CEOs from tourism and hospitality organisations and industry representatives who have worked internationally, that offers strategic direction and provides industry advice
- affiliations with international networks that provide the RTO with the opportunity to learn about international trends and common philosophy in curriculum development for tourism and hospitality courses.

The RTO promotes training activities internationally through annual prospectus, mail-outs and a website. Representatives in overseas locations promote the school at international education forums and conferences. The RTO alumni are very active and provide current feedback on the industry and the progress of their international careers.

The Principal of the RTO advises RTOs operating in an international context to become involved in the industry. "Start your involvement at a local level and then establish international networks," he said. "An RTO must demonstrate that it wants to help industry achieve business objectives. Then it will reap the rewards of an effective relationship with industry."

Experiences from the field

A private RTO specialising in design, visualisation, fashion design and interior decoration claims a sustained 100 percent employment rate for students in relevant industry employment, often before their graduation. In addition, the fashion and interior design industries regularly call on this RTO as a surrogate employment agency.

Consultation with enterprises/industry is an ongoing and mutually beneficial process for the RTO, with activities including:

- engagement in activities such as design competitions, fashion parades, direct project recruitment and establishment of high-profile industry placements for students
- cross-sector education and institutional affiliations including formal representation from industry on course development committees and affiliations with universities, schools, Industry Training Advisory Bodies and the relevant Board of Studies
- recruitment of staff members, who are often industry practitioners running their own design studios and businesses, with current industry knowledge
- course advisory panel meetings that develop learning and assessment strategies in consultation with industry, ensuring that assessment tasks reflect workplace contexts.

"Education is a natural part of industry development," said the Director of Education at the RTO. "We are fortunate to have established great industry networks that ensure our training programs are geared to genuine workplace opportunities."

Proactive consultation

Description

The RTO segments its enterprises/industry clients and builds contacts with networks of interested people. It actively seeks the views of these groups in response to specific questions and promotes dialogue with these groups about their concerns and the concerns of their constituencies.

Consultation strategies

The consultation strategies that the RTO might use with this approach include:

- directly communicating with key enterprise personnel and "industry leaders"
- facilitating and participating in enterprise networks
- establishing and conducting focus groups of enterprise and RTO staff
- distributing information through newsletters and websites
- making presentations at conferences and forums and seeking feedback
- appointing and allocating staff with specific enterprises/industry liaison responsibilities.

Application

This approach is particularly suited to situations where RTOs offer a range of qualifications, such as all the qualifications in a Training Package, to a group of enterprises and require input and feedback to develop and review their assessment strategies.

When to use

This approach works well where RTOs have the expertise and capacity, including the staff, networks and infrastructure, to engage "industry leaders" and enterprises across an industry, industry sector or region.

Issues/considerations

A key issue is ensuring that the contacts and relationships are purposeful, and the information gained through consultations informs the development of the RTO's assessment strategies and its quality improvement cycle.

Case studies

A State Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB) has taken an active role in facilitating RTO enterprise engagement on a range of issues, including the development of workplace assessment strategies associated with the implementation of the industry's Training Packages. A regional RTO has been successful in proactively consulting with enterprises/industry in the community services sector. A small private training provider has also sought enterprises/industry consultation to enhance its business operations.

Experiences from the field

One State ITAB has taken a proactive stance in facilitating communication in its industry by building strong relations with virtually all relevant RTOs and enterprises operating across the State.

The ITAB has established an ongoing series of workshops to facilitate RTO enterprise engagement. These workshops, attended by RTO and enterprise staff, are normally organised around a key theme and provide a forum to share views and experiences about key issues associated with the implementation of the industry's Training Packages. A recent meeting focused on the assessment requirements in the AQTF and how RTOs can comply with the standards in a cost-effective manner. A key issue discussed was the role that enterprises could play in RTO assessment validation processes. This involved consideration of the purpose of validation, enterprise and RTO attitudes about the value of validation, and how enterprises might work with RTOs to add value to validation activities.

The ITAB provides a forum in which RTOs and enterprises can speak openly and frankly about their concerns and needs in relation to delivery and assessment. Through this process RTOs and enterprises develop a better understanding of each other's requirements and pursue practical forms of RTO enterprise engagement, such as the collaborative development of assessment tools.

Experiences from the field

A campus of a large RTO has established a successful venture with the local community services sector. A shortage of available vocational placements for students in the region meant that an alternative assessment scenario had to be devised.

In consultation with the students, the Community Services Coordinator devised an industry-focused project. An *"Independent Living Kit"*, developed by the group, was designed to assist young people who leave home for the first time. In the beginning, it was difficult to engage industry support for the initiative. However, once the benefits of the kit were communicated to industry, local groups were supportive and keen to offer their suggestions on structure, content and production of the resource.

The production of the *"Independent Living Kit"* was so successful that local youth groups will use the resource with their members. The local City Council and the State Department of Health have funded further production of the kit for distribution to youth organisations statewide.

The success of the kit proved to industry the commitment and passion the RTO's students have for the community services industry. Since the launch of the resource, enterprises and industries have been easily engaged to support the development of assessment strategies for the RTO's community services programs, and many other community-based projects have been successfully undertaken.

Experiences from the field

A small not-for-profit training provider with expertise in online learning, flexible delivery and the development of Training Package Toolboxes has established effective consultation processes with industry and enterprises.

The RTO's success at engaging and consulting with enterprises/industry has been due to the experience and networking contacts of staff. Industry representatives are appointed to advise on assessment practices and the relevant competencies required by industry. External industry representatives annually review student work to ascertain quality and advise the RTO on which students should be granted study scholarships. The RTO also runs an internal consultation process where a panel of staff reviews student results and verifies assessment outcomes. And where possible, the RTO seeks the appropriate consultant services to ensure that its business practices are compliant with the AQTF.

The RTO has established strong links with a statewide curriculum reference committee, curriculum development groups, relevant ITABs and a range of industry representatives.

"We have been successful in engaging enterprises/industry because we talk common sense to them," said the director of the RTO. "We build a relationship with them and look at how we can add value to each other's business operations. It's also very important to be a straightforward communicator, to be honest and to develop trust between the two parties."

Passive consultation

Description

The RTO collects individual and group views in response to surveys, notices and invitations. It records these responses and uses the information in the development and review of its assessment strategies.

Consultation strategies

The consultation strategies that the RTO might use with this approach include:

- collecting information on enterprises/industry needs from published industry sources such as journals and websites
- establishing processes to capture and analyse information from enterprises/industry and candidates including customer satisfaction data, complaints and appeals
- creating opportunities for enterprises/industry to offer general input and feedback on assessment strategies through inviting comment via websites and other informal means
- using targeted questionnaires and surveys.

Application

As part of their quality processes, RTOs regularly collect information from surveys of employer satisfaction. This can capture information about the validity of assessment outcomes, the aspect that usually concerns employers the most.

When to use

This approach is suited to situations where RTOs are servicing a large number of enterprises and there are different levels of involvement, such as in off-the-job delivery.

Issues/considerations

Surveys are major sources of quantitative information on employer requirements. However, care should be taken in interpreting these data (be aware of sample size, reliability, design, randomness and structure of the questionnaire). Structuring assessment strategies around what most appear to want may be a useful starting point but this needs to be supported by more forms of direct consultation. To maximise response rates, surveys should be short and succinct and make minimal imposition on the time and resources of enterprises. A further issue is ensuring that the information obtained aids in the development of the RTO's assessment strategies and its quality improvement cycle.

Case study

A public RTO employs a range of approaches to engage enterprises in the development and review of its assessment strategies. One aspect of its approach involves systematically gathering and analysing feedback from enterprises and using this to inform continuous improvement.

Experiences from the field

The RTO's success in the VET in Schools sector is based on a tiered consultation process. One aspect of this approach involves gathering feedback from relevant enterprises, ITABs, Group Training Companies, RTOs, neighbouring schools, teachers, students and parents on its delivery and assessment strategies.

Through this consultation process the RTO is able to:

- establish specialised networks within each industry area
- customise student delivery and assessment tasks to suit enterprise needs
- maximise the benefits students receive from work placements
- validate the value of the VET in Schools programs with industry support
- gather feedback on its delivery and assessment strategies through annual surveys with industry, employers, teachers, students and parents
- keep up to date with current industry developments
- maintain assessment consistency and quality
- work to improve the development of assessment resources in consultation with enterprises.

"Industry wants to see how they can benefit from their involvement with a VET in Schools provider and it is our job as an RTO to do this", said the VET Development Officer at the RTO. "We've found that it is essential to have a mutually beneficial and trusting relationship between industry employer, the school coordinator and the student."

Information sharing

Description

In this approach the RTO ensures that clear, accurate and comprehensive information on its assessment strategies is made available publicly and attempts to collect information about the needs, interests and concerns of enterprises/industry but does not necessarily engage enterprises/industry in dialogue on these matters.

