



**ACT**  
Government



# ESA Registered Training Organisation (RTO) Operating Policy

**ESA P010**

**Version number 3.1**

**Note:** This is a CONTROLLED document. Any documents appearing in paper form are not controlled and should be checked against the intranet version prior to use.

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Commissioner

ACT Emergency Services Agency

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		Section 48: Added information about timeframes for response		
		Section 48: Added information about Continuous Improvement process		
		Section 51: Added 6-month period to validation schedule		

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## Introduction

### 1. Purpose

This policy provides practical guidance to ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) staff and stakeholders on how the ESA meets its obligations as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in accordance with the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Quality Framework.

### 2. Scope

This policy, and associated procedures, applies to anyone including volunteers and contracted providers involved in training and/or assessment activities within ESA under the ESA RTO scope of registration.

### 3. Background

The ESA maintains a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) under the VET Quality Framework. Maintaining RTO registration allows the ESA to offer nationally recognised training to staff, volunteers and other external clients.

The ESA RTO operates as an enterprise RTO, meaning that training and assessment is developed and delivered primarily for employees and volunteer members of the ESA. In some circumstances the ESA delivers training to external clients; however, the key focus is on internal clients. Wherever possible, education and training within the ESA is aligned to national units of competency and qualifications.

### 4. Policy Statement

This policy contains information related to training and assessment activities managed by the ESA RTO. It has been developed as a reference document for anyone involved in training and/or assessment activities within ESA.

This policy provides instruction and guidance for compliance with the *National VET Regulator Act 2011*<sup>1</sup> and the associated *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*<sup>2</sup>. Where applicable, it provides instruction for compliance with the *ACT Funding Agreement*<sup>3</sup> and its associated *ACT Standards for Delivery of Training*<sup>4</sup>.

### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

The ESA Commissioner, as the Chief Executive of the ESA RTO, is responsible for this policy. The Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture is responsible for the maintenance of this policy.

Chief Officers are responsible for matters relating to the technical and professional expertise of their service under Part 3.1 of the *Emergencies Act 2004*<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#)

<sup>3</sup> [ACT Funding Agreement](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ACT Standards for Delivery of Training](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Emergencies Act 2004](#)

## 6. Definition of Terms

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>ACTAS</b>	ACT Ambulance Service
<b>ACTF&amp;R</b>	ACT Fire & Rescue
<b>ACTRFS</b>	ACT Rural Fire Service
<b>ACTSES</b>	ACT State Emergency Service
<b>AFAC</b>	Australasian Fire & Emergency Services Authorities Council
<b>AQF</b>	Australian Qualifications Framework
<b>ASQA</b>	Australian Skills Quality Authority
<b>ESA</b>	Emergency Services Agency
<b>ESAT/ ESA RTO</b>	Emergency Services Agency Training
<b>IRC</b>	Industry Reference Committee
<b>JACS</b>	Justice and Community Safety Directorate
<b>NVR Act</b>	National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (C'wlth)
<b>PSTP</b>	Public Safety Training Package
<b>RTO</b>	Registered Training Organisation
<b>services</b>	Refers to ACTAS, ACTF&R, ACTRFS & ACTSES
<b>Skills Canberra</b>	Part of the ACT Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. The ACT State Training Authority.
<b>SSO</b>	Skills Service Organisation
<b>TGA</b>	Training.gov.au
<b>TNA</b>	Training Needs Analysis
<b>TPWG</b>	Training Practices Working Group
<b>TVA</b>	Total VET Activity
<b>USI</b>	Unique Student Identifier
<b>VET</b>	Vocational Education and Training
<b>WHS</b>	Work health and safety

## 7. Related Materials

Name	Location (document path)	Document Type
ESA P008 Training Centre Governance	<a href="http://injacs/portfolio/esa/training/default.aspx">http://injacs/portfolio/esa/training/default.aspx</a>	Policy
ESA Student Code of Conduct	<a href="http://injacs/portfolio/esa/training/default.aspx">http://injacs/portfolio/esa/training/default.aspx</a>	Guideline
ESA Trainer and Assessor Code of Conduct	<a href="http://injacs/portfolio/esa/training/default.aspx">http://injacs/portfolio/esa/training/default.aspx</a>	Guideline
Australian Qualifications Framework	<a href="http://www.aqf.edu.au/">http://www.aqf.edu.au/</a>	National Policy
Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)	<a href="http://www.asqa.gov.au/">http://www.asqa.gov.au/</a>	Regulatory body
National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011	<a href="https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2011A00012">https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2011A00012</a>	Legislation
Standards for Registered Training Organisations	<a href="http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2014L01377">http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2014L01377</a>	Legislative Instrument
Users Guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015	<a href="http://www.asqa.gov.au/users-guide-to-the-standards-for-registered-training-organisations-2015/users-guide-to-the-standards-for-registered-training-organisations-2015.html">http://www.asqa.gov.au/users-guide-to-the-standards-for-registered-training-organisations-2015/users-guide-to-the-standards-for-registered-training-organisations-2015.html</a>	Guide
Fit and Proper Person Requirements	<a href="http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2011L01341">http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2011L01341</a>	Legislative Instrument
Data Provision Requirements	<a href="http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013C00497">http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013C00497</a>	Legislative Instrument
Standards for VET Accredited Courses	<a href="http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L00177">http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L00177</a>	Legislative Instrument
Student Identifiers Act 2014	<a href="https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00038">https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00038</a>	Legislation
Information Privacy Act 2014	<a href="http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2014-24/default.asp">http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2014-24/default.asp</a>	Legislation



## VET Governance Overview

### 8. National VET Regulation

The *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (C'wlth)* (NVR Act) is the principal legislation enacted for the regulation of the vocational education and training (VET) sector in Australia.

The ESA RTO must comply with the NVR Act to maintain its RTO status. This includes ensuring compliance with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* under subsection 185(1) and subsection 186(1) of the NVR Act.

### 9. Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

ASQA is the national regulator for Australia's VET sector. ASQA's role is to ensure that RTOs comply with the requirements detailed in the NVR Act at all times. Compliance ensures nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment services for the clients of Australia's VET system.

### 10. VET Quality Framework

The VET Quality Framework is a set of nationally agreed quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment services delivered by RTOs. The framework consists of a series of legislative instruments enacted under the NVR Act.

The VET Quality Framework comprises the:

- [Standards for Registered Training Organisations;](#)
- [Australian Qualifications Framework;](#)
- [Fit and Proper Person Requirements;](#)
- [Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements;](#) and
- [Data Provision Requirements.](#)

To become an RTO, and to maintain registration, organisations must comply with every component of the framework.

The Framework is supported and complimented by the following:

- [Standards for VET Accredited Courses;](#)
- [Standards for Training Packages;](#) and
- [Standards for VET Regulators](#)

### 11. Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

The *Standards for RTOs* provide the over-arching governance statements, context and the actions or activities that are required to achieve compliance with the NVR Act. The *Standards for RTOs* describe the outcomes RTOs must achieve but do not mandate methods to achieve those outcomes. Each RTO is required to operate in a way that meets its clients' needs. ASQA has issued a User's Guide to the *Standards for RTOs* to assist RTOs to demonstrate and maintain compliance. The User's Guide does not form part of the Standards and has no legal authority. However, it provides guidance on best-practice implementation of the Standards and assists to establish and maintain systems and processes that comply.

## 12. Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

The AQF provides a comprehensive nationally consistent framework for all qualifications in post-compulsory education and training. The AQF forms part of the VET Quality Framework.

The AQF comprises ten levels with each level defined by a set of learning outcomes that describe what an individual can demonstrate on completion of their qualification.

AQF levels are an indication of the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement. AQF level 1 has the lowest complexity and AQF level 10 has the highest complexity<sup>6</sup>.

ESA is an RTO in the VET sector which means it can apply for registration to deliver and assess AQF levels 1 through 6. That is: Certificates I, II, III, IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma qualifications.

Training programs within ESA focus on job requirements which are then mapped to the relevant qualification/unit of competency for accreditation.

For more information about the AQF visit <http://www.aqf.edu.au> or contact ESA Training.

## 13. Training Packages

Training Packages are a key feature of Australia's national VET system. A Training Package is a set of nationally endorsed occupational skills standards that are used for recognising and assessing people's skills in a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Training Packages comprise:

- Units of Competency
- Assessment Requirements
- Qualifications
- Credit Arrangements
- Companion Volumes

Training Packages are developed in accordance with a nationally agreed set of standards and principles under the governance oversight of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Industry and Skills Council. The COAG Industry and Skills Council has established the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) with delegation for approval of Training Packages for implementation.

ESA uses the Public Safety and Health Training Packages for the majority of its operations.

<http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/PUA12>

<http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/HLT>

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<sup>6</sup><http://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf/in-detail/aqf-levels/>

## Industry Reference Committees

The Australian Government introduced new arrangements for industry engagement in Training Package development from 1 January 2016 including establishing Industry Reference Committees (IRCs). IRCs are charged with identifying industry's skills needs, developing business cases for changes to Training Packages, and providing industry sign-off before changes are considered by the AISC. IRCs are the formal point through which industry requirements for skills are considered and defined in Training Packages.

The operations of the ESA are covered by two IRCs:

- [Public Safety IRC](#) – for ACTF&R, ACTRFS & ACTSES
- [Ambulance and Paramedic IRC](#) – for ACTAS

## Skills Service Organisations

Skills Service Organisations (SSOs) are funded by the Australian Government to support IRCs engagement with industry to identify the skills required for job roles across the economy and drive the Training Package development process. SSOs provide technical, operational and secretariat services to enable IRCs to undertake their industry engagement and Training Package development and review activities. SSOs support industry engagement while remaining independent from both industry and the training sector.

The Public Safety IRC is supported by [Australian Industry Standards](#).

The Ambulance and Paramedic IRC is supported by [Skills IQ](#).

The Executive Branch Manager, People & Culture is responsible for coordinating the recording and provision of industry feedback to the relevant IRC. For the Public Safety Training Package, this is usually coordinated through the AFAC Learning and Development Group.

## ESA RTO Management and Governance

### 14. Registered Entity Details

Code/Provider Number:	88091
Legal Name:	ACT Emergency Services Agency
ABN:	77 972 506 632
RTO Type:	Enterprise – Government
Initial Registration Date:	23 Sept 2004
Current Registration Period start date:	17 Oct 2014
Current Registration Period end date:	26 Oct 2019

### 15. ESA Scope of Registration

The ESA RTOs scope of registration specifies which nationally accredited qualifications, units of competency and/or accredited courses it is approved to deliver, assess, and issue.

