

Understanding VET Frameworks

1. Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is an all-inclusive, quality-guaranteed structure for all nationally recognised qualifications conveyed through schools, higher education institutions, and the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. It is the national policy for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system. The AQF is implemented across all states and territories, thereby guaranteeing that education and training outcomes are transferable, recognized, and maintain a standardised level of quality throughout Australia.

Structure and Levels

The AQF is categorised into ten different levels. Each level has a set of qualifications associated with it, sorted by the learning outcomes, relative complexity, and depth of achievement expected. The qualifications at level one are the least complex and advance to the most complex at level ten.

Policy Guidelines

As a policy framework, the AQF contains guidelines for education and training providers on several aspects. These include:

- **Accreditation and Issuing of Qualifications:** The AQF stipulates the standards for issuing qualifications, ensuring that all educational providers adhere to these.
- **Student Pathways:** It lays out the paths for students to progress from one level to the next, providing a clear roadmap for academic progression.
- **Qualification Pathways:** The AQF outlines how various qualifications interlink and the prerequisites required to progress from one qualification to the next.
- **Governance Features:** It provides the governance structures needed to maintain the integrity and quality of the Australian education and training system.

2. Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)

Victoria's regulating body, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), operates under the AQTF requirements. The VRQA uses the 'Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration' of the AQTF and the '2016 VRQA Guidelines for VET Providers' when auditing RTOs within their jurisdiction.

RTOs in Victoria should be aware of these requirements, and if unsure if the VRQA is their regulator, should check registration details for their RTO on training.gov.au for confirmation. The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is a superseded national set of compliance standards. The AQTF lists a number of Conditions, Standards, Indicators and Criteria for the registration and operations of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

Prior to the establishment of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) as the national VET regulator, the standards that applied to the registration of RTOs were found in the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Now, the Standards for RTOs 2015 is used in most states and territories as the legislation for initial and ongoing registration for training providers in the VET sector.

3. Framework for Foundation Skills

Foundation skills are the core capabilities that are necessary for effective participation in the workplace and broader community. They comprise four key areas: language, literacy, numeracy (LLN), and employability skills.

These skills have been consistently recognised by employers as vital for successful performance within any work environment. With the ever-evolving industry landscapes and rapid technological changes, individuals are urged to continuously develop and adapt their foundation skills to align with new contexts, technologies, and purposes.

Mandatory Requirement of Foundation Skills

As of the Standards for Training Packages 2012, it's now a mandatory requirement for all units of competency to detail the essential language, literacy, numeracy, and employment skills necessary for performance in each respective unit.

The Standards further specify that these Foundation Skills should be embedded within all Units of Competency. Even when not explicitly stated, these Foundation Skills must be detailed in the unit's 'Foundation Skills' section to ensure comprehensive understanding and application.

4. Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)

The Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) is a comprehensive framework that outlines the language, literacy, and numeracy (LLN) elements essential for individuals to develop strong foundation skills. Together with the 'Core Skills for Work,' these foundation skills are crucial for successful participation in various contexts such as personal and community, workplace and employment, and education and training.

The ACSF serves as a valuable tool for individuals, educators, employers, and policymakers, providing a nationally consistent approach to identifying and developing these core skills.

Key Features of the ACSF

- **Shared Concepts and Language:** The ACSF provides a common understanding and vocabulary for identifying, describing, and discussing core skills. It ensures consistency and promotes effective communication across different stakeholders.
- **Systematic Benchmarking and Monitoring:** The framework offers a systematic approach to benchmarking, monitoring, and reporting on core skills performance. This enables individuals and organizations to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and measure skill development over time.

The Five Core Skills

The ACSF identifies the following five core skills as essential for an individual's successful participation in society:

- **Learning:** This skill encompasses the ability to acquire and apply knowledge effectively, engage in continuous learning, and adapt to changing circumstances.
- **Reading:** Reading involves understanding and interpreting written texts of various formats, including documents, instructions, reports, and digital content.

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- **Writing:** Writing involves producing written communication that is clear, coherent, and appropriate for different purposes and audiences.
- **Oral Communication:** Oral communication refers to the ability to express ideas, opinions, and information effectively through spoken language, whether in face-to-face or digital interactions.
- **Numeracy:** Numeracy encompasses the capacity to use and interpret numerical information in everyday life, including understanding mathematical concepts, calculations, and data analysis.

5. Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS)

Framework

The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework is a comprehensive set of legal regulations that governs the provision of education services to international students in Australia. The framework ensures a consistent, high-quality approach to training and student care, thereby upholding Australia's reputation as a leading global provider of education services.

Components of the ESOS Framework

The ESOS Framework is made up of several legislative and regulatory components:

- **Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act):** The primary legislation covering the provision of education to overseas students.
- **Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019 (ESOS Regulations):** Further details on the ESOS Act's implementation and operation.
- **Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Act 1997:** Governs the charges associated with becoming a registered ESOS provider.
- **National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code):** Sets out the standards Australian educational providers must meet when providing services to overseas students.
- **National Standards for Foundation Programs:** Specifies the standards for foundational programs provided to international students.

- **ELICOS Standards 2018:** Details the standards for English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS).

Note: This VET Fact Sheet provides general information and should not be considered as legal advice.