Consultation strategies

The consultation strategies that the RTO might use with this approach include:

- publishing brochures, manuals and websites including detailed information about the RTO's assessment strategies; these communication channels can also be used to solicit feedback on the RTO's strategies
- advertising delivery and assessment services to potential clients
- preparing and distributing regular newsletters and inviting feedback
- preparing and distributing discussion papers and surveys
- preparing and distributing marketing and information materials
- making presentations at conferences and seminars.

Application

This approach is particularly suited to situations where there is a broad range of enterprises that the RTO is attempting to engage, and there are different levels of contact between the RTO and its actual and potential clients.

When to use

Every organisation engages in promotional activity. RTOs that can explain their delivery and assessment strategies in accessible ways have a competitive advantage in the traineeship market.

Issues/considerations

Enterprises/industry will only engage with this published material if it seems directly relevant to them. While making materials available in highly attractive forms can increase the likelihood of engagement, it can never be assumed that enterprises/industry have actually been engaged.

Case study

A metropolitan Adult Community Education (ACE) provider has established effective ways of sharing information with enterprises/industry to seek feedback and validate assessment strategies.

Experiences from the field

The RTO sees the benefits of consulting with industry and has successfully achieved this through its literacy program. RTO staff consult with peak literacy bodies, attend literacy conferences and forums and have established literacy committees and networks to ensure that programs align with the national benchmark and deliver the opportunity for a variety of vocational pathways for students. Links with local TAFEs and the RTO's own relevant departments have also been established to assist students to continue their education at the completion of their literacy course.

Information on the literacy program is posted on the youth network website for students to access and special "interface classes" have been established to bring literacy and ESL students together to learn and exchange information and ideas.

The RTO has also undertaken an industry consultancy project providing language, literacy and numeracy awareness workshops that assist RTOs to meet the AQTF requirements, particularly those relating to Standards 6, 7, 8 and 9.

The Manager of Quality Assurance at the RTO says that the organisation is already implementing effective ways to consult with industry. However, she believes the challenge for the RTO is to maintain effective records of the consultation procedures they implement with industry. "This is where we may need to improve in order to fully comply with Standard 9 of the AQTF," she said.

Capturing evidence of enterprise/industry engagement

RTOs must be able to substantiate that they have met the AQTF requirements for engaging enterprises/industry in the development of their assessment strategies. To do this, RTOs must have documented evidence of enterprise engagement. This evidence may take a variety of forms including:

- names of enterprise staff involved in consultations including details of their positions, organisations and contact details
- details of what they were consulted about and their responses
- copies of information sent and presentations made to those consulted
- minutes or other records of any formal group consultations conducted
- copies of correspondence with these people that is relevant to this purpose
- letters and any documents showing that those consulted support the proposed assessment strategies
- documents showing that the RTO's assessment strategies have been adapted in response to enterprise consultation
- information derived from surveys, research and statistical reports.

One way of capturing and recording this evidence is to establish and maintain an evidence record that simply lists the items of evidence held by the RTO and where it may be located. A sample evidence of consultation record is provided as Appendix 6.

9.1d of the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* states:

The RTO must document the strategies referred to in Standard 9.1a on application for registration and on extension to scope.

9.1b of the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* states:

The assessment strategies referred to in Standard 9.1a must be developed in consultation with enterprises/industry.

It follows that RTOs need to devise practical, cost-effective ways of organising their documentary evidence of enterprises/industry consultation.

Reviewing the approach to engaging enterprises

RTOs should regularly review their consulting approaches. In conducting reviews, RTOs should consider the following questions:

- Are the right enterprises consulted?
- Are the right staff within the enterprise consulted?
- Are the right stakeholders represented in advisory groups?
- Do the enterprises consulted have appropriate input into the RTO's decision making processes?
- Is an adequate cross-section of enterprises being consulted? Are the views of small, medium and large enterprises being considered?
- Are the consultations focused on the right issues?
- Are the consultations generating useful information?
- Is the information gathered being used to improve the RTO's assessment strategies?
- Was the documentation of consultations adequate?
- How have the improvements to the assessment strategies been documented?

5. validating assessment strategies

In practice, many RTOs already engage enterprises/industry and other stakeholders in both the development and validation of their assessment strategies. They realise that effective validation processes ensure that their assessment strategies meet the needs of clients, are benchmarked against relevant standards and provide outcomes that are accepted by enterprise and other key industry stakeholders. These processes build the confidence of RTO staff involved in conducting assessments and serve to enhance industry acceptance of the outcomes of the national training system.

The AQTF *Standards for RTOs* require all RTOs to validate their assessment strategies through:

... reviewing, comparing and evaluating the assessment processes, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same competency standards, at least annually.*

** These may be internal processes with stakeholder involvement or external validations with other providers and/or stakeholders.*

and to

... document any action taken to improve the quality and consistency of assessment.

Depending on the scope of registration, an RTO may validate several qualifications together. In some cases, it may be appropriate to validate at a level below that of a single qualification.

The key benefit of assessment validation is that it facilitates consistent and valid assessment. More specifically, validation activities:

- confirm that the needs of clients (candidates, enterprises and industry) are met
- facilitate assessor professional development
- enable enterprises and other stakeholders to contribute to RTO assessment processes
- provide a means of gathering feedback and identifying ways of improving RTO assessment processes
- facilitate consistent interpretation of competency standards
- allow for the evaluation of the technical quality of the evidence-gathering technique(s)
- promote discussion about aspects of the assessment process, such as reasonable adjustment
- foster the development of informal networks and the exchange of information
- provide for the development of benchmark performance standards.

What must be validated?

Standard 9.2 of the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* requires RTOs to validate assessment strategies by reviewing, comparing and evaluating the assessment processes, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same standards at least annually.

Validating the assessment process

The assessment process is the agreed series of steps that the candidate undertakes within the enrolment, assessment, recording and reporting cycle. The process must meet the requirements of Standard 8 of the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*. The key steps in the assessment process usually include:

- establishing the assessment context
- preparing the candidate
- planning and preparing the evidence-gathering process
- collecting the evidence and making the judgement
- providing feedback on the assessment
- recording and reporting the result
- reviewing the assessment process
- participating in the reassessment and appeals process.

The assessment process can be validated by comparing the policies, procedures and processes of one RTO with another.

Validation of assessment tools

An evidence-gathering or assessment tool comprises:

- the instrument(s) — the specific questions or activities developed from the selected assessment method(s) to be used for the assessment (a profile of acceptable performance and the decision making rules for the assessor may also be included)
- procedures — the information/instructions given to the candidate and/or the assessor regarding conditions under which the assessment should be conducted and recorded.

The validation of evidence-gathering/assessment tools is designed to ensure the quality and validity of the tools before their use. The process builds consistency by ensuring that assessment tools meet specified criteria in their development.

It is crucial that tools used to gather evidence are based on an accurate interpretation of the competency standards and use appropriate methods for gathering evidence that enable the assessor to make an informed judgement on the candidate's competence.

The validation of evidence-gathering/assessment tools is a process designed to ensure that the tools reflect the requirements of the relevant Training Package, are able to be applied in a range of practical settings and meet the RTO's quality standards.

The validation process may include:

- expert review of the evidence-gathering/assessment tools by individuals with expertise in assessment and the relevant Training Package
- field or pilot testing of the assessment tools with groups of assessors and candidates
- peer review of the tools by assessors in the relevant industry
- "workshopping" the tools with assessors and other key stakeholders in the relevant industry sector.

The validation of the evidence-gathering/assessment tools may involve a number of approaches. Regardless of the approaches used, a review should generate feedback about the usefulness of the tool and any required changes. The evaluation should ensure that the assessment tool:

- is benchmarked against the current version of the relevant Training Package(s)
- was developed in consultation with industry and has been effectively trialled
- facilitates assessment practices that are reliable, valid, flexible, consistent and fair
- incorporates clear, concise and accurate advice to assessors on how it should be used
- takes into account the need for reasonable adjustment in the assessment process
- supports assessment processes that are inclusive and non-discriminatory
- represents good value for money
- is of a production quality ensuring that the tool is durable, attractive to the candidate and assessor and fit for purpose
- can be successfully implemented in the relevant enterprise or RTO, taking into account the characteristics of the candidates, assessors and the assessment context.

Assessment tools that carry the ANTA quality logo have been evaluated against the criteria above. This means that an independent evaluator has checked them for consistency with these points.

Validating the evidence contributing to the judgement made by assessors

Assessors may judge evidence that is drawn from a range of sources. The evidence may be collected by the assessor, the candidate or a third party, such as a workplace supervisor. It can be a mix of current and past evidence. Whatever the approach, the focus should be on gathering evidence that is valid, sufficient, current and authentic, "quality evidence". It is important to ensure that the evidence requirements of the relevant Training Package are met, and this should be monitored regularly.

The implications of inconsistent and poor judgements can include:

- confidence in the AQF qualifications and/or statements of attainment between RTOs will be undermined
- employers and employees will not readily accept AQF qualifications and/or statements of attainment
- candidates may be treated unfairly.