To view the ESA scope of registration, visit the national register of VET at [training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au) (TGA) <http://training.gov.au/>.

### 16. Compliance Accountabilities

#### ESA Commissioner (Chief Executive of the RTO)

For the purposes of registration, the ESA Commissioner is the Chief Executive of the ESA RTO. The *Standards for RTOs* require that the Chief Executive is “vested with sufficient authority to ensure the RTO complies with the RTO Standards at all times” (Standard 7.1).

The Chief Executive of the RTO is required to satisfy the *Fit and Proper Person Requirements 2011*<sup>7</sup> at all times and must make a ‘fit and proper person’ declaration to ASQA. Therefore, it is necessary for the Chief Executive of the RTO to be a natural person.

At such time as the natural person occupying the role of ESA Commissioner is changed, that person is required to make a ‘fit and proper person’ declaration to ASQA.

#### Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture

For the purposes of registration, the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture is an executive officer of the RTO. The Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture is required to satisfy the *Fit and Proper Person Requirements 2011* at all times and make a ‘fit and proper person’ declaration to ASQA.

The Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture provides oversight of the day-to-day operations and management of the RTO under the authority of the ESA Commissioner.

#### Director, ESA Training

The Director, ESA Training is responsible for the provision of strategic advice on learning and development; day-to-day management of the ESA RTO; and the development and provision of learning and development initiatives to support and enable staff and volunteers to carry out their duties safely, efficiently and effectively.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2011L01341>

## **Chief Officers**

In accordance with the *Emergencies Act 2004*, the Chief Officer of the respective service is responsible for matters relating to the professional and technical expertise of the relevant service i.e. training and professional standards. The Chief Officer is responsible for 'what' training is implemented to support the capability requirement.

The Chief Officer is responsible for ensuring staff of the service carry out their duties in accordance with this policy including responding to compliance requirements notified by the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture.

## **Training Review Panel**

A Training Review Panel is convened through consultation between a service and the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture.

The Training Review Panel will consist of at least one service representative, one ESA RTO representative, and sufficient subject matter experts to ensure the content of training and assessment is as relevant to current operations as practicable.

The Review Panel will consider the appropriateness of proposed modifications to curriculum and assessment tools ensuring that changes do not result in the duplication of training, elimination of required training, introduction of unnecessary training, or altered programs without consideration of consequences. The Panel will recommend changes to training and/or assessment products and processes to the relevant Chief Officer and to the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture.

## **Assessment Validation Panel**

An Assessment Validation Panel is convened through consultation between the services and the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture as required under the schedule of validation activities detailed in this policy.

The Assessment Validation Panel will consist of at least one ESA RTO representative and one service representative with subject matter expertise/knowledge who collectively have:

- vocational competencies and current industry skills relevant to the assessment being validated;
- current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning; and
- training and assessment qualification or assessor skill set.

## **17. Expected behaviours in training and assessment**

A shared understanding of expected behaviours for trainers, assessors and students is essential to ensuring expectations and required behaviours are clear.

### **Students**

The *Student Code of Conduct* is included in the Student Handbook and describes acceptable behaviour in the learning environment. It presents the norms that ESA will respect and sets the standard for what is considered appropriate behaviour.

### **Trainers and Assessors**

The *Trainer and Assessor Statement of Responsibilities* describes the role and responsibilities of Trainers and Assessors including expectations for professional standards in the representation of ESA.

The *Trainer and Assessor Statement of Responsibilities* is applicable to everyone conducting training and assessment activities on behalf of the ESA RTO. This includes volunteers and contracted providers.

Trainers and assessors are endorsed by the ESA RTO to train and/or assess on its behalf in accordance with this policy. If, at any time, a trainer and assessor is suspected to have behaved in contravention of this policy, the ESA RTO may, at its discretion, suspend its authorisation to deliver training or assessment pending investigation of the issues raised.

Behaviour in contravention of these documented expectations should be reported to the Director, ESA Training who will review the matter and make recommendations to the relevant person.

- Matters related to ESA employees will be referred to the relevant Chief Officer or Executive.
- Matters related to ESA volunteers will be referred to the relevant Chief Officer.
- Matters related to a 3rd party who is an employee of the ACT Government will be referred to that person's Executive Officer.
- Matters related to any other person will be referred to the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture.

These expected behaviours need to be read in conjunction with: the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct; the ACT Public Service Code of Ethics; and the ACT ESA Volunteer Charter and any other service specific codes of conduct and/or guidelines.

They do not replace existing public sector values and obligations or the ACTPS Code of Conduct. Processes for managing code of conduct issues for ACT Public Service employees are contained in the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and its subordinate instruments and relevant enterprise agreements.

## **18. Cross Service Consultation**

### **ESA Training Management Team**

The Training Management Team (TMT) is made up of representatives from each service with responsibility for training and assessment services. The Director, ESA Training chairs this group.

The role of the TMT is to:

- discuss enhancements to single service training and curriculum;
- identify, promote and support cross-service training and curriculum;
- discuss issues related to the use of the ESA Training Centre including scheduling issues;
- discuss, resolve and/or report work health and safety issues for the ESA Training Centre;
- discuss vocational education and training governance and RTO compliance issues.

### **ACTSES Training Support Team and ACTRFS Training Officer Meetings**

Meetings of the ACTSES Training Support Team (TST) are managed by the ACTSES Learning & Development Coordinator. Meetings of the RFS Training Officers are coordinated through the ACTRFS Learning & Development Coordinator. These forums provide opportunities for training officers to increase their understanding of training issues. It also provides a forum for professional development while assisting in coordinating service level training and assessment activities.

A representative from ESA Training will attend these meetings as required by invitation of the relevant Learning & Development Coordinator.

## **Industry Consultation**

ESA strives to ensure its training and assessment is based on current industry practice and meets the needs of industry. Current industry skills may be informed by consultations with industry and may include, but is not limited to:

- Having knowledge of latest techniques and processes;
- Possessing a high level of product knowledge;
- Understanding and knowledge of legislation relevant to the industry and to employment and workplaces;
- Being customer/client-oriented;
- Possessing formal industry and training qualifications; and
- Training content that reflects current industry practice.

ESA is a member of the AFAC Learning and Development Group representing fire and emergency services (including SES). This group facilitates national collaboration through the AFAC Collaboration Model; encompassing 36 Groups, Technical Groups and Networks. AFAC members regularly share knowledge, exchange insights, explore opportunities and create solutions that shape practice and guide the industry's development. The Collaboration Model adds value to members, the fire and emergency services industry and, ultimately, enhances community safety.

ACT Ambulance Service is a member of the Ambulance and Paramedic Industry Reference Committee. This Committee is responsible for national training package qualifications relevant to first aid services, on-site pre-hospital care, intensive paramedic care services, and the domestic and international retrieval of patients.

## 19. Compliance Activities

As an enterprise RTO<sup>8</sup>, the ESA RTO must comply with the same requirements for registration as non-enterprise RTOs.

**Table 1: Compliance activities**

Due Date and Frequency	Action Required	Policy reference
Annually 01 February	Statement of Performance against the ACT Funding Agreement*	Compliance with ACT Standards for Delivery of Training
Annually 31 March	Annual declaration on compliance to ASQA	Annual Self-Assessment Audit
Annually 30 June	Quality Indicators report to ASQA	Reporting Requirements
Annually 28 February	Total VET Activity reporting	Reporting Requirements
Quarterly End of quarter*	ACT funded training activity AVETMISS data submission	Reporting Requirements

\*specific reporting windows are published on the Skills Canberra [AVETMISS website](#)

## 20. Annual self-assessment audit

The Chief Executive Officer and/or Executive Officer of the RTO is required to make an annual declaration on compliance with the *Standards for RTOs* to ASQA by 31 March each year.

To ensure that the ESA RTO continues to meet its compliance obligations and allow the annual declaration to be made, ESA Training will conduct an internal audit on an annual basis. This will identify continuous improvement opportunities and performance gaps that require action through routine reporting, planning and management processes.

In addition, the ESA RTO is required to conduct an internal audit to review compliance against the ACT Funding Agreement using the Internal Review Tool annually, usually in February each year.

Where non-compliances or areas for improvement are identified the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture will coordinate the response.

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<sup>8</sup> Enterprise – an enterprise or the training function or department of an enterprise that is registered to provide nationally recognised training. Training is delivered to its employees.  
[http://www.asqa.gov.au/verve/resources/Application\\_guide\\_-\\_Application\\_for\\_initial\\_RTO\\_registration.pdf](http://www.asqa.gov.au/verve/resources/Application_guide_-_Application_for_initial_RTO_registration.pdf)



## 21. ASQA Audit

In 2016, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) developed a student-centred audit approach that provides a greater focus on the student experience and the practices of RTOs. Under the student-centred audit approach:

- audits will be structured around RTO practices and behaviours in relation to five key phases of the student experience: marketing and recruitment; enrolment; support and progression; training and assessment; and completion
- the depth and scope of an audit will be customised for each RTO and will be informed by compliance history and detailed risk intelligence
- where non-compliances are identified the RTO may be expected to take remedial action to address the impact the non-compliance may have caused to students.

There is more information about how ASQA's student-centred audit approach was developed, and how the revised approach supports improved VET sector quality, at [www.asqa.gov.au/audit](http://www.asqa.gov.au/audit).

## 22. Partnerships and third-party training delivery

This section applies when another provider delivers nationally accredited training on behalf of the ESA RTO and the ESA RTO issues the Qualification or Statement of Attainment. It does not apply to training delivered by an external provider when the external provider issues the Award.

Where a partnership or subcontracting arrangement has been entered into, the ESA RTO will inform students of the arrangements.

### Partnership Agreements

The ESA RTO is directly accountable for the quality of training and assessment it provides. If another RTO is delivering training or assessment services on behalf of the ESA RTO, it is essential that such arrangements are underpinned by a clearly articulated written agreement that fully expresses the roles and responsibilities of each party, including monitoring arrangements. The written agreement must require the third party to cooperate with ASQA in the provision of information and in the conduct of audits and other monitoring activities.

The ESA RTO must notify ASQA whenever it enters into a third-party agreement using the *Third-Party Service Arrangement notification form* available from the [ASQA website](http://www.asqa.gov.au). This must occur within 30 calendar days of the agreement being entered into or prior to the obligations under the agreement taking effect, whichever occurs first. Where an agreement with a third party comes to an end, the ESA RTO must notify ASQA using the *Third-Party Service Arrangement notification form* within 30 days of the end of the agreement.

