

To cluster or not to cluster?

The decision to cluster for delivery and/or assessment will be made based on a number of considerations that relate to the needs of the student, the needs of the workplace, the needs of the RTO and the characteristics of the units of competency. In determining whether clustering is appropriate, RTOs should consider the answers to the following questions.

Questions	Yes	No
Characteristics of the units of competency		
Do the units in your proposed cluster have common knowledge and/or skills and/or performance requirements?	☐	☐
Are they at the same Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level?	☐	☐
Do they have common application in tasks?	☐	☐
Student		
Does the student need to be competent in all the units or would it be better if he/she completed an individual unit?	☐	☐
Does the student already have competence in some of the knowledge and skills in the cluster? If so, can this be recognised within a clustered learning program or assessment process?	☐	☐
RTO		
Does the training package allow for these units to be grouped into a cluster?	☐	☐
If the cluster is going to contribute to a qualification, will it meet the qualification packaging rules?	☐	☐
Does the RTO have staff who are vocationally competent in the cluster?	☐	☐
Is the RTO able to effectively timetable a clustered learning program or assessment process?	☐	☐
Workplace		
Do the units reflect the typical tasks for this workplace?	☐	☐
Does the workplace require all the units or would it be better to offer individual units?	☐	☐
Does the workplace have staff who are vocationally competent in the cluster and able to help students in the workplace?	☐	☐
Does the workplace have access to all the equipment and facilities required to deliver and assess the cluster in the workplace?	☐	☐

If the RTO answers 'no' to any of the questions above, then serious consideration should be given to whether clustering is the appropriate approach. If the RTO decides to proceed with clustering, then the risks highlighted in the checklist need to be managed to ensure that a quality product is offered to the student and that valid, reliable judgements of competence are made.