Ensuring the validity and reliability of judgements will improve the consistency of outcomes and build confidence in the qualifications issued through the vocational education and training system.

However, to make a judgement or inference about a candidate's competence can be a complex process. It requires assessors to have:

- current skills and knowledge of the broader industry practice (or access to another person with those skills and knowledge, such as an industry expert, who will agree to assist with the design and/or conduct of the assessment)
- a common understanding of the assessment requirements as set out in the relevant Training Package
- a common interpretation of the unit(s) of competency being assessed.

Validation activities should focus on providing opportunities for assessors to check, confirm and discuss their interpretation of the standards, the evidence requirements and the basis on which they make assessment decisions.

Who should be involved in the validation of assessment strategies?

The footnote to Standard 9.2 in the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* states that validation processes:

... may be internal processes with stakeholder involvement or external validations with other providers and/or stakeholders.

Validation activities may be internal processes managed by the RTO. To ensure that the needs of candidates and enterprises/industry are met, RTOs should provide for the involvement of external stakeholders.

External validation activities involve personnel from RTOs and external organisations. These processes may include specialist assessors, external validators and representatives of relevant industry bodies.

When should validation occur?

Validation can take place before, during and after assessment. It can occur at one, two or all of these times.

Validation *before* assessment may concentrate on:

- the interpretation of the unit(s) of competency to be assessed
- the development of a common understanding of the standard to be achieved
- the identification of the evidence required
- evidence-gathering/assessment tool design.

Validation *during* assessment may concentrate on:

- the performance of the candidate undertaking the assessment
- the evidence collection process
- the role of the assessor in it.

Validation *after* assessment may concentrate on:

- the effectiveness of the assessment tool(s) and the assessment process
- the standard of performance achieved
- the validity of the evidence collected
- the accuracy and consistency of the assessment judgement.

Undertaking validation through all stages of the assessment process can be a costly process. The RTO can choose whether validation activities will cover all stages or focus on particular stages of the assessment process.

The checking of tools, evidence requirements and benchmarks of performance usually occurs either before or after assessment takes place. Validation during the assessment process is less common.

What documentation is needed?

Regardless of the validation approach used, it is vital that RTOs maintain records of their validation processes to satisfy the requirements of Standard 9.2 in the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* which states that RTOs must:

... document any action taken to improve the quality and consistency of assessment.

It is important that any records are filed appropriately so that they can be easily accessed if required. The forms of evidence that show validation has taken place may include:

- records of meetings where validation is covered (course committees, assessor networks, moderation, peer review etc):
  - agendas, minutes, reports of outcomes, action plans, memos, emails etc.
- feedback from clients including:
  - candidate and/or employer satisfaction surveys
  - notes recording feedback from face-to-face or telephone interviews
  - letters or other written material
- position descriptions for specialist or lead assessors
- terms of reference for assessment panels or similar committees
- records of reviews or samples of evidence collected for assessment including:
  - feedback to candidates
  - comments from specialist assessors or technical experts
  - notes from moderation meetings
- internal audits/RTO self-assessment regarding the assessment process
- records of benchmark activities such as:
  - visits to other RTOs or organisations
  - exchange activities (personnel, documentation, resources etc)
- records of professional development activities or similar mechanisms that focus on improving assessment strategies
- examples of materials used in reviewing, comparing and evaluating tools, such as:
  - quality criteria, review checklists
- materials and guidelines for developing and validating evidence gathering tools including:
  - guidelines for designing evidence-gathering tools
  - templates
  - exemplars/samples

- records of changes made to evidence-gathering tools:
  - samples of early drafts and final tools showing improvement (be aware of version control)
  - reports/review sheets on changes made to tools.

These are only suggested forms of evidence, and many other examples may be added to this list.

What approaches can be used to validate assessment strategies?

There are many approaches that RTOs can use to validate assessment strategies. These include:

- assessor networks
- assessment panel
- assessment tool bank
- bank of assessment exemplars and benchmarks
- benchmark
- client satisfaction surveys
- field testing, trialling and piloting
- independent validator
- information for assessors
- internal audits
- lead assessor
- mechanisms to support professional judgement
- mentoring
- moderation meetings
- peer review
- professional development
- RTO self-assessment
- sampling
- specialist assessor
- team assessment.

This list is neither exhaustive or mandatory. Figure 9 provides an alphabetic list of the validation approaches described in these guides and identifies which approaches are most suited to validating the different components of RTO assessment strategies.

Figure 10 provides a brief description of each of these approaches as well as links to other guides in the series that contain more detailed information.

Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment and *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* provide detailed information on most of the approaches listed above. These guides include:

- a description of the approach and its purpose
- how the approach can be used
- benefits of using the approach
- issues to consider
- snapshot case studies and examples from the field where relevant
- templates and suggested guidelines where appropriate.

Figure 9: Suggested approaches for validating components of the assessment strategy

Approaches for validation	Components of the assessment strategy to be validated			
	Assessment process	Assessment tools	Evidence	Assessment judgement
	A	B	C	D
Assessor networks	X	X	X	X
Assessment panel	X	X	X	X
Assessment tool bank		X		
Bank of assessment exemplars and benchmarks		X	X	
Benchmarking	X	X		X
Client satisfaction surveys	X			X
Field testing, trialling and piloting		X		
Independent validator	X	X	X	X
Information for assessors	X		X	X
Internal audits	X	X	X	X
Lead assessor	X	X	X	X
Mechanisms to support professional judgement			X	X
Mentoring	X		X	X
Moderation meetings	X	X	X	X
Peer review	X	X	X	X
Professional development	X	X	X	X
RTO self-assessment	X	X	X	X
Sampling		X	X	X
Specialist assessor		X	X	X
Team assessment	X		X	X

Adapted from: *Guide 7: Assessment using partnership arrangements* (page 31) and *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* (page 10)

Figure 10: Description of validation approaches and sources of evidence

Approach	Description	Links
Assessment panel	Assessment panels have a variety of functions, depending on the needs of the organisation(s) and the assessment process. These may include: ■ reviewing assessment processes ■ interpreting and promoting a common understanding of units of competency and Training Package requirements ■ determining reasonable adjustment ■ critiquing and signing off assessment tools ■ developing benchmarks or assessment exemplars ■ overseeing professional development for assessors ■ providing a network of mentors and coaches for assessors. The focus of the assessment panel may be on higher level strategic and policy matters or more practical and operational issues. Wherever possible, panels should include relevant industry representatives, such as employers, unions, industry organisations and industry regulators.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Assessment panel p.20
Assessment tool bank	An assessment tool bank is a collection of evidence-gathering tools and techniques that are developed and shared among a group of assessors and/or RTOs. The establishment of an assessment tool bank: ■ supports development of a shared understanding of the Training Package and in particular the specific unit(s) of competency being assessed ■ encourages collective development of assessment tools that will tend to produce higher quality assessment products ■ facilitates the critiquing and validation of assessment tools ■ ensures that a quality control procedure is applied to the selection of tools for inclusion in the bank ■ reduces cost, minimises waste and avoids duplication of effort in the development of tools.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Assessment tool bank p.54 *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* ■ Appendix F contains a peer review checklist for assessment tools.

Approach	Description	Links
Assessor networks	Assessor networks are groups of individuals involved in VET assessment who come together to develop and extend their professional practice. Such networks vary in focus, size, structure and level of organisation. Assessor networks contribute to consistency by providing a forum in which assessors can build a shared understanding of Training Packages as well as the assessment requirements of the AQTF. When assessor networks are focused on a specific industry sector, Training Package or qualification, they offer an environment in which assessors can validate assessment practices. This may be achieved through assessors exchanging ideas about the meaning of specific competency standards, the evidence requirements, the ways of gathering evidence and the basis on which assessment decisions are made.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Assessor networks p.44 ■ Mentoring for assessors p.86 *Guide 9: Networking for assessors*
Bank of assessment exemplars and benchmarks	The development of a bank of assessment exemplars enables assessors to access samples of candidate work that are considered to be exemplary. The bank may be developed with the input of industry groups, professional associations or industry regulators. The assessment exemplar bank may be collaborative and informal in nature or highly structured and commercial.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Bank of assessment exemplars and tools p.57
Benchmarking	Benchmarking involves: ■ making comparisons with other organisations to identify or create areas for improvement ■ identifying superior performance and/or practices and adopting them within a specific RTO. The two major forms of benchmarking include: ■ performance benchmarking (comparison of performance between a number of organisations against a number of agreed measures) ■ process benchmarking (comparison of their procedures/processes as well as performance).	*Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* ■ Benchmarking p.26