### Sub-contracting for Australian Apprenticeships delivery

Where a partnership arrangement is in place with another RTO for the delivery of training and assessment services under an Australian Apprenticeships arrangement, the ESA RTO must either:

- Ensure the third-party RTO holds a current ACT Funding Agreement; OR
- apply for sub-contracting arrangement approval under the ACT Funding Agreement. See the *ACT Standards for Delivery of Training* for detail on applying for subcontracting arrangements.

All subcontracting arrangements must be in place and approved prior to the commencement of training.

### **Monitoring of Partnership Agreements**

Once Partnership Agreements have been established, ESA Training systematically monitors them to ensure both parties are meeting their obligations and that services being provided comply with the *Standards for RTOs*.

Monitoring activities may include:

- regular management data reports, including client feedback;
- site visits to the partner organisation;
- assessment validation processes;
- quality assurance audits;
- sharing of professional development activities.

### **23. Quality and Continuous Improvement Overview**

The ESA RTO is committed to continuously improving services and building on strengths. To apply this value, the ESA RTO will:

- look for and implement ways to improve our services
- be flexible and prepared to respond to change
- admit and learn from mistakes
- measure, monitor and review services in partnership with the community
- initiate and undertake research and development
- recognise and build on our strengths

The ESA RTO uses several methods to continuously improve, including:

- collecting feedback from course participants via course evaluations
- analysing data obtained from the Quality Indicators
- ongoing evaluation and endorsement of the skills of trainers and assessors
- regularly reviewing TRKs and assessment materials
- consultation when creating TRKs
- formal and informal feedback via phone and e-mails from all stakeholders
- RTO internal audit regime
- convening periodic trainer and assessor development forums

## 24. Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is a process whereby ongoing effort is made to improve products and processes. These improvements may be minor incremental changes or major redesign/redevelopment. Where improvements to training and assessment products or processes have been identified through any means, those amendments will be managed through the ESA Training Continuous Improvement process.

### Minor changes

Minor changes are characterised as not impacting the relationship between the product/process and the intended outcome of the activity. Examples include: correcting typographical errors; applying agreed coding changes to a suite of documents; updating references to equipment that does not alter the training or assessment activity.

Minor changes are made by the Service Training Officer/team and recorded in the document's version control table as a minor change. The service is required to notify ESA Training for the purposes of monitoring version control.

### Major/Version changes

Major/Version changes are characterised as having the potential to impact the relationship between the product/process and the intended outcome of the activity.

Examples include:

- addition of new assessment tasks;
- changes to the processes for collective evidence against a unit of competency;
- changes to the resources and/or equipment required to conduct training or assessment.

Major/Version changes must be considered by a Training Review Panel as described at Section 16. Major changes are also subject to Assessment Product Validation procedures.

In order to maintain compliance with the VET Quality Framework, all major changes must be endorsed by the ESA RTO.

Major/Version changes are made by the relevant service area following validation and recorded in the document's version control table as a Version change. ESA Training will record the change for the purposes of monitoring version control.

### Recording amendments

ESA Training maintains a Continuous Improvement Register for the purposes of recording proposed changes, responsibilities and outcomes of change processes. The Director, ESA Training is responsible for maintaining the currency of the Continuous Improvement Register.

## 25. Safety in Training and Assessment

ESA is responsible to volunteers, staff and the general public, to ensure the highest standards of safety are implemented, maintained and practised in all aspects of training.

The *WHS Act 2011*<sup>9</sup> outlines responsibilities of all parties in maintaining a safe workplace which includes the training environment. The primary means of providing a safe working environment is through eliminating, or if elimination is not possible, minimising risk. Managing risk is an active process and, therefore, revisiting the process should be undertaken regularly.

A dedicated Safety Advisor should be considered for high risk training activity or where the numbers involved in a course exceed the ability of the trainer/assessor to adequately manage safety issues. The responsibility of the Safety Advisor is to ensure that all training is safely conducted in accordance with service specific safety guidelines.

The safe use of the ESA Training Centre is addressed in detail in the ESA Training Centre Governance Arrangements: ESA P008. As detailed in that policy, each service has a lead responsibility for maintaining and training in certain training props utilised by trainers across the ESA and, therefore, it is fundamental that inductions and briefings occur regularly.

It is the responsibility of the applicable service to maintain a record of training staff, from their service or other services, which have undertaken induction and participated in ongoing briefings on safety requirements for each aid or prop. A register suitable for this purpose includes: the name, service, the date the person was inducted; who delivered the induction; the standard to which the induction was delivered; and any subsequent briefings to ensure ongoing compliance with the required safety measures.

These registers will be examined as part of the annual self-assessment.

### **Risk Identification**

Risk management is an integral part of strategic policy, management responsibilities and operational functions. Therefore, all ESA personnel have a role in, and are accountable for, managing risk. This applies from the identification stage right through to treatment of the risk.

The Lead Trainer or Safety Advisor should make themselves aware of, and adhere to, the Safe Work Procedure for the training props.

### **Reporting of Incidents and Near Misses**

The notification and reporting of hazards is an important element of the work health and safety framework, particularly as it relates to managing risk. Therefore, reporting hazards enables a risk management approach to be adopted allowing time to consider the nature of the hazard, the identification of the risk and suitable response to managing it. ESA Training adheres to ACT Government hazard reporting procedures available on the [Shared Services Customer Portal](#).

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<sup>9</sup> [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)

## 26. Trainer and Assessor Qualifications

In accordance with the VET Quality Framework, all trainers and assessors must meet the requirements outlined in the *Standards for RTOs*.

The *Standards for RTOs* requires that training and assessment activities are conducted by trainers and assessors who have:

- Vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed;  
AND
- Current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided;  
AND
- Current knowledge and skills in vocational training and learning that informs their training and assessment.

Industry experts may also be involved in training and/or the assessment judgement, working alongside the trainer and assessor.

In addition, training and assessment may only be provided by people who hold the appropriate credential as detailed in Table 2.

See [Table 2](#) for an outline of the required qualifications.

### ESA RTO Endorsement of Trainers and Assessors

As an enterprise RTO, ESA has considered the varied roles played by trainers, assessors, course designers and subject matter experts in the development of staff and volunteer skills and knowledge. [Table 2](#) on the next page describes the formal roles related to development, delivery and assessment of nationally recognised VET sector courses within the ACT ESA. This relates to nationally accredited training only.

In addition to the qualification requirements under the *Standards for RTOs*, trainers and assessors must be endorsed by the ESA RTO to deliver training or assessment on its behalf. Endorsement allows the ESA RTO to satisfy its obligation to ensure all trainers and assessors are properly qualified in both vocational training and in the topic area they are delivering. Endorsement is granted to individuals identified by services following Training Needs Analysis. Services put forward individuals for endorsement including those topic areas the person is to be endorsed to deliver. The ESA RTO confirms the individual holds the appropriate qualifications and experience before providing ESA RTO endorsement. The ESA RTO maintains the list of endorsed trainer and assessors. As a part of the endorsement process, the ESA RTO supports staff and volunteers to attain and maintain relevant trainer and assessor competencies.

Ongoing endorsement is contingent on individuals: participating in professional development; providing training and/or assessment and delivering the relevant training. The below table identifies the trainer and assessor qualification requirements.

### Collecting Evidence vs Conducting Assessment

A person does not need to be a qualified assessor to collect assessment evidence. However, it is important that the validity of the evidence collected is confirmed before it contributes to a decision of competency. All evidence collection tools and processes must be reviewed and approved by a qualified assessor and the determination of competence must be made by an Authorised Trainer/Assessor.

**Table 2: Trainer and Assessor Qualification Requirements**

All roles must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hold sufficient and current vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed</li> <li>• have the endorsement of the relevant Chief Officer/Business Unit head</li> </ul>		
<b>Title/ Role:</b>	<b>Required TAE credential:</b>	<b>Authorisation</b>
<b>Authorised Trainer/Assessor</b>	Certificate IV in Training and Assessment: TAE40116 or TAE40110 + LLN411/401 + ASS502	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver training in nationally recognised units or qualifications.</li> <li>- Assess candidates (make a determination of competence) against nationally recognised units or qualifications.</li> <li>- Participate in product and assessment validation.</li> <li>- Supervise <i>Authorised Instructors</i> and SME/Guest Lecturers according to the ESA RTO Supervision Procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>Authorised Instructor</b> (working under supervision)	One of the following Skill Sets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TAESS00007/ TAESS00014 Enterprise Trainer - Presenting</li> <li>- TAESS00008/TAESS00013 Enterprise Trainer - Mentoring</li> <li>- TAESS00003/TAESS00015 Enterprise Trainer and Assessor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver training in nationally recognised units or qualifications.</li> <li>- Collect evidence that can be used by the <i>Authorised Trainer/Assessor</i> to make a determination of competence.</li> </ul> Note: Training must be delivered using validated TRKs under the supervision of an <i>Authorised Trainer/Assessor</i> .
<b>Subject matter expert/ Guest lecturer</b> (working under direct supervision)	Not required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contribute to training outcomes by passing on expert knowledge and skills to others on-the-job and/or in an informal manner through mentoring or similar activities.</li> <li>- Make a presentation within their field of expertise to vocational learners as a part of a nationally recognised course.</li> <li>- Contribute to the collection evidence that can be used by the <i>Authorised Trainer/Assessor</i> to make a determination of competence. In this case, the collection of evidence must be directly supervised.</li> </ul>
<b>Training Coordinator/ Service Training Officer</b>	Certificate IV in Training and Assessment: TAE40116 or TAE40110 + LLN411/401 + ASS502  A Diploma of Training Design and Development is highly desirable for occupants of this role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Primary responsibility for the coordination of training and/or primary responsibility for the development or significant revision of training and/or assessment materials.</li> <li>- Delegation within their service or within ESA Training to participate in validation and sign off on nationally recognised training and assessment materials.</li> <li>- May deliver and assess nationally endorsed units or qualifications.</li> </ul>

## **Supervision arrangements**

The Standards for RTOs 2015 require that a person that does not hold the required competencies (regardless of their skills and knowledge):

- must be supervised by a qualified trainer, and
- must not determine assessment outcomes.

Training must only be provided by those who have current industry skills and knowledge.