Approach	Description	Links
Client satisfaction survey	A client satisfaction study involves gathering information from candidates, employers and other end users of the assessment process. Information sought from clients may relate to any aspect of the assessment process. Some areas of inquiry may include: ■ assessment planning ■ provision of information to candidates ■ reasonable adjustment ■ evidence collection ■ feedback to candidates ■ assessment decision making ■ reassessment and appeal processes ■ provision of information on pathways following the assessment process ■ participation in assessment review processes.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Candidate satisfaction study p.76
Field testing, trialling and piloting	Field testing, trialling or piloting of evidence gathering tools and related materials should be a part of the validation process. Assessors can determine whether the tools are appropriate for the context, gather quality evidence and meet the needs of the enterprises/industry and the candidates. Feedback from candidates and enterprises/industry personnel should be used to refine and enhance the tools. Trialling may also be useful for other components of the assessment strategy.	*Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* ■ Appendix F contains a peer review checklist for assessment tools
Lead assessor	The lead assessor has responsibility for developing, managing and monitoring strategies that ensure consistency in assessment. The lead assessor may be the direct line manager of the assessors or may occupy a position with professional responsibility for fostering consistency in the assessment process and outcomes but without direct supervisory responsibility for the assessors. The appointment of a lead assessor provides a clear organisational focus on the importance of achieving consistency in assessment. The lead assessor has responsibility for all validation processes, ensuring the development of a shared understanding and the maintenance of consistent practice by the assessors.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Lead assessor p.26

Approach	Description	Links
Independent validator	An independent validator reviews and validates the assessments that are performed within or across RTOs. The validation of assessment tools may also be part of the role. The appointment of an independent validator is designed to ensure the impartiality and fairness of the assessment process. An independent validator would not be from the organisation or unit delivering the training and/or assessment service. Ideally, the validator will have high-level assessment and technical skills, industry knowledge and experience in conducting assessments within the relevant industry.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Independent validator p.31 includes a sample task description.
Information for assessors	Information for assessors is material produced by RTOs to support quality assessment practice. It commonly covers the assessment policy and assessment procedures, and guidelines for various components of assessment. Part of the information for assessors may take the form of a code of practice for assessors. This may be governed by the State or Territory registering body requirements. Information to assessors can be in print or electronic form. Providing specific information to assessors is a major quality assurance mechanism and an effective communication strategy between the organisation and the assessor. In particular, assessor information: ■ develops mutual understanding of RTO policy and procedures ■ enhances consistency and assessment practice.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Guidelines to interpret units of competency p.60 ■ Guidelines on the collection and judgement of evidence p.63 ■ Guidelines for conducting assessments p.80 *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* ■ Guidelines for gathering third party evidence p.32 ■ Simulated assessment guidelines p.54

Approach	Description	Links
Internal audits *(see also RTO self-assessment)*	Audit means a systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining evidence to determine whether the activities and related outcomes of a training organisation comply with the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*. Under Standard 1.4, RTOs are required to conduct an internal audit of their compliance with the Standards and policies and procedures mentioned in Standard 1.1a. This must take place at least once a year and can be done using: ■ internal audit or ■ self-assessment of equal rigour.	*Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* ■ Internal audits p.38 ■ Appendix K contains a model plan — internal audit planning process. ■ Appendix L contains an internal audit checklist template.
Moderation meetings	Moderation is a process that involves assessors in discussing and reaching agreement about assessment processes and outcomes in a particular industry or industry sector. Assessors develop a shared understanding of the requirements of specific Training Packages, including the relevant competency standards and assessment guidelines, the nature of evidence, how evidence is collected and the basis on which assessment decisions are made. Moderation meetings may be conducted within an RTO (referred to as internal moderation), or across a range of different RTOs offering delivery and assessment services in the same industry or industry sector (called external moderation). External moderation meetings may be convened by a number of different organisations. Moderation meetings may involve: ■ moderation of assessment processes and procedures ■ moderation for verification of assessment outcomes.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Moderation meetings p.36 *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* ■ Appendix F contains a peer review checklist for assessment tools.

Approach	Description	Links
Mechanisms to support professional judgement	Professional judgement involves an assessor making a judgement about competence based on: ■ evidence gathered ■ interpretation and understanding of the unit of competency ■ breadth and depth of experience working with the Standards they are assessing against ■ thorough understanding of current industry practice. In the assessment decision, an assessor is required to infer competence. To minimise errors of judgement it is wise to establish a set of guidelines or strategies to support assessors' professional judgements. RTOs and assessors should establish and implement strategies to ensure that the assessment decision/process is transparent and credible, such as: ■ written information about common pitfalls or errors that affect judgement ■ open and ongoing communication between assessors ■ self-assessment ■ networking ■ professional development workshops for assessors ■ ongoing contact with industry ■ using assessment panels or teams ■ mentoring and coaching.	*Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* ■ Mechanisms to support professional judgement p.40 ■ Simulated assessment guidelines *Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Assessor networks p.44 ■ Guidelines to interpret units of competency p.60 ■ Guidelines on the collection and judgement of evidence p.63 ■ Guidelines for conducting assessments p.80 ■ Mentoring for assessors p.86
Mentoring for assessors	Mentoring involves the pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a lesser skilled or experienced one, with the agreed upon goal of having the lesser skilled person develop specific competencies. Mentoring strategies may be either formal or informal. They may involve pairing an inexperienced assessor with: ■ an experienced assessor who is a member of an assessor network ■ an experienced industry assessor who may be in the workforce or recently retired ■ an experienced assessor from within the same or another RTO.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Assessor networks p.44 ■ Mentoring for assessors p.86 ■ Specialist assessors p.89 ■ Lead assessors p.26

Approach	Description	Links
Peer review	Peer review involves assessors observing each other at work, then providing structured and specific feedback. These strategies can be either formal or informal. It may involve pairing a more experienced assessor with a less experienced assessor. Peer review can involve an evaluation of the: ■ assessment planning interview with the candidate ■ evidence-gathering tools ■ conduct of the assessment ■ evidence collected ■ assessment judgement ■ feedback provided to the candidate.	*Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* ■ Appendix F contains a Peer review checklist for tools. *Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Mentoring for assessors p.86 ■ Lead assessors p.26
Professional development for assessors	Professional development is the means by which assessors acquire, develop and maintain the competencies to carry out quality assessment within the VET sector. It also includes the ways in which assessors maintain knowledge of changes in policy, practice and research that may impact on their assessment processes. Assessors' skills and understanding of competence and competency-based assessment are crucial to the overall assessment process. Professional development will ensure that assessors continue to conduct valid, reliable, fair, flexible and cost-effective assessments. There are many activities that can assist assessors to develop their skills. These include: ■ assessor networks ■ job rotation ■ mentoring and coaching ■ internal validation activities ■ peer review ■ project teams, working parties and committees ■ workplace visits and "return to industry" programs ■ RTO-structured professional development activities ■ formal or informal programs of further study and professional reading.	*Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* ■ Ongoing professional development p.44 *Guide 9: Networking for assessors*

Approach	Description	Links
RTO self-assessment *(see also internal audit)*	Self-assessment is a disciplined process that identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement of the assessment system. Under Standard 1.4, RTOs are required to conduct an internal audit of their compliance with the Standards and policies and procedures mentioned in Standard 1.1a. This must take place at least once a year and can be done using internal audit or self-assessment of equal rigour.	*Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* ■ RTO self-assessment p.50
Sampling	Sampling involves reviewing a random selection of assessments conducted in an organisation to ensure that the planning and preparation, the conduct, the record keeping and reporting, and the review and evaluation of the assessments were undertaken in line with the policy of the organisation, the requirements of the relevant Training Package and the needs of the candidate. Sampling may be conducted both within and across RTOs.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Sampling p.71 includes a checklist for reviewing a sampling exercise.
Specialist assessor	Specialist assessors are individuals with high-level skills and experience in both assessment and a specific technical area. In addition to meeting the assessor requirements of the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* they typically have formal qualifications and experience in their particular industry area. The use of specialist assessors can enhance assessment consistency through ensuring that assessment decisions are made by a relatively limited number of people who have "deep" knowledge of the industry and the assessment process.	*Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Assessor networks p.44 ■ Mentoring for assessors p.86 ■ Specialist assessors p.89 ■ Lead assessors p.26

Approach	Description	Links
Team assessment	Team assessment involves two or more people coming together to undertake an assessment and to make an assessment decision. Team assessment is an effective strategy for checking assessments. Information in the form of a code of practice for assessors or clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the members is necessary to quality assure the outcomes of team assessments. Standards 7.3 (a) and (b) of the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* must be met in team assessments, regardless of the number of members in the team.	*Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* ■ Team assessment p.56 *Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* ■ Specialist assessor p.89 ■ Lead assessor p.26

Selecting the appropriate validation strategies

It is not intended that RTOs and assessors should implement all of the approaches provided in this guide. However, it should be a goal for RTOs to implement as many validation approaches as practicable over time as part of a continuous improvement process. It is important that strategic decisions are made about which approaches are used and in what ways they are used. The decisions made about which approaches to adopt will be dictated by:

- business considerations: These include the organisation's quality systems, strategic planning processes, market share, industry sector and issues relating to client satisfaction.
- resource considerations: Consider staffing, financial, physical resources and time commitments (also consider the cost of establishment, operation and maintenance of the system).
- RTO context: Consider the type, size, location and complexity of the RTO and the enterprises/industry involved.
- regulatory requirements: These could include licensing requirements, State/Territory legislative requirements, State/Territory registering body requirements.

Some approaches require considerable effort and/or resources to implement and might initially be considered to be relatively expensive (for example, conducting team assessments). This "cost" must be balanced against the benefits achieved by implementing the approach. If it is highly effective in terms of increasing confidence or validity, then the cost is warranted. Remember that while the costs of initiating a validation approach may be high, the ongoing costs will be well covered by the long-term benefits to the organisation. The cost of not pursuing specific approaches may be greater than the cost of implementing them. Ultimately, consideration must be given to the degree of risk involved in getting an assessment judgement wrong. Pick the mix of approaches that will ensure compliance with the AQTF and State/Territory requirements, give a sense of confidence about assessment and provide the best value for money.

Planning validation activities

Validation requires:

- strategic planning that may cover an extended period of assessment
- effective coordination and managerial commitment to the concept
- a clear and agreed purpose and process
- a process that meets the needs of the assessors and stakeholders and matches the resources available
- determination of the most appropriate validation techniques to use
- determination of the stage within the assessment process where validation activity will be focused
- identification of personnel involved in the process including consideration of:
    - the capacity and willingness of key stakeholders to participate in the validation process
    - professional development and/or training in validation for assessors
    - the costs associated with establishing, operating and maintaining the validation process including the recognition of the reasonably high demands in relation to time, human and other resources
- records to be maintained that provide evidence of validation process and outcomes
- a procedure for reviewing the validation approaches including:
    - feedback from candidates, enterprise/industry and other stakeholders
    - the positive and negative impacts on current activities.

All these issues need to be considered when selecting the most appropriate validation approaches for the RTO. Figure 11 is a tool designed to assist RTOs in determining which approaches are appropriate for validating different components of the assessment strategy. Figure 12 is a tool provided to help RTOs focus on which validation approaches may be useful. The issues raised in the previous section need to be considered when determining the most appropriate approach for the RTO.

Once the RTO has determined the most appropriate approach to use, it is advisable to invest time in planning the implementation of these activities. Such a plan would include:

- a description of the activity and its purpose
- the period of time over which the activity will be conducted
- who will be involved and their roles and responsibilities
- resources required
- record-keeping requirements.

To assist RTOs with this process, a planning tool has been included as Appendix 8.1 and Appendix 8.2. Appendix 8.1 describes how to use the tool and Appendix 8.2 is a blank template.

Figure 11: Sample planning tool

Validation approach	Description of activities	Timing	Responsibility	Resources required	Record-keeping requirements
1. Peer review	Develop a set of quality criteria to use when evaluating existing evidence gathering tools. Part of the process will involve getting feedback through face to face interviews with a sample of candidates and supervisors.	Feb.—Apr. approx 8 weeks	2 staff members: John Formosa and Anne McKenzie	All existing tools 1/2 day x 8 weeks time release for each staff member	■ Sample of draft tools with edits ■ Quality criteria checklist ■ Summary of feedback from candidates/ supervisors ■ Summary sheet of strengths/ weaknesses of tools for professional development workshop in May
2. Moderation meeting	Results and sample evidence (student work and portfolios) to be discussed at monthly staff meeting (one qualification per meeting).	2 hrs a month	Program manager to coordinate. Individual staff to supply materials.	Sample evidence, recording sheets	Minutes of meeting including action plan for documenting required action
Write in the validation activities you will be using.	Describe how you are going to evaluate each of the validation activities.	Indicate the date(s) the review will take place.	Name the person(s) who will be responsible for evaluating the validation activities.	Describe which resources these activities will need, for example, people, time, physical resources.	Identify what records need to be kept of the review and what form these will take, for example, recording sheets, feedback sheets.

Adapted from: *Guide 7: Assessment using partnership arrangements* (pp. 56, 58 and 60) and *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* (Appendix A [1], page 64)

Figure 12: Tool to help RTOs focus on which validation approaches may be useful

Questions to consider	Approaches that could be useful *(tick relevant boxes)*	
Assessment processes		
Do all the assessors employed by or working in partnership strategies with your RTO follow the RTO's assessment policies, procedures and processes?	☐ Internal audit ☐ RTO self-assessment ☐ Team assessment ☐ Moderation meetings ☐ Information for assessors	☐ Lead assessor ☐ Mentoring ☐ Peer review ☐ Assessor networks ☐ Independent validator
How do your policies, procedures and processes compare with other RTOs?	☐ Benchmarking ☐ Assessor networks	☐ Assessment panel ☐ Client satisfaction survey
Evidence gathering/assessment tools		
Are you confident that the tools used by assessors: ■ are based on the current version of the Training Package and an accurate interpretation of the competency standards? ■ use appropriate methods for gathering evidence? ■ were developed in consultation with industry and have been effectively trialled? ■ facilitate assessment practices that are reliable, valid, flexible, consistent and fair? ■ incorporate clear, concise and accurate instructions/advice to candidates and assessors? ■ take into account the need for reasonable adjustment in the assessment process? ■ support assessment processes that are inclusive and non-discriminatory? ■ are able to be successfully implemented and take into account the characteristics of the candidates, assessors and the assessment context?	☐ Peer/expert review ☐ Lead assessor ☐ Moderation meetings ☐ Assessment tool bank ☐ Assessor networks ☐ Bank of assessment exemplars and benchmarks ☐ Benchmarking	☐ Field testing, trialling and piloting ☐ Independent validator ☐ Moderation meetings ☐ Professional development ☐ Sampling ☐ Specialist assessor
Evidence leading to the judgement		
Is the evidence collected: ■ current, valid, reliable, sufficient and authentic? ■ based on the correct interpretation of the unit(s) of competency being assessed?	☐ Bank of assessment exemplars and benchmarks ☐ Assessment panel	☐ Sampling ☐ Internal audit ☐ Information for assessors
Do the assessors making the assessment decision have: ■ a common understanding of the assessment requirements as set out in the relevant Training Package? ■ current skills and knowledge of the broader industry practice?	☐ Mechanisms to support professional judgement ☐ Team assessment ☐ Assessor panels	☐ Assessor networks ☐ Independent validator ☐ Moderation meetings ☐ Specialist assessor
Do the assessment judgements meet the needs of the candidate and enterprise/industry?	☐ Client satisfaction surveys	

Evaluating chosen validation approaches

Once a decision has been made about which approaches to use, the RTO should think about evaluating how they will work when they are first implemented. In other words, the evaluation of validation approaches must be planned. This does not need to be a complicated process. Figure 13 provides an example of a worked template that is included as Appendix 9 (Validation approaches — review and evaluation template). This template could be used to gather feedback from those involved in the validation activities. The proforma can be customised to suit the particular requirements of the RTO. Large RTOs could provide a form for each validation activity or program area. Smaller RTOs may be able to provide a record of all validation activities on one form.

As each validation approach is reviewed, the RTO should decide how approaches can be improved. This will assist in determining what actions need to be taken and could form part of the internal audit/self-assessment that RTOs are required to undertake as part of compliance with the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

Figure 13: Validation approaches — evaluation outcomes form

Validation approach	Outcome of review activities	Follow-up action for continuous improvement
Moderation meeting	Four assessors were asked to get together and work out how the evidence they collected for a new qualification that they were assessing compared. All agreed that some guidelines need to be developed for handling the portfolios of evidence.	Jo and Alex will work together with some of the workplace supervisors to put together samples of the documents being included in portfolios. Exemplar materials will be developed from these samples. Completion and trialling during the next in-service training.
Assessment tools	Approval process for tools implemented and quality criteria established.	Agreement that the quality of the tools has improved. However, feedback from some assessors indicates concern regarding innovative practice and time taken for the approval process. Issues will be discussed at next assessor network meeting.
Identify which validation approaches were used and which were reviewed.	Outline the outcomes of the review process. What did you find when you evaluated the approaches to validation?	From the findings of your review, what can you improve in your validation approach? What changes can you make to do it better? How will you make the changes? When should the changes be made? This form should be kept to use as evidence in your internal audit.

Adapted from: *Guide 7: Assessment using partnership arrangements* (pp. 56, 58 and 60) and *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* (Appendix A [1], p. 64)

Appendix 1: Enterprise profile

Name of enterprise	
Name and position of key contact	
Contact details	

BACKGROUND	NOTES
■ What is the key role of this enterprise? ■ What are the key objectives of this enterprise? ■ What are the main activities of the enterprise? ■ Who is the key decision maker in the enterprise? ■ What is the basis of competition in this industry? ■ What changes have taken place in this enterprise? ■ What changes have taken place in this industry? ■ What are the current and future trends in this enterprise and industry? ■ What is the industrial relations situation for this enterprise and industry?	