Only an *Authorised Trainer/Assessor* can supervise another person in delivering training or collecting evidence. Supervision does not require constant direct line of sight, rather, oversight consistent with the skill level of the person being supervised.

The exact supervision arrangement must be discussed and agreed between the *Authorised Trainer/Assessor*, the supervised person, and the Director, ESA Training. A *Plan for Supervision Arrangement*<sup>10</sup> must be completed.

All supervision arrangements must include:

- An induction to the relevant TRK(s)
- A plan for regular meetings/supervision events
- A list of the specific TRKs or skills that are included in the Supervision Arrangement

## **Maintenance of training and assessment and vocational competency**

All trainers and assessors must be able to demonstrate current vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed and provide evidence of professional development in training and assessment.

Vocational competence is defined as broad industry knowledge and experience, usually combined with a relevant industry qualification. A person who has vocational competence will be familiar with the content of the job role and will have relevant current experience in the industry. Vocational competence must be considered on an industry-by-industry basis and with reference to any guidance provided in the relevant Training Package or Accredited Course. This may include advice on relevant industry qualifications and experience required for training and assessing against the Training Package or Accredited Course. The Training Package or Accredited Course may also provide specific industry advice outlining what industry sees as acceptable forms of evidence to demonstrate the maintenance of currency of vocational competence.

In order to meet the RTO standards, all trainers and assessors will be required to participate in professional development activities to maintain their industry skills and vocational skills. These may include but are not limited to:

- industry specific professional development opportunities
- VET conferences/professional development
- industry conferences
- peer assessment (of self and of others)
- participation in moderation activities

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<sup>10</sup> Template available from ESA Training

Whilst the *Standards for RTOs* do not prescribe how often professional development must occur, it must be sufficient to ensure trainers and assessors have current knowledge and skills in vocational training, learning and assessment. Simply delivering training and assessment does not constitute professional development.

Each individual trainer and/or assessor must maintain records of their involvement in training, assessment and VET professional development activity. ESA Training will periodically require copies of these records to be submitted in order to demonstrate compliance with the *Standards for RTOs*.

## **27. Australian Apprenticeships**

Wherever possible and appropriate, qualifications for employees will be delivered under an Australian Apprenticeships arrangement. ESA Training applies for, and manages on behalf of the services, applicable Australian Apprenticeships incentives and ensures incentives received are reinvested in training related initiatives.

Australian Apprenticeships encompass all apprenticeships and traineeships. Australian Apprenticeships combine time at work with training and can be full-time or part-time. Australian Apprenticeships arrangements ensure the delivery of structured on and off the job training as well as contributing financially to the costs of providing such training.

In order to deliver Australian Apprenticeships in the ACT, the ESA RTO is required to hold an *ACT Funding Agreement* with the relevant agency of the ACT Government and comply with the *ACT Standards for the Delivery of Training* (ACT Standards).

The ACT Government administers payments to RTOs under a national funding policy for Australian Apprenticeships called 'User Choice'. User Choice provides a public funding contribution to the RTO for providing structured training to Australian Apprentices. The funding amount listed on the ACT Qualifications Register is a contribution to the cost of training the Australian Apprentice.

The *ACT Funding Agreement* states that funds must be used "for the sole purpose of providing the Training Services to which those funds relate". Therefore, funds obtained through the *ACT Funding Agreement* can be used for such things as training related activity and training support materials or equipment relevant to training Australian Apprentices. Expenditure of these funds is authorised by the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture following consultation with the relevant service.

### **ACT Standards for the Delivery of Training**

The *ACT Funding Agreement* requires compliance with the ACT Standards and compliance with the *ACT Standards Compliance Guide for Australian Apprenticeships* (Compliance Guide). These two documents set out mandatory actions and activities required of RTOs delivering Australian Apprenticeships in the ACT. The Compliance Guide provides structure for implementing the requirements.

As an enterprise RTO, the employer and RTO relationship with a trainee is inextricably linked. In some cases, compliance requirements can be met in different ways. Each mandatory requirement is addressed in this section including how the ESA RTO meets each requirement in the context of being an enterprise RTO.

#### Promotion and Publication

As an enterprise RTO, the ESA does not market, promote or publicise training linked to the ACT Funding Agreement. Similarly, the ESA RTO is exempt from charging tuition fees.

Where subcontracting arrangements exist, the trainee will be provided information about the arrangement in accordance with this policy.



### RTO Eligibility

The ESA RTO manages its scope of registration and student transition in accordance with this policy.

In the event that the ESA RTO ceases to deliver under Australian Apprenticeships arrangements, ESA Training will notify the relevant agency of the ACT Government within 14 days of the decision to cease delivery. As an enterprise RTO, this decision will take account of the progress of trainees in a current Training Contract and all attempts will be made to minimise disruption. In the unlikely event it becomes necessary to cease delivery when there are active trainees, ESA Training will assist in the 'Change of RTO' process for all active trainees and issue Statements of Attainment within 30 days of ceasing to deliver.

### Student Eligibility

As an enterprise RTO, the ESA employs individuals without reference to their eligibility for Australian Apprenticeships. Individual student eligibility is assessed in partnership with the Apprenticeship Network Provider and a Contract of Training is only entered into with eligible individuals.

### Enrolment

A fully compliant AVETMISS enrolment form is required for all individuals under a Contract of Training. ESA Training is responsible for ensuring the correct enrolment documentation is completed, signed and filed appropriately.

As an enterprise RTO, the ESA is exempt from charging tuition fees for Australian Apprenticeships. Trainees are made aware of eligibility for the completion payment during the sign-up process.

### Initial Skills Assessment

The most suitable qualification for the student is determined in order to meet occupational skill requirements in consultation with the relevant service as the employer. Recruitment is directly linked to specific skill requirements.

RPL is offered to all students according to this policy.

LLN assessment is provided according to this policy.

Additional support is determined and provided during face-to-face engagement between each trainee and the service training team during initial induction training.

### Training Plan

A fully compliant Training Plan is negotiated for each trainee. ESA Training is responsible for ensuring the correct Training Plan documentation is completed, signed and filed appropriately. Where there are amendments to the Training Plan, the relevant Service Training Officer must notify ESA Training immediately so that the Training Plan can be properly maintained.

A signed copy of the Training Plan is provided to the trainee including whenever changes are made.

### Training delivery and assessment

Training delivery and assessment is conducted in accordance with this policy. Records of training delivery and assessment are kept in accordance with this policy.

<b>ACTFA Requirement</b>	<b>ESA RTO action</b>
Issue a Training Record book within 14 days of signing the Training Plan. The purpose is to track the cumulative progress of the trainee through both off-job and workplace training.	The trainee is informed of the employment and training pathway and provided with relevant documentation during initial face-to-face induction training. Cumulative progress is tracked through participation in, and achievement of, clusters of units. Progress through the qualification is recorded using assessment outcomes forms signed by all parties. The assessment outcomes forms including the final Outcomes Summary form constitute the equivalent of a Training Record Book for ESA as an enterprise RTO.
Retain evidence of employer support of competence at the unit level.	Each unit of competency is signed off by the assessor/s, the employer representative and the trainee. The signed documentation is retained by the service on the trainees file.
Final assessment is conducted prior to the due-to-complete date	ESA Training support staff systematically monitors due-to-complete Contracts of Training through AVETARS. The due-to-complete status of each trainee is discussed with the relevant Service Training Officer as required.
Confirm employer, trainee and RTO agreement of competence prior to issuing the qualification.	The final Outcomes Summary form is signed by the employer, trainee and RTO prior to completion of each Contract of Training.

### Support and Monitoring

As an enterprise RTO, the workplace supervisor performs a dual role in providing support and monitoring of a trainees progress through training. Any identified support needs are agreed and documented.

Where a variation to a Contract of Training is required, ESA Training support staff liaise with the Service Training Officer to submit the appropriate requests for variation through AVETARS.

### Completion and Issuing Certification

Completion and issuing awards is managed in accordance with this policy.

### Recordkeeping and Reporting

Recordkeeping and reporting is managed in accordance with this policy.

## **Learner Management**

### **28. Transition of Superseded Training Packages**

From time to time, changes to Training Packages occur. This means that RTOs must either ensure their students finalise their current programs of study within the existing qualification or are transitioned to the replacement unit of competency or qualification within the timeframes mandated by ASQA.

To best meet the needs of students and of industry, students must be transferred from superseded qualifications into the replacement qualification as soon as practicable but no later than 12 months from the date the replacement qualification was published to the National Register (TGA).

Where a qualification is superseded, students who will complete their study and be issued with a qualification within the 12 month transition period do not need to be transferred to the replacement qualification. All other students are to be transferred to the new qualification within 12 months. No new enrolments are permitted in the superseded qualification after the 12 month transition period has lapsed.

Where a qualification has been discontinued and not replaced and there is no clear replacement qualification for students to transfer into, the ESA RTO must ensure that all training, assessment and issuance of certification is completed within two years of the date the qualification was removed.

The ESA RTO must provide timely and adequate advice to current students if the qualification in which they are enrolled is superseded or discontinued and ensure students are given the opportunity to transfer to the replacement Training Package qualification or unit of competency.

### **29. Access and Equity**

Trainers and assessors must ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged in the training or assessment process due to cultural or language background, age, gender, religion or disability. Assessors also need to be aware of the ways in which candidates can be disadvantaged in the assessment process and what steps can be taken to ensure that assessment policies and practices take account of individual needs.

This may involve adjusting the training or assessment process. Reasonable adjustment involves varying processes to take into account any special characteristics of the candidate. See the section on Assessment Design and Delivery for details about how to apply 'reasonable adjustment' in the assessment process.

### 30. Language, Literacy and Numeracy Support

The Standards for RTOs require that:

- 1.7 The RTO determines the support needs of individual learners and provides access to the education and support services necessary for the individual learner to meet the requirements of the training product as specified in training packages or VET accredited courses.

The ESA RTO has implemented a system called *LLN Robot* to meet this regulatory requirement to manage our assessment and support of learners regarding their individual language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) needs.

The *LLN Robot* system consists of two parts:

1. Online LLN testing
2. Generating training profiles and training support programs.

Assessment of core LLN skills identifies an individual's skill levels which can then be compared with the LLN levels required of a training program (or unit or qualification) or workplace tasks.

The *LLN Robot* online assessment has been designed to give an indication of a learner's abilities across five core skills being Learning, Reading, Writing, Oral Communication and Numeracy<sup>11</sup>. The assessment uses examples from everyday life to avoid bias relating to specific training or working environments and experience. This approach keeps the assessments fair, valid and accessible to all learners.