BUSINESS SKILLS	
■ How many people are employed in this enterprise? What are their characteristics in terms of employment basis, duration of employment and skill level? ■ Are there any categories of employees for which it is difficult to obtain the right skills, knowledge and attitudes? ■ What is the skill hierarchy in the enterprise? ■ Is there any cross-skilling in the enterprise? ■ How does the enterprise attempt to maintain the skills and knowledge that give it a competitive edge? ■ What knowledge and skills contribute most to the success of the enterprise? ■ Which staff members possess these skills and knowledge? ■ What are the current and future skill needs of the enterprise?	

BUSINESS LEARNING	NOTES
■ How did the enterprise acquire its current skills and knowledge? ■ How does the enterprise acquire new skills, knowledge and ways of working? ■ From which activities have employees learnt the most?	

STRUCTURED TRAINING	
■ Do people in this enterprise access structured training? ■ How valuable has the enterprise found structured training? ■ What training infrastructure exists in the enterprise?	

ASSESSMENT	
■ Does the enterprise assess the skills and knowledge of its employees? ■ If so, what is the purpose of the assessment? ■ If so, how is the assessment organised? ■ If so, does the assessment lead to national recognition? ■ Are nationally recognised qualifications important in this enterprise?	

Appendix 2: Enterprise "macro-level" requirements

Name of enterprise	
Name and position of key contact	
Contact details	
Date of consultation	

KEY DISCUSSION AREAS	NOTES
Key skill development areas	
Training delivery mode	
Enterprise capacity to deliver and assess	
RTO capacity to deliver and assess	
Customisation of the Training Package	
Sequencing of delivery and assessment	
Recognition of prior learning	
Use of simulation in evidence gathering	
Evidence collection	
Catering for candidates with special needs	

Appendix 3: Enterprise "micro-level" requirements

Name of enterprise	
Name and position of key contact	
Contact details	
Date of consultation	

KEY DISCUSSION AREAS	NOTES
Competencies to be developed through the program	
Integrating enterprise operating procedures with competency standards	
Integrating enterprise performance standards with competency standards	
Competencies delivered and assessed on-the-job	
Competencies delivered and assessed off-the-job	
Scheduling delivery and assessment activities	
Assessment tools and processes	
Record keeping	
Appeals and reassessment	
Communication between RTO and enterprise	

Appendix 4: Sample qualification structure

Name of RTO	
Training Package	
Title of Qualification	
Delivery and assessment context	

Selection of units of competency:	
Code	**Title of Unit of Competency**

Appendix 5: Delivery and assessment strategy outline

Name of RTO			**Page 1 of 4**
Delivery period			
Code and title of qualification			
Units of competency	**Code**	**Title**	**Core/Elective**
Client(s)			
Delivery and assessment arrangements	**Duration** The program is delivered over a period of		
	Organisation		

Name of RTO		Page 2 of 4
Delivery and assessment arrangements (continued)	**Alignment with units of competency**	
	Program Area	**Unit(s) of Competency**
	Delivery modes	
	Evidence-gathering techniques	

Program area	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

KEY

A Demonstration
B Questioning
C Interview
D Scenario — problem solving
E Role play
F Case study — fault finding
G Written test
H Critical incident report

Name of RTO		Page 3 of 4
Delivery and assessment arrangements (continued)	**Schedule**	

Week	Program structure		
1			
2			
3			
4			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			

Name of RTO					Page 4 of 4
Delivery and assessment staff	**Program area**	**Staff**	**Delivery/ Assessment**	**Competencies of staff**	
				Technical	**Assess**
Assessment validation process	The processes used to validate assessment in this program are: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■				
Infrastructure requirements *(A tick indicates that the RTO has the required infrastructure.)*	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐				
Pathways					
Program manager's endorsement:					
Date:					

Appendix 6: Evidence of consultation record template

Appendix 6 is a template to assist RTOs to effectively record the different types of evidence they may have from many different sources regarding consultations with enterprises/industries. It is a way of organising existing documentation of evidence by providing a key to its location. It may also act as a prompt about the range of activities that may constitute evidence of consultation. (Discard any components not applicable.)

Department	**Qualification(s)**
Sources of industry information used: ***(delete those not applicable)***	

Staff or contracted personnel currently employed in industry	**Yes**	**No**	
Engaged in design of assessment approaches?	Yes	No	Experience of staff currently employed in the industry used in the following ways:
Numbers of staff involved			
Engaged in design of learning programs?	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:
Numbers of staff involved			(eg Address on server of minutes of a planning session held with casual staff)

Allied industry experts available for particular purposes (projects)	**Yes**	**No**	
Industry advice/ expertise sought	Yes	No	Experience of allied industry experts used in the following ways:
Engaged in design of learning programs	Yes	No	
Engaged in design of assessment approaches	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:
Numbers of staff involved			(eg Location of report that acknowledges the input of particular industry experts)

Staff visits to industry sites	**Yes**	**No**	
Industry advice/expertise sought	Yes	No	Input from enterprise personnel sought by visiting staff and used:
Engaged in design of learning programs	Yes	No	
	Yes	No	
Engaged in design of assessment approaches	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:
Numbers of staff involved			(eg Diaries of staff members conducting industry visits)

Partnerships with enterprises/industry associations for particular purposes (eg projects)	Yes	No	
Industry advice/expertise sought	Yes	No	Names of projects involving partnerships with particular enterprises and/or industry associations:
Engaged in design of learning programs	Yes	No	
Engaged in design of assessment approaches	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:
Numbers of staff involved			(eg Project files server location)

Response(s) to enterprise requests for advice/service	Yes	No	
Request received	Yes	No	The following enterprises had requests for advice/service:
Need/problem identified	Yes	No	
Solution developed in consultation with enterprise(s)	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:
Number of staff involved	Yes	No	(eg Log of phone inquiries)

Industry representatives on governing bodies	Yes	No	
Approval of governing body sought	Yes	No	The following enterprises/industry associations represented:
Engaged in design of learning programs	Yes	No	
Engaged in design of assessment approaches	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:
Numbers of meetings where relevant issues discussed			(eg File location of minutes and board papers, including membership record)

Industry representatives on course consultative committees	Yes	No	
Approval of consultative committee sought	Yes	No	The following enterprises/industry associations represented:
Engaged in design of learning programs	Yes	No	
Engaged in design of assessment approaches	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:
Numbers of meetings where relevant issues discussed			(eg File location of minutes and papers including attendance records)

Participation in other formal industry networks	Yes	No	Yes	No
Feedback sought relevant to assessment strategies	Yes	No	Participation in the following forums:	
Feedback received relevant to assessment strategies	Yes	No		
Adjustments to delivery/ assessment activities	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:	
Number of forums participating			(eg Email folder containing invitations to forums and their programs)	

Participation in informal industry networks	Yes	No	Yes	No
Feedback sought relevant to assessment strategies	Yes	No	Participation in the following informal network activities:	
Feedback received relevant to assessment strategies	Yes	No		
Adjustments to delivery/ assessment activities	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:	
Number of informal networks operating			(eg Folder of letters of thanks from industry people)	

Industry views canvassed in surveys	Yes	No	Yes	No
Questions on delivery/ assessment strategies included	Yes	No	The following surveys conducted:	
Useful information generated from this source	Yes	No		
Adjustments to delivery/ assessment activities	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:	
Numbers of enterprises responding			(eg Published survey results in Annual Report)	

Complaints/appeals recorded and acted upon	Yes	No	Yes	No
Issues in complaints/appeals identified	Yes	No	Complaints/appeals on the following issues:	
Useful feedback gained	Yes	No		
Incorporated into delivery/ assessment approaches	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:	
Numbers of incidents recorded			(eg Log of complaints kept by assigned person)	

Industry informed about delivery and/or assessment strategies	Yes	No	
Information distributed through various media	Yes	No	Types of media used to distribute information on delivery/assessment strategies to enterprises and/or industry:
Included opportunity for feedback	Yes	No	
Useful feedback received and used	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:
Numbers of responses from industry sources			(eg Available locations of current course directories)

Other sources of enterprises/industry input and advice	Yes	No	
Other sources of enterprise/ industry information	Yes	No	Outline of other sources used:
Feedback gained on delivery/ assessment strategies	Yes	No	
Information used to amend approaches	Yes	No	For details see the following sources:
Numbers of such sources utilised			

Appendix 7: Evidence of RTO training delivery and assessment strategies

Name of RTO			
Qualification			
Name of RTO contact person		**Telephone**	

This organisation can provide the following documented evidence to show that it has developed training delivery and assessment strategies for this qualification that comply with Standard 9.1 of the Australian Quality Training Framework.