At the end of the assessment a learner profile is generated scoring each of the five core skills from levels 0 through 4. These results are stored in a secure database and accessed by the authorised training officer for that learner. The profile can be updated based on other evidence gathered by the training officer e.g. enrolment forms, pre-course work and discussions.

Each course offered by the ESA RTO is analysed by the *LLN Robot* system and a profile of that course is generated against the same five core skills. This allows a comparison of the course requirements and the learner's current skill level to identify any gaps and possible support needs.

Where gaps in a learner's core skills are identified, the *LLN Robot* system provides a training support program which outlines mechanisms that can be used to support the learner's development, as well as a series of self-paced activities that the learner can work through to improve their skills.

The *LLN Robot* system is used to determine learner support needs. It is not a recruitment or screening tool.

There is flexibility to use *LLN Robot* for non-accredited training. This flexibility is at the discretion of the services in consultation with ESA Training.

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<sup>11</sup> These five core skills are detailed in the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) which was developed to facilitate a consistent national approach to the identification and development of foundation skills for learning, work and in the community.

## **Training Design and Delivery**

### **31. Basic Principles**

Effective training must be planned and systematic to be successful. The five key components of training are:

- identification of training needs
- training design and development
- training delivery
- assessment
- evaluation

These five components are explained in further detail throughout this policy.

### **32. Identifying Training Needs**

A training need exists where there is a gap between the skills and knowledge required to do a task or function competently, and the proficiency a worker actually has.

A training needs analysis (TNA) is a systematic approach for determining what and if training needs to take place. A TNA considers:

- the business need
- the competencies required to meet that business need
- the current competency of existing personnel
- the most appropriate and cost-efficient training method/s

An effective TNA ensures training is targeting the most appropriate competencies for the correct personnel and is addressing a business need.

There are a number of ways that a TNA can be conducted depending on the nature of the issue/s concerned. An example of a TNA process is detailed below.

## **The TNA Process**

### **Step 1: Determine business/operational need**

- Establish the business/operational objective
- Clarify the skills development goal. For example:
  - Improve operational efficiency
  - Improve workplace safety outcomes
  - Meet regulatory requirement/s
- Identify the optimum desired competencies required to meet the objective

### **Step 2: Determine current competencies held**

- Identify the current level of competency within the area concerned. This may be achieved by:
  - Performance evaluations
  - After action review recommendations
  - Surveys of personnel

### **Step 3: Analyse gap between need and current competencies**

- Analyse the gap between Steps 1 and 2. Consider any competency or capability frameworks relevant to the business unit (e.g. The ACTPS Shared Capability Framework)
- Document the findings of the analysis

### **Step 4: Identify appropriate intervention**

- Evaluate the areas for development and determine whether training is the most appropriate intervention. Examples of alternative interventions include:
  - Performance management processes
  - Improved policies and/or procedures
  - Improved job design
- Analyse existing training offerings against the identified need. Where existing offerings do not meet the need, research and identify new training options
- Identify who needs training and the most appropriate training method for the intended student cohort

For further details and/or assistance in conducting a TNA contact ESA Training.

### **33. Training Design**

Training design is the process of developing learning and assessment strategies together with strategies for evaluating the training and assessment continuum. The objective of these strategies is to ensure that the learning is achieved in the most efficient and effective way possible. Importantly, adult learning and competency-based training and assessment are essential elements of learner-centred activities.

The competencies required for the job are analysed for their skills, knowledge and application of skills and knowledge. The characteristics of both the potential learners and the circumstances in which assessment and learning could occur are identified.

ESA RTO is required to develop and implement approaches (including by providing access to suitable resources, facilities and trainers) that ensure learners gain all relevant skills and knowledge.

### **34. Training and Assessment Strategy**

The Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS) is a framework that outlines learning requirements and the teaching, training and assessment arrangements of a VET qualification. It documents the requirements of the learning and assessment process relevant to the specific student cohort, training environment, and Training Package requirements.

A TAS is required for all nationally recognised training. A template is available from ESA Training and must be used to ensure all mandatory information requirements are met. Each TAS must be reviewed and validated by the ESA RTO prior to delivery of training or assessment.

The project manager/course developer reviews the relevant unit(s) of competency, any relevant training documentation (e.g. Australian Emergency Manuals, superseded curriculum, AFAC TRKs) and operating processes or procedures (e.g. Standard Operating Procedures) to identify what will and will not be included. In most cases, this work will be informed by discussions with appropriately experienced and qualified staff members and, if appropriate, key volunteers.

#### **Industry Engagement**

In developing a TAS, evidence of industry engagement must be retained and documented in the TAS. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Liaison and emails with other jurisdictions
- Industry groups and partners for specific purposes (i.e. Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience)
- AFAC learning and development meetings
- Other industry working groups
- Implementation of new equipment within the service
- Emails and minutes from service specific meetings
- Outcomes of After Action Reviews

## Volume of Learning / Amount of Training

The TAS must document the amount of training to be delivered such that the course/program is consistent with the requirements of the Training Package or Accredited Course, enabling each learner to meet the requirements for each unit of competency or module in which they are enrolled.

The amount of training to be delivered must reference the AQF Volume of Learning but it is important to note that they are not the same thing.

The AQF Volume of Learning indicators are:

Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV
0.5 - 1 year	0.5 - 1 year	1 - 2 years	0.5 - 2 years
600 – 1200 hours	600 – 1200 hours	1200 – 2400 hours	600 – 2400 hours

Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma
1 – 2 years	1.5 – 2 years	0.5 – 1 year	1 – 2 years
1200 – 2400 hours	1800 – 2400 hours	600 – 1200 hours	1200 – 2400 hours

The AQF Council states in its factsheet ‘Volume of Learning: An Explanation’:

“The duration of the delivery of the qualification may vary from the volume of learning specified for the qualification. Providers may offer the qualification in more or less time than the specified volume of learning, provided that delivery arrangements give students sufficient opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes for the qualification type, level and discipline.”

The *Users’ Guide to the Standards for RTOs* states that:

“Your RTO is required to comply with the AQF in applying the volume of learning to your programs. You must therefore develop and implement strategies for training and assessment that are consistent with the AQF.

In a competency-based training environment, learners aren’t required to study for a specified number of weeks or months; however, your RTO must still be able to identify and explain any significant variations from the time periods described in the AQF.

If a course is structured so as to be completed in a shorter time period than that described in the AQF, you will need to clearly describe, using a rationale based on the previous skills and knowledge and the needs of learners, how a specific learner cohort:

- has the characteristics to achieve the required rigour and depth of training
- can meet all of the competency requirements in a shorter timeframe.

Your description must take into account the need to allow learners to reflect on and absorb the knowledge, to practise the skills in different contexts and to learn to apply the skills and knowledge in the varied environments that the ‘real world’ offers before being assessed.”

When designing the course/program, these factors must be considered and documented in the TAS.



### **35. Development of the Training Resource Kit (TRK)**

The relevant Service Training Officer/Training Coordinator will design, develop and create a draft curriculum, based on the information from the relevant service (and personnel involved in the training design) and subject matter experts (as appropriate).

A TRK will consist of the following:

- training and assessment strategy
- assessment matrix or similar mapping document
- introduction
- trainer resources
- participant resources
- assessment tools
- evaluation resources

The Director, ESA Training will assign an ESA Training staff member to work with the service to conduct product validation prior to delivery of training.

#### **Consultation & Validation**

The relevant service and subject matter experts (if appropriate) will be contacted to review the draft resources and methods of assessment, add their comments and return the documents by an agreed date.

A Training Review Panel will then review the proposed materials to ensure they meet the requirements of the related qualification or unit of competency.

#### **Delivery Methods**

For each course the methods of delivery will be outlined in the TAS and detailed in the Trainer's Guide and/or lesson plan. The ESA RTO in consultation with the Training Review Panel ensures the resources for delivery, assessment and the issue of qualifications meet the requirements of the relevant endorsed Training Package.

ESA delivers customised training to groups and individuals. Information-based sessions are normally conducted indoors using a variety of aids and styles. Skills-based sessions are delivered in a safe, realistic environment, often outdoors, using equipment and procedures identical to those encountered on-the-job.

Delivery strategies used by ESA are selected to effectively achieve the required competency outcome whilst giving consideration to adult learning principles. The provision of training may include a combination of off-the-job (i.e. during a classroom-based course) and on-the-job (i.e. during an exercise or operation) delivery and assessment.

Some training may include pre-course work and some training may include post-course work.

Delivery modes include, but are not limited to:

- training presentations and activities
- audio/visual presentations
- demonstrations
- exercises
- group work
- individual projects
- activities
- simulations
- on-the-job training
- computer managed learning
- self-paced learning guides
- site visits
- pre and/or post course work

In accordance with the principles of adult learning, participants are encouraged to learn at their own pace and reasonable assistance is provided where necessary to accommodate specific learner needs.

### **Maintenance of the TRK**

Each TRK is owned by the service that developed it. It is maintained in consultation with the ESA RTO in accordance with this policy. A register of TRKs is maintained by ESA Training in accordance with the Document Control requirements of this policy (Section 55).

The TRK must only be amended in accordance with the Continuous Improvement (Section 24) and Document Control requirements of this policy (Section 55). Trainers and assessors must not amend or vary the content of a TRK in any way except for adding local context or making approved reasonable adjustments. Any variation or reasonable adjustment must be reported to the relevant service Training Officer as soon as practicable. Where changes to the TRK are proposed, these must be reported to ESA Training for inclusion in the Continuous Improvement Register (Section 24).

### **Sharing of the TRK**

The security of assessment tools and instruments must be maintained to ensure the integrity of assessment outcomes. Only authorised individuals will be given access to the TRK. Authorised individuals will not distribute or disseminate any part of the TRK except in accordance with the relevant Training and Assessment Strategy.

Requests for the release of any part of a TRK must be made in writing to the Director, ESA Training.

## **36. Planning a new course**

To ensure a new or significantly changed course is fit for purpose, specific considerations are required. A Training Review Panel should be convened to develop the Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS) including considering the most appropriate delivery methods, trainers and assessors, equipment, etc. If the new course is based on, or an extension of, an existing course, participant feedback should be reviewed by the Training Review Panel in the finalisation of the TAS.

The Training Review Panel should also consider the implications for instructor professional development requirements for the new course.

## **Assessment Design and Delivery**

### **37. Assessment System**

The assessment system is a coordinated set of documented policies and procedures (including assessment materials and tools) that ensure assessments are consistent and are based on the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence.

The assessment system (sometimes referred to as an Assessment Plan) for each course/program is documented in the Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS).

### **38. Assessment**

Assessment is a process of collecting evidence against a standard and making a judgement of competency. In the VET sector, there are rules about the collection of evidence; Training Packages define the standard; and competency has a specific meaning.

Each TAS documents assessment strategies, which:

- are valid, reliable, flexible and fair
- support the collection of evidence that is sufficient, valid, authentic and current
- are consistent with the assessment guidelines/requirements in the relevant Training Package or Accredited Course
- ensure that workplace and regulatory requirements are met
- identify and justify any requirements for workplace and/or simulated assessment

### 39. Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence

Adherence to the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence is required to ensure quality assessment outcomes. All assessment including RPL is to be in accordance with these concepts.

#### Principles of Assessment

<b>Validity</b>	Assessment is valid when the process assesses what it claims to assess. Validity requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- assessment against the unit/s of competency and the associated assessment requirements covers the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance;</li><li>- assessment of knowledge and skills is integrated with their practical application;</li><li>- assessment to be based on evidence that demonstrates that a learner could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations;</li><li>- judgement of competence is based on evidence of learner performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency and associated assessment requirements.</li></ul>
<b>Reliability</b>	Evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.
<b>Flexibility</b>	To be flexible, assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- reflects the candidate's needs;</li><li>- provides for recognition of competencies no matter how, where or when they have been acquired;</li><li>- draws on a range of methods appropriate to the context, competency, and the candidate;</li><li>- and supports continuous competency development.</li></ul>
<b>Fairness</b>	Fairness in assessment requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- consideration of the individual candidate's needs and characteristics and any reasonable adjustments that should be applied;</li><li>- clarity of communication between the assessor and the candidate to ensure the candidate is fully informed, participates in, and consents to the assessment process;</li><li>- opportunities that allow the person/s being assessed to challenge assessments with provision for reassessment.</li></ul>

## Rules of Evidence

There are four rules of evidence that must be considered to ensure the judgement made by an assessor is based on quality evidence. It is important to note that it is almost impossible for a single source of evidence to satisfy each of these rules. Therefore, to ensure reliable judgement of competence, assessors are highly likely to require presentation of multiple sources and forms of evidence over a period of time to ensure the rules of evidence are met.

<b>Valid</b>	Evidence is valid when it relates directly to the competency being assessed and addresses the Dimensions of Competency.
<b>Authentic</b>	Authenticity relates to ensuring the evidence is from or of the candidate and not another person (e.g. the assessor needs to be satisfied that the evidence gathered is the candidate's own work).
<b>Current</b>	Current relates to the age of collected evidence. Competency requires demonstration of current performance, therefore the evidence collected establishes the ability of the candidate to demonstrate competence in the present.
<b>Sufficient</b>	Sufficiency relates to the amount of evidence collected. The collection of sufficient evidence is necessary to ensure all aspects of the competency have been captured and to satisfy the need for repeatable performance.

A variety of assessment tools can be used in combination to collect evidence of competence, including:

- written assessment
- practical demonstration
- supervisor checklists and reports
- group assessment
- workplace assessment
- simulation exercises and/or role play
- oral questioning
- portfolio
- logbook
- self-assessment

Assessment tools are included in the Training Resources Kit (TRK) for all courses.

## 40. Reasonable Adjustment

Reasonable adjustment means adjustments that can be made to the way in which evidence of candidate performance is collected. Whilst reasonable adjustments can be made in terms of the way in which evidence is gathered, the criteria for making a judgement of competency cannot be altered in any way. That is, the minimum performance standard is the same regardless of the group and/or individual being assessed.

## 41. Determining Competence

Competency requires the application of specified skills and knowledge relevant to effective participation in an industry, industry sector or enterprise. The assessor is responsible for making a judgement using the evidence collected that a person is competent. A person is deemed to be competent when able to demonstrate they have the required skills and knowledge and can apply them in a range of situations in the workplace. This definition of competency:

- emphasises outcomes
- focuses on what is expected of an employee in the workplace
- highlights the application of skills and knowledge to workplace tasks
- incorporates the ability to apply and transfer knowledge and skills to new situations and environments

It is important to remember that an assessment outcome of not yet competent is not failure. It simply means that the candidate needs more training and/or support in some identified areas.

### What is Competence

The national definition of 'Competency' in the Australian training system is:

Competency is the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace.

It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

There are four dimensions of competency that form the broad concept of competency including all aspects of work performance.

<b>Task Skills:</b>	encompass the ability to perform individual tasks
<b>Task Management Skills:</b>	involve demonstrating the ability to manage a number of different tasks/operations/activities within the job role or work environment
<b>Contingency Management Skills:</b>	skills: involves the requirement to respond to irregularities and breakdowns in routine
<b>Job Role / Environment Skills:</b>	involves demonstrating the ability to deal with responsibilities and expectations of the workplace, including working with others

Assessors must ensure, through design, conduct and review of assessment, that all four dimensions of competency are demonstrated in order to deem a candidate 'competent' in any nationally recognised unit of competency and/or qualification.

## **42. Feedback to the Candidate**

Useful and clear feedback to the candidate is of primary importance to the assessment process. Feedback should include advice and explanation of the elements of competency achieved and elements of competency not yet achieved. Effective feedback is:

- Constructive
- Balanced
- Actionable
- Relevant
- Timely

As part of the feedback process for candidates who are deemed 'Not Yet Competent', the assessor and where applicable the candidate's supervisor, will provide guidance and assistance in developing proposed remedial action and expected performance outcomes. This will further prepare the candidate for future reassessment.

## **43. Reassessment**

All candidates assessed as Not Yet Competent are entitled to retraining and reassessment. The assessor and/or service are to ensure that candidates are given adequate retraining time and resources. Feedback must be provided to candidates about the Not Yet Competent assessment decision and advised of the retraining and reassessment times and dates.

The reassessment must replicate the standards and conditions of the original assessment but may be a different assessment task from that originally attempted. The reassessment may address that part where the candidate was deemed Not Yet Competent or require a full reassessment as determined by the assessor.

#### 44. Assessment Steps

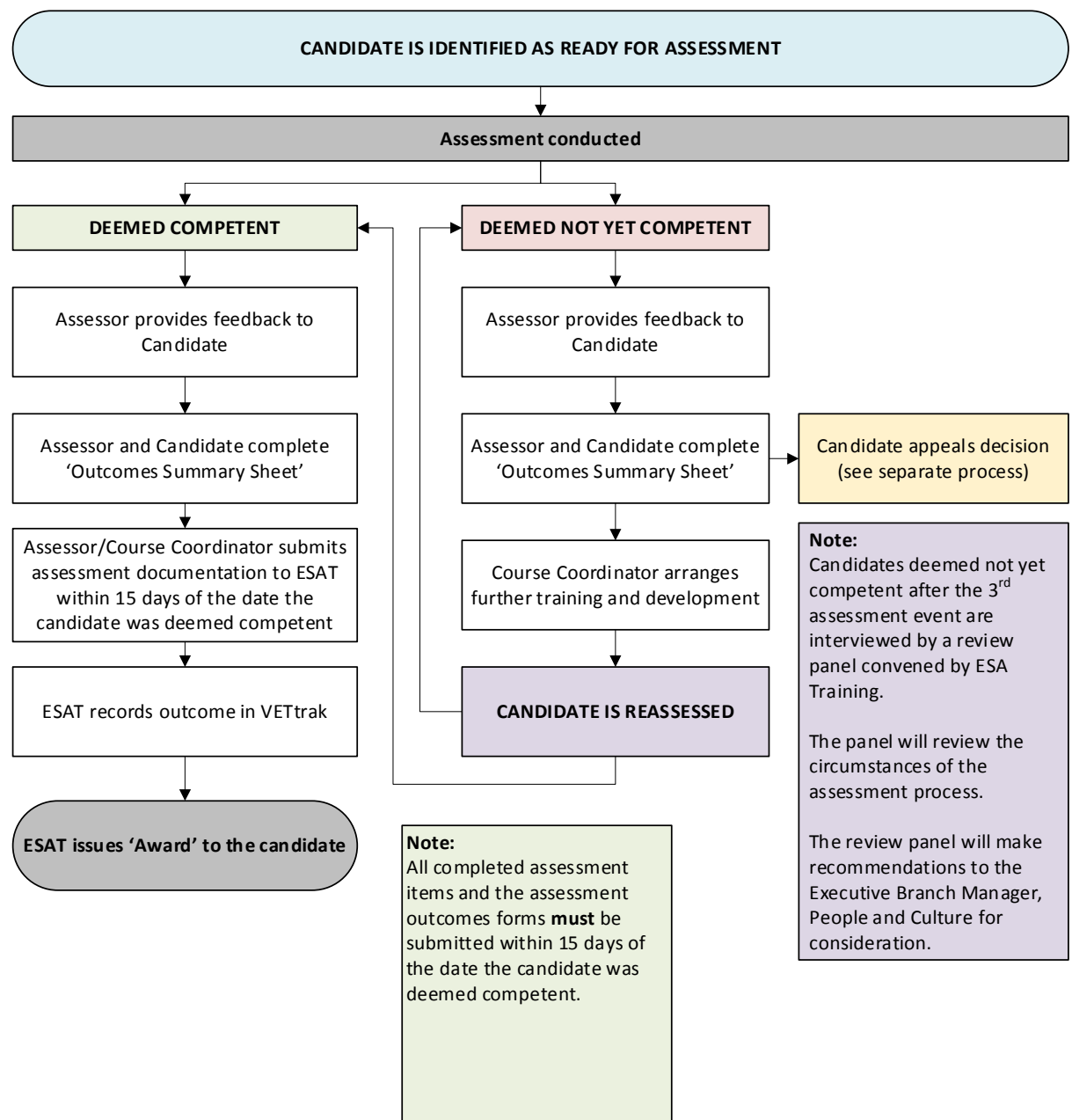
The assessment process is the series of steps that candidates and assessors move through while undertaking the assessment. It includes preparing, conducting, reviewing, and recording the assessment. Wherever possible, assessments will be conducted in the workplace of the person being assessed using tools and equipment that is usually available. Where this is not possible, the simulated environment must replicate the workplace and be documented in the TAS and the Assessment Tools. Validated assessment tools are provided in each course TRK.