TYPE OF EVIDENCE *(Delete any information in this table not required by your organisation.)*	**YES**	**LOCATION OF EVIDENCE**
CLIENT NEEDS		
Surveys, research reports, statistical information on needs of client groups	☐	
Customised delivery and assessment strategies to meet client needs	☐	
CLIENT INFORMATION		
Outline of program structure and delivery/ assessment strategies	☐	
Client information on delivery/assessment options	☐	
ASSESSMENT AND DELIVERY PLANS		
Delivery plan and evidence of implementation	☐	
Assessment plan and evidence of implementation	☐	
ENTERPRISE/INDUSTRY CONSULTATION		
Meeting minutes/notes to indicate enterprise/ industry consultation in development of assessment strategies	☐	
Letters acknowledging enterprise/ industry involvement in development of assessment strategies	☐	
ASSESSMENT AND DELIVERY MATERIALS		
Delivery materials	☐	
Assessment materials	☐	
REVIEW PROCESSES		
Plans, agendas, minutes that indicate review of assessment and/or delivery materials	☐	
Plans, agendas, minutes that indicate review of assessment and/or delivery process	☐	
Revised assessment processes indicating action taken to improve quality and consistency of assessment	☐	
Stakeholder feedback on assessment processes	☐	
OTHER		
	☐	

Appendix 8.1: Planning proforma for validation approaches

Validation approach	Description of activities	Timing	Responsibility	Resources required	Record-keeping requirements
1.					
2.					
3.					
Write in the validation activities you will be using.	Describe how you are going to evaluate each of the validation activities.	Indicate the date(s) the review will take place.	Name the person(s) who will be responsible for evaluating the validation activities.	Describe what resources these activities will need, for example, people, time, physical resources.	Identify what records to be kept of the review and what form these will take, for example, recording sheets, feedback sheets, etc.

Adapted from: *Guide 7: Assessment using partnership arrangements* (pp. 56, 58 and 60) and *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* (Appendix A [1], page 64)

Appendix 8.2: Planning proforma for validation activities

Validation approach	Description of activities	Timing	Responsibility	Resources required	Record-keeping requirements
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

Adapted from *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* (Appendix A [2], p. 65)

Appendix 9: Validation approaches — review and evaluation template

Validation approach	Outcome of review activities	Follow-up action for continuous improvement
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Filing details: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Adapted from *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* (Appendix B, p. 66)

glossary

This glossary was compiled for use in the *Training Package Assessment Guides*.

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

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

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

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Appeal process
A process whereby the person being assessed, or other interested party, such as an employer, may dispute the outcome of an assessment and seek reassessment.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Assessment
Assessment means the 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.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Assessment context
The environment in which the assessment will be carried out. This will include physical and operational factors, the assessment system within which assessment is carried out, opportunities for gathering evidence in a number of situations, the purpose of the assessment, who carries out the assessment and the period of time during which it takes place.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Assessment guidelines
Assessment guidelines are an endorsed component of a Training Package which underpins assessment and which sets out the industry approach to valid, reliable, flexible and fair assessment. Assessment guidelines include the assessment system overview, assessor requirements, designing assessment resources, conducting assessment and sources of information on assessment.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Assessment judgement
Assessment judgement involves the assessor evaluating whether the evidence gathered is current, valid, authentic and sufficient to make the assessment decision. The assessment judgement will involve the assessor in using professional judgement in evaluating the evidence available.

Assessment materials
Assessment materials are any resources that assist in any part of the assessment process. They may include information for the candidate or assessor, assessment tools or resources for the quality assurance strategies of the assessment system.

Assessment method
Assessment method means the particular technique used to gather different types of evidence. This may include methods or techniques such as questioning, observation, third party reports, interviews, simulations and portfolios. Also see Evidence gathering technique.

Assessment plan
An assessment plan is a document developed by an assessor that includes the elements and units of competency to be assessed, when the assessment will occur, how the assessment will occur, the assessment methods to be used and the criteria for the assessment decision. Also see Evidence plan.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Assessment process
The assessment process is the agreed series of steps that the candidate undertakes within the enrolment, assessment, recording and reporting cycle. The process must best suit the needs of all stakeholders and be both efficient and cost-effective. The agreed assessment process is often expressed as a flow chart.

Assessment strategy
Assessment strategy means the approach to assessment for each qualification, or part thereof, within the Registered Training Organisation's scope of registration.

Assessment system
An assessment system is a controlled and ordered process designed to ensure that assessment decisions made in relation to many individuals, by many assessors, in many situations are consistent, fair, valid and reliable.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Assessment tool
An assessment tool contains both the instrument and the instructions for gathering and interpreting evidence:

- instrument(s) — the specific questions or activity developed from the selected assessment method(s) to be used for the assessment. (A profile of acceptable performance and the decision making rules for the assessor may also be included.)
- procedures — the information/instructions given to the candidate and/or the assessor regarding conditions under which the assessment should be conducted and recorded.

Also see Evidence gathering tool.

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

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

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

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

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

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Candidate
A candidate is any person presenting for assessment. The candidate may be:

- a learner undertaking training in an institutional setting
- a learner/worker undertaking training in a workplace
- a learner/worker wanting their skills recognised
- or any combination of the above.

Competency
The specification of knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standards of performance required in the workplace.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Competency standard
Competency standards define the competencies required for effective performance in the workplace. Standards are expressed in outcome terms and have a standard format comprising unit title, unit descriptor, elements, performance criteria, range statement and evidence guide. Also see Unit(s) of competency.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Client
Client means learner, enterprise or organisation, which uses or purchases the services provided by the Registered Training Organisation.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Clustering
The process of grouping competencies into combinations which have meaning and purpose related to work functions and needs in an industry or enterprise.

Adapted from Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Collaborative assessment arrangements
Formal collaborative assessment arrangements involve written agreements between a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and other organisations or RTOs. These arrangements enable the partners to share for mutual benefit their resources, effort, time, cost, responsibility and expertise. Partnership arrangements are regulated by the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* under Standard 1.6. See also Partnerships.

Informal collaborative arrangements refer to assessors and candidates working together, in partnership, in the assessment process.

Customisation
Customisation is the addition of specific industry or enterprise information to endorsed national competency standards to reflect the work of a particular industry or workplace or to improve the standards' relevance to industry.

Delivery and assessment strategies
Delivery and assessment strategies means delivery and assessment strategies for each qualification, or part thereof, within the Registered Training Organisation's scope of registration.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Dimensions of competency
The concept of competency includes all aspects of work performance and not only narrow task skills. The four dimensions of competency are:

- task skills
- task management skills
- contingency management skills
- job/role environment skills.

From Training Package Developers' Handbook

Element
An element is the basic building block of the unit of competency. Elements describe the tasks that make up the broader function or job, described by the unit.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Endorsement
Endorsement means the formal process of recognition of Training Packages undertaken by the National Training Quality Council.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Evaluation
Evaluation includes all the activities related to the registration of a training organisation to determine whether it meets, or continues to meet, all the requirements of the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* necessary for registration. Evaluation may include review of past performance, review of complaints and other feedback, risk assessment, examination of documentation, conduct of audit, consideration of audit reports and other relevant activities in relation to the organisation.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Evidence and 'quality' evidence

Evidence is information gathered which, when matched against the performance criteria, provides proof of competency. Evidence can take many forms and be gathered from a number of sources. Assessors often categorise evidence in different ways, for example:

- direct, indirect and supplementary sources of evidence
- evidence collected by the candidate or evidence collected by the assessor
- historical and recent evidence collected by the candidate and current evidence collected by the assessor.

Quality evidence is valid, authentic, sufficient and current evidence that enables the assessor to make the assessment judgement.

Evidence gathering techniques

Evidence gathering technique means the particular technique or method used to gather different types of evidence. This may include methods or techniques such as questioning, observation, third party reports, interviews, simulations and portfolios.

Also see Assessment method.

Evidence gathering tool

An evidence gathering tool contains both the instrument and the instructions for gathering and interpreting evidence in an assessment process:

- instrument(s) — the specific questions or activity developed from the selected assessment method(s) to be used for the assessment (a profile of acceptable performance and the decision making rules for the assessor may also be included)
- procedures — the information/instructions given to the candidate and/or the assessor regarding conditions under which the assessment should be conducted and recorded.

Also see Assessment tool.

Evidence guide

The evidence guide is part of a unit of competency. Its purpose is to guide assessment of the unit of competency in the workplace and/or a training environment. The evidence guide specifies the context of assessment, the critical aspects of evidence and the required or underpinning knowledge and skills. The evidence guide relates directly to the performance criteria and range statement defined in the unit of competency.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Evidence plan

An evidence plan is a document developed by an assessor, often in collaboration with the candidate and the supervisor or technical expert. It includes the units of competency to be assessed, details of the type of evidence to be collected, information regarding who is to collect the evidence and the time period for doing so.

Also see Assessment plan.

Flexible learning and assessment

Flexible learning and assessment means an approach to vocational education and training which allows for the adoption of a range of learning strategies in a variety of learning environments to cater for differences in learning styles, learning interests and needs, and variations in learning opportunities (including online).

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Holistic/integrated assessment

An approach to assessment that covers the clustering of multiple units/elements from relevant competency standards. This approach focuses on the assessment of a 'whole of job' role or function that draws on a number of units of competency. This assessment approach also integrates the assessment of the application of knowledge, technical skills, problem solving and demonstration of attitudes and ethics.