Step	Procedure
1	Candidate is identified as ready for assessment by trainer/assessor
	Candidate nominates as ready for assessment
2	An assessment time and place is agreed with the candidate
	Candidate is advised of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the purpose of the assessment</li> <li>- performance standards</li> <li>- resources available and resources needed</li> <li>- expected duration of the assessment event</li> <li>- competencies being assessed</li> </ul> This information may be written or verbal but must be documented
3	The assessor conducts the assessment according to the validated assessment tool, gathering sufficient and appropriate evidence to make a judgement
4	The assessor evaluates the evidence gathered and makes a judgement of competency
	The assessor completes the Assessment Outcomes form
5	If the candidate is deemed Competent skip to step 10. If the candidate is deemed Not Yet Competent:
	The Assessor advises the candidate of the outcome and explains the judgement. This explanation is recorded using the Assessment Outcomes Form.
	The Assessor and Service Training Officer/Training Coordinator provide feedback the candidate, including guidance in developing remedial actions and expected performance outcomes.
	Additional training opportunities are discussed and may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a repeat of a scheduled training course</li> <li>- one-on-one coaching</li> <li>- guided practice of a particular skill</li> <li>- mentoring</li> </ul>
	Assessor reminds candidate of Appeals Policy as documented in the Learner Guide.
6	Reassessment is conducted. This may be in the whole of the assessment task or in discrete areas depending on the type and quality of evidence gathered during the first assessment event.



Step	Procedure
7	<p>A candidate deemed Not Yet Competent after a third assessment event is interviewed by a review panel convened by the Director, ESA Training. The panel will include appropriate representation from the service area concerned.</p> <p>The panel will investigate circumstances of the candidate's inability to demonstrate competence. The panel will limit its investigation to matters relating to the training and assessment process. Any other matters arising will be referred to the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture and the relevant Chief Officer or Executive Branch Manager.</p>
8	<p>The review panel will produce and submit a recommendation regarding an appropriate course of action to the relevant service head for endorsement.</p> <p>The Chair of the review panel will produce documentation outlining the review panel process and outcomes.</p> <p>A copy of this document will be given to the candidate and will include information about the candidate's right to appeal under this policy.</p>
9	<p>The review panels determined course of action is implemented.</p>
10	<p>When a candidate is deemed competent the assessor advises the candidate of the assessment outcome and explains the judgement.</p>
11	<p>The candidate and assessor sign the Assessment Outcomes Form.</p>
	<p>The assessor provides the original completed assessment items and the Assessment Outcomes Form to ESA Training as soon as practicable but no later than 15 days after the candidate has been deemed competent.</p>
	<p>ESA Training records the assessment outcome in the ESA Training database (VETtrak) and retains the original documentation in accordance with the records management section of this policy.</p>

**Figure 1: Assessment Process Overview**



## 45. Recognition (RPL) / Assessment Only

Recognition is an assessment process that assesses the competency/s of an individual that may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual meets the requirements specified in a Training Package or Accredited Course. Recognition can include:

- formal learning referring to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree);
- non-formal learning referring to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction, but does not lead to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business); and
- informal learning referring to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative).<sup>12</sup>

RPL is a process involving an assessment of an individual's current skills and knowledge even though the evidence produced in support of the claim for recognition may be drawn from the past. In order to ensure currency of competency, the process may require a challenge test.

### Credit for Prior Studies / Credit Transfer

The VET Quality Framework requires RTOs to recognise qualifications that are issued under the AQF (i.e. endorsed competency standards or accredited courses) by another RTO or AQF authorised issuing organisation. For credit to be granted, the individual must supply:

- AQF certification documentation (original or certified copy); or
- Authenticated VET transcripts issued by the Registrar (USI transcript).

The ESA RTO will review and may seek external verification of the validity of documentation presented.

Credit transfer applies when the certification documentation contains the same national competency code/s as those that form part of the application for Recognition.

Certification documentation must be presented as either originals or certified copies of an original. Certified copies must be signed by an authorised signatory or an authorised staff member of ESA Training. Original qualifications are not to be sent to ESA Training. If original documentation is presented in person to ESA Training, it will be returned to the applicant once a copy has been made and certified.

Whilst a candidate may have previously achieved a competency, there may be differences in organisational policies and procedures, other contexts (e.g. industry application) and variables (e.g. currency) that may require a person to further demonstrate their skills and knowledge before being granted credit and/or an operational role. Candidates may be asked to participate in local induction programs or to undergo a challenge test to assess competency against ACT operational policy and familiarisation with equipment. The relevant Service Training Officer will review each application for Recognition and make recommendations to the Director, ESA Training regarding service induction/challenge test requirements.

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<sup>12</sup> [Standards for Registered Training Organisations](#)

### **Eligibility for Recognition (RPL)**

As an enterprise RTO, the ESA RTO offers recognition services only where:

- the candidate is enrolled with the ESA RTO in the unit of competency/qualification for which RPL is requested
- the unit of competency/qualification is linked to the specific job role or progression requirements of the applicant

ESA volunteers and staff, who believe they possess, and can substantiate relevant competencies, may apply for recognition. Applications will be processed on the basis that it is the applicants' responsibility to provide the evidence required to support their claim for recognition.

### **Application for Recognition (RPL)**

The first step in having existing skills and knowledge recognised is to apply to ESA Training. The application must include details of the Training Package or unit of competency applied for (national code and name of competency).

The Director, ESA Training will review the application for recognition and, if approved, assign an assessor to provide guidance to the candidate about how to collect appropriate evidence. The Director, ESA Training will consult with the relevant Service Training Officer/Training Coordinator in making the assignment.

If the application for recognition is not approved, the applicant will be given written advice as to the reasons for declining the application. The applicant may appeal this decision in line with the appeals process detailed above.

### **Collecting Evidence**

Evidence required for recognition must meet all the requirements for evidence outlined in this policy.

Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- mapping of learning outcomes from prior formal or non-formal learning to the relevant qualification components
- questioning (oral or written)
- observation of performance in work based and/or simulated environments
- challenge examinations/assessments
- consideration of third-party reports and/or other documentation such as articles, reports, project material,
- papers, testimonials or other products prepared by the RPL applicant that relate to the learning outcomes of the relevant qualification component
- consideration of a portfolio and review of contents, and
- participation in structured assessment activities that individuals normally would be required to undertake if they were enrolled in the qualification components<sup>13</sup>.

All evidence provided is to be in the form of an Evidence Portfolio where evidence is linked to the relevant unit(s) of competency including all assessment requirements.

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<sup>13</sup> AQF Publication 'Recognition of Prior Learning: An Explanation' [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au)

Evidence requirements vary between Certificate levels due to the characteristics and distinguishing features of various AQF levels. For example, a Certificate IV requires a greater depth of knowledge evidence than a Certificate II. A summary of the learning outcome characteristics and their distinguishing features for each AQF level can be found on the AQF website at <http://www.aqf.edu.au/>.

### **Recognition (RPL) Assessment Decision**

Once the portfolio of evidence is received, an appropriate Authorised Trainer/Assessor reviews the evidence against the requirements of the relevant units of competency/qualification utilising course assessment tools as required. The participant's application for recognition may result in a number of outcomes:

- The participant may be deemed 'Competent' on the basis of the original evidence portfolio provided
- The participant may be informed they need to provide additional evidence. This may include: the participant attending an interview with the Assessor; providing examples of industry experience; providing supervisor statements; providing examples of work records/ documentation, work diary; and/or providing records of previous study
- The participant may be deemed 'Not Yet Competent' and offered a pathway to achieve competence through further training

## Issuing Awards

### 46. Certification of Nationally Recognised Training

The ESA RTO issues an Award (qualification or Statement of Attainment) on presentation of completed assessment documentation where the Authorised Trainer/Assessor has deemed the candidate competent. All nationally recognised awards must be issued in accordance with the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy<sup>14</sup>.

All awards must be issued within 30 calendar days of the candidate being assessed as meeting the requirements of the training program. Note: the 30 day period to issue an award does not commence when the assessment material is received by ESA Training, rather from the date all required assessment items have been verified as present and complete.

All certification includes fraud prevention controls in accordance with Schedule 5 of the *Standards for RTOs*.

#### **Certificate replacement**

If a student loses or misplaces the original certificate issued by the ESA RTO, a replacement certificate may be issued upon request. The original date of issue will be provided on the replacement certificate. All requests must be made in writing to the Director, ESA Training outlining the reason for issuing a replacement certificate. To protect privacy, a replacement certificate will only be provided to the named person.

#### **Replacement Certificates on behalf of RTOs previously existing as separate entities**

For replacement certificates issued under RTOs that have been incorporated into the ESA RTO (such as the ACT Fire Brigade RTO); applications will be assessed by the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture on a case-by-case basis. The Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture will consider training records and evidence available to be able to replace the original certificate. This may include but is not limited to:

- Completed assessment documentation
- Student Files
- Records of training delivered

If the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture decides to reissue, the certificate will have a new number and be issued under the ESA RTO with the appropriate information obtained from the records.

#### **Certification of non-accredited Training**

A Certificate of Attendance will be issued for non-accredited courses. Required non-accredited training will be recorded in the ESA Student Management System (currently VETtrak).

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-policies>

## Appeals and Complaints

### 47. Appeals

An appeal against an assessment outcome or process may be lodged at any time if the person undergoing assessment feels they have been disadvantaged or discriminated against.

An appeal is a process whereby a client of an RTO, or other interested party, may dispute an assessment decision made by the RTO. The appeals procedures apply to:

- assessments conducted within a course
- assessments or decision within a recognition (RPL) process

Under this section, procedures are established for students to seek a review of assessment outcomes. These procedures must be applied in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness and in a manner that promotes the values and general principles of the ACT Public Service. These procedures apply to all students of the ESA RTO.

#### Lodging an Appeal

Unless it would be inappropriate, a student should first discuss their concerns about an action or decision with the relevant assessor and/or Service Training Officer/Training Coordinator with a view to resolving the matter within the workplace or training environment before initiating a review under this procedure.

A student may initiate a review under this procedure by making an application to the Director, ESA Training that:

- is in writing; and
- identifies the action/decision the student seeks to be reviewed, and
- describes the outcome sought

Applications for a review must be submitted by the appellant within 14 days of the assessment outcome. This time period can be extended at the discretion of the Director, ESA Training.