Adapted from Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs)
National and State/Territory bodies comprising representation from the industry parties responsible for the development, review and implementation of competency standards in given industries.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

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

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Key competency
Employment related general competencies that are essential for effective participation in the workplace.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Moderation
Moderation is a process which involves assessors in discussing and reaching agreement about assessment processes and outcomes in a particular industry or industry sector. This enables assessors to develop a shared understanding of the requirements of specific Training Packages, including the relevant competency standards and assessment guidelines, the nature of evidence, how evidence is collected and the basis on which assessment decisions are made.

Mutual recognition
Mutual recognition applies nationally and means:

1. The acceptance and application of the decisions of a registering body that has registered a training organisation, or a course accrediting body that has accredited a course, by another registering body or course accrediting body, without there being any further requirement for a process beyond the initial process, including:
    a. the recognition and application by the registering body of each State or Territory of the decisions of the registering body of other States and Territories in relation to the registration of, imposition of sanctions on, including the cancellation of registration of training organisations; and
    b. the recognition and application by the course accrediting body of each State or Territory of the decisions of the course accrediting body of other States and Territories in relation to the accreditation of courses where no relevant Training Package exists;
2. The recognition by State and Territory registering bodies of the decisions of the National Training Quality Council in endorsing Training Packages.
3. The recognition and acceptance by a 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.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Nationally recognised training
Nationally recognised training means training and assessment, delivered by a Registered Training Organisation, which meets the requirements specified in national industry/enterprise Training Packages or accredited courses where no relevant Training Package exists.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo
Nationally Recognised Training logo means the logo used to signify that training and assessment products and services meet the requirements agreed under the National Training Framework.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

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

- applies nationally
- is endorsed by the ANTA Ministerial Council
- is made up of the *Australian Quality Training Framework* and endorsed Training Packages.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

National Training Information Service (NTIS)
National Training Information Service (NTIS) means the National Register for recording information about Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), Training Packages and accredited courses. Information held on the NTIS is searchable and publicly accessible via the Internet. The NTIS contains comprehensive information on endorsed Training Packages which have been approved by Ministers and includes full details of competency standards; a listing of National Training Quality Council noted support materials with contact source; details of Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) accredited courses/qualifications; and contact details and scope of registration of all RTOs.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

National Training Quality Council (NTQC)
National Training Quality Council (NTQC) means the body established by the ANTA Ministerial Council as a Committee of the ANTA Board. In relation to quality assurance arrangements in the vocational education and training system the NTQC has a role in:

- providing advice on the operation of, and any necessary change to, the *Australian Quality Training Framework* (AQTF);
- providing information and advice to State and Territory recognition authorities on the implementation of the AQTF; and
- providing to the ANTA Board, for incorporation in the Board's reports to the ANTA Ministerial Council (including the Annual National Report), information and advice on the operation of the AQTF in each State and Territory, including by providing such independent advice on State/Territory registration, audit and related processes and related Commonwealth processes as deemed necessary by the NTQC.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

New Apprenticeships
New Apprenticeships means structured training arrangements, usually involving on- and off-the-job training, for a person employed under an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Non-compliance
Non-compliance means failure to comply with one or more of the *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Partnerships
Formal partnership assessment arrangements involve written agreements between a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and other organisations or RTOs. Partnership arrangements enable the partners to share for mutual benefit their resources, effort, time, cost, responsibility and expertise. These arrangements are regulated by the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* under Standard 1.6. See also Collaborative assessment arrangements.

Informal partnership arrangements refer to assessors and candidates working together in the assessment process.

Performance criteria
Evaluative statements which specify what is to be assessed and the required level of performance. The performance criteria specify the activities, skills, knowledge and understanding that provide evidence of competent performance for each element.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Period of registration
Period of registration means the period for which a Registered Training Organisation is registered. The period of registration is five years (unless cancelled or suspended).

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Qualification
Qualification means, in the vocational education and training sector, the formal certification, issued by a Registered Training Organisation under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), that a person has achieved all the requirements for a qualification as specified in an endorsed national Training Package or in an accredited course.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Quality
Quality means the ability of a set of inherent characteristics of a product, system or process to fulfil requirements of customers and other interested parties.

From AS/NZS ISO 9000: 2000 in the AQTF Standards for RTOs

Range statement
Part of a competency standard, which sets out a range of contexts in which performance can take place. The range helps the assessor to identify the specific industry or enterprise application of the unit of competency.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Reasonable adjustment
The nature and range of adjustment to an assessment tool or assessment method which will ensure valid and reliable assessment decisions but also meet the characteristics of the person(s) being assessed.

Adapted from Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Reassessment
An assessment activity initiated as a result of an appeal against the outcome of a previous assessment.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Recognition process
Recognition process is a term that covers Recognition of Prior Learning, Recognition of Current Competency and Skills Recognition.

Recognition of Current Competency
See Recognition of Prior Learning.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
RPL means recognition of competencies currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. Under the *Australian Quality Training Framework*, competencies may be attained in a number of ways. This includes through any combination of formal or informal training and education, work experience or general life experience. In order to grant RPL the assessor must be confident that the candidate is currently competent against the endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards or outcomes specified in Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) accredited courses. The evidence may take a variety of forms and could include certification, references from past employers, testimonials from clients and work samples. The assessor must ensure that the evidence is authentic, valid, reliable, current and sufficient.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Records of assessment
The information of assessment outcomes that is retained by the organisation responsible for issuing the nationally recognised Statement of Attainment or qualification.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Registration
Registration means the process of formal approval and recognition of a training organisation, by a State or Territory registering body, in accordance with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* and the *Standards for Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies*.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
Registered Training Organisation (RTO) means a training organisation registered in accordance with the *Australian Quality Training Framework*, within a defined scope of registration.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Registering body
State or Territory registering body means the body responsible under the State or Territory vocational education and training legislation and decision making framework for all the processes relating to the administration of the registration of training organisations including the imposition of sanctions.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Renewal of registration
Renewal of registration means the subsequent registration of a Registered Training Organisation following an evaluation, conducted prior to the expiry of a registration period, of a Registered Training Organisation against the requirements of the *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Reporting assessment outcomes
The different ways in which the outcomes of assessment processes are reported to the person being assessed, employers and other appropriate personnel or stakeholders. Assessment outcomes may be reported in a variety of ways including graded, non-graded, statistical or descriptive reporting systems.

From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training

Risk management
Risk management means the systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the tasks of identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating and monitoring risk.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Sanctions
Sanctions means any action imposed for non-compliance with the *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, including:

a. the imposition of specific conditions on registration (which can cover any aspect of registration including the Registered Training Organisation's scope, location or type of delivery and assessment activities);
b. amendment of registration (including a reduction in the scope of registration);
c. suspension of registration; and
d. cancellation of registration.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Scope of registration
Scope of registration means the defined scope for which a training organisation is registered that identifies the particular services and products that can be provided. A Registered Training Organisation may be registered to provide either:

a. training delivery and assessment services and products and issue Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications and Statements of Attainment; or
b. assessment services and products and issue AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

The scope of registration is further defined by AQF qualifications and/or endorsed units of competency.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Self-assessment
Self-assessment is a process that allows candidates being assessed to collect and provide evidence on their own performances against the competency standards. Self-assessment is often used as a pre-assessment tool to help the candidate and assessor to determine what evidence is available and where the gaps may be.

Simulation
Simulation is a form of evidence gathering that involves the candidate in completing or dealing with a task, activity or problem in an off-the-job situation that replicates the workplace context. Simulations vary from recreating realistic workplace situations such as in the use of flight simulators, through the creation of role plays based on workplace scenarios to the reconstruction of a business situation on a spreadsheet. In developing simulations, the emphasis is not so much on reproducing the external circumstance but on creating situations in which candidates are able to demonstrate:

a. technical skills
b. underpinning knowledge
c. generic skills such as decision making and problem solving
d. workplace practices such as effective communication.

Skills Recognition
See Recognition process.

Statement of Attainment
Statement of Attainment means a record of recognised learning which, although falling short of an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) 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.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Strategic industry audit
Strategic industry audit means the audit of Registered Training Organisations operating in a specific industry or industry sector targeted on the basis of identified risks relating to that industry or sector.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Training contract
An agreement outlining the training and assessment which forms part of a New Apprenticeship training contract and registered with the relevant State/Territory government department or agency.

Training Package
Training Package means an integrated set of nationally endorsed competency standards, assessment guidelines and Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Training plan
Training plan means a program of training and assessment which is required under an Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract. The Apprenticeship/Traineeship Contract is registered with the appropriate State/Territory government department or agency as may be required by State/Territory legislation.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Unit of competency
Unit of competency means the specification of knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance expected in the workplace.

From AQTF Standards for RTOs

Validation
Validation involves reviewing, comparing and evaluating assessment processes, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same standards and documenting any action taken to improve the quality and consistency of assessment.

Derived from AQTF Standards for RTOs

Australian
National Training
Authority