#### Director, ESA Training Responsibilities

On receipt of the application the Director, ESA Training will acknowledge the request in writing within seven days. The Director, ESA Training must arrange for an application to be reviewed by an independent person (the Reviewing Officer), within 14 days, who is:

- An individual who was not involved in the original action/decision; and
- Holds relevant trainer and assessor qualifications. The Reviewing Officer is to be appointed in consultation with the relevant service's chief officer (where applicable)

The Director, ESA Training must provide the Reviewing Officer with terms of reference that outline the scope of the review. The terms of reference will include provision for the Reviewing Officer to contact the assessment team. The terms of reference must clearly articulate the parameters of the review (i.e. the assessment process, task).

The Director, ESA Training will write to the appellant, and relevant Chief Officer where applicable, fully informing the appellant of: the appeals process; providing a copy of the terms of reference; and providing access to all the relevant documents. Where the process is going to exceed 60 days, the Director, ESA Training will inform the appellant of the progress.

## **Responsibilities of the Reviewing Officer**

The Reviewing Officer must complete their review and respond to the Director, ESA Training within 30 days of appointment.

The Reviewing Officer must have due regard to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness and act with as little formality and as quickly as practicable consistent with a fair and proper consideration of the issues. This includes ensuring that the Reviewing Officer contacts both the appellant and relevant trainers/assessors involved in the training/assessment action or decision under appeal.

The Reviewing Officer may recommend to the Director, ESA Training that an application should not be considered based on any of the following grounds:

- The Reviewing Officer believes on reasonable grounds that the application:
  - is frivolous or vexatious
  - is misconceived or lacks substance, or
  - should not be heard for some other compelling reason.

If the Reviewing Officer does make a recommendation that an application should not be considered, the Director, ESA Training must either:

- confirm the recommendation that an application should not be considered; or
- arrange for another Reviewing Officer to consider, review and investigate the application.

The Director, ESA Training will inform the appellant in writing, within 14 days of any decision, including the reasons for a decision not to consider an application.

If the Reviewing Officer agrees that an application should be considered, then the Reviewing Officer must investigate the application. The purpose of the investigation is to:

- determine the facts and circumstances surrounding the action/decision;
- provide the Director, ESA Training with sufficient information to enable the Director, ESA Training make an informed decision on the substance of the appeal within 30 days of appointment.

On conclusion of the investigation the Reviewing Officer will present a written report to the Director, ESA Training detailing recommendation(s) on whether the action that led to the application should be confirmed, varied or that other action be taken. A copy of this report will be provided at the same time to the appellant and any other relevant parties.

The appellant and other listed parties may respond to any aspect of the report. Such a response must be in writing and be provided to the Director, ESA Training within seven days of the appellant receiving the report.

The Director, ESA Training after considering the report from the Reviewing Officer and any response by the appellant/other parties, may:

- confirm the original action;
- vary the original action; or
- take other action the Director, ESA Training believes reasonable.

The Director, ESA Training will inform the appellant in writing, within 14 days, outlining the reasons for the decision.



If applicable, a reassessment will be recommended to the Director, ESA Training. If the Director, ESA Training accepts the recommendation for reassessment, the Director, ESA Training will:

- arrange a reassessment with the appellant;
- where possible will organise an independent assessor; and
- offer the appellant to nominate an independent observer.

The appellant may refuse to be reassessed. The Director, ESA Training will refer the applicant to the relevant Chief Officer.

### **Right for External Review**

If the appellant or other parties are unhappy with the outcome, they may seek a review of a decision of the Director, ESA Training through:

- The Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture, or
- The ESA Commissioner; or
- ASQA

### **Certification following a successful appeal**

Following a successful appeal, ESA RTO will issue the relevant Award according to this policy.

### **Procedures where the subject of the appeal is an act or omission of the Director ESA Training**

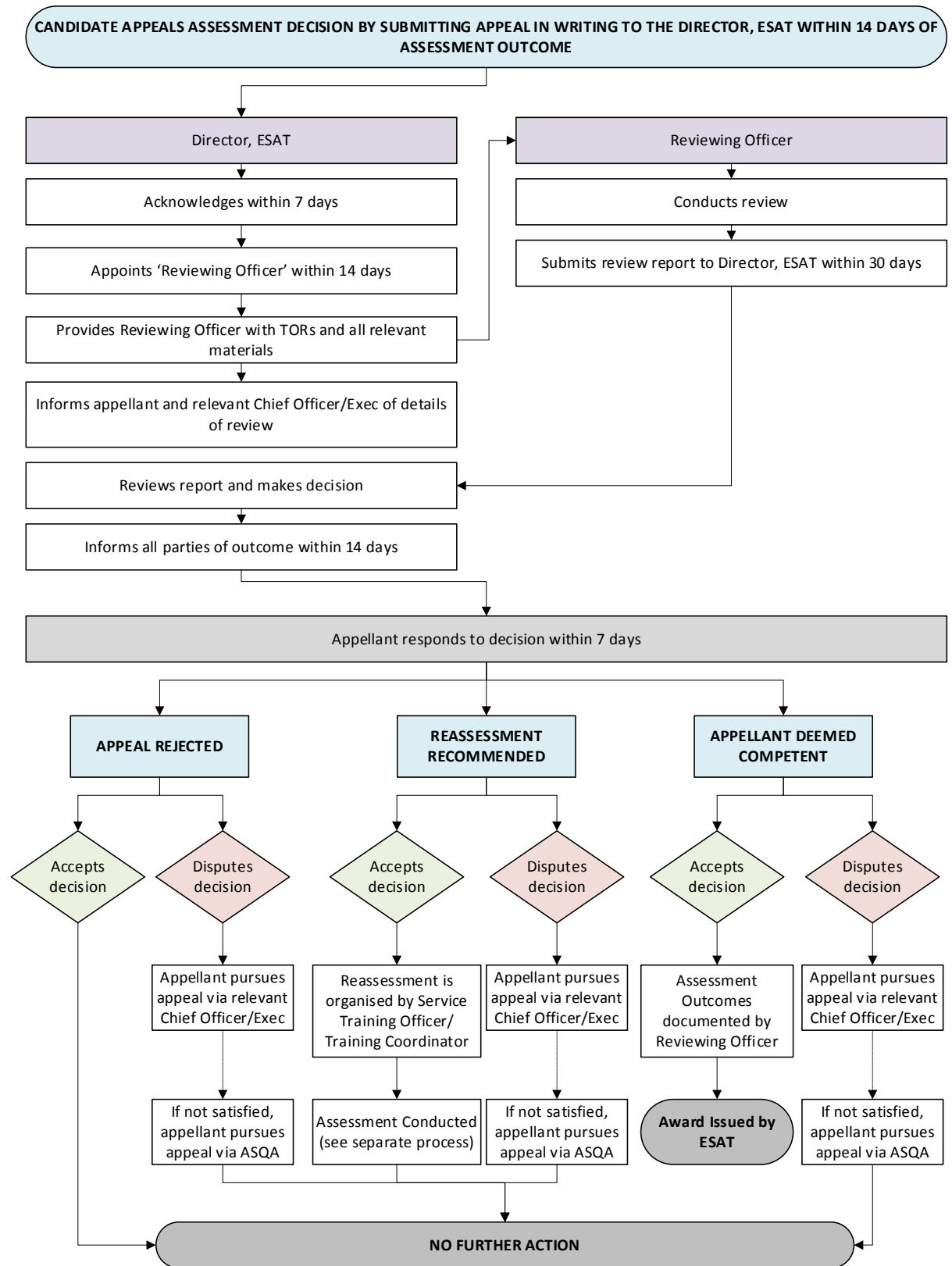
Where the subject of the appeal is an act or omission of the Director, ESA Training the appeal should be submitted to the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture.

The Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture will follow the appeal process as outlined in Figure 2, Appeals Process Overview.

### **Continuous Improvement**

Outcomes of an appeal will be recorded on the ESA Continuous Improvement Register to ensure any corrective action is taken to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

**Figure 2: Appeals Process Overview**



## 48. Complaints

A complaint is a real or perceived grievance that is expressed either verbally or in writing by a complainant. Information produced during the complaints resolution process is kept in trust and divulged only to those with a need to know, with due regard to the requirements of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016 (ACT)* and the *Information Privacy Act 2014*.

Where there is a complaint in relation to training, ESA is committed to observing the following principles:

- Employees/members are informed of their rights and responsibilities in the complaint resolution process
- the process is based on a proper consideration of the facts and circumstances prevailing at the time of the complaint
- decisions are impartial, transparent and capable of review
- documentation about complaint resolution decisions describes clearly and concisely the grounds upon which decisions were made

### Complaints Principles

For employees in cases involving, for example, the recruitment, selection and appointment process, the breach of standard review procedures as detailed in the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and/or relevant enterprise agreement may apply.

ESA observes the following principles and standards in relation to a complaint:

- recognise the difference between and apply either the complaint resolution procedure or other relevant process
- wherever possible the parties directly affected will resolve disputes
- at any stage of the complaint resolution procedure, the complainant may elect to be accompanied by another representative for support
- where in any case a dispute cannot be resolved by the affected parties, it is to be processed according to the following procedures
- where the complaint process is going to exceed 60 days the Director, ESA Training will inform the appellant of progress

**Note:** There are some slight variances across different awards and agreements, for employees. For further information please contact JACS.

## **Complaints Procedure**

**Step 1:** The complainant should, if he or she feels comfortable in doing so, attempt to resolve the complaint by approaching the person(s) who is/are the cause of the complaint.

**Step 2:** If not settled at Step 1, the matter is to be discussed between the complainant, respondent and the relevant operational supervisors or Director, ESA Training.

**Step 3:** If not settled at Step 2, the matter is to be discussed further involving a representative from the relevant Chief Officer and Director, ESA Training.

**Step 4:** If not settled at Step 3,

- for volunteers, the matter is to be referred formally to the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture who will seek an investigation via a delegated complaints officer and a reply is to be provided within seven working days
- for staff, the matter is to be referred through the relevant enterprise agreement grievance procedures

If after taking up a complaint with the RTO about training, a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaints process, the student may contact the national VET regulator:

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

Infoline: 1300 701 801

Web: [www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)

or call the National Training Complaints Hotline on 13 38 73.

## **Continuous Improvement**

Any complaints will be recorded on the ESA Continuous Improvement Register to ensure any corrective action is taken to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

## **Validation and Moderation**

### **49. Evaluation of Training and Assessment**

Evaluation is the process of checking how well training has prepared learners for the workplace and whether the original capability requirement has been met. Evaluation may be undertaken by a variety of means including course reports, post-course assessment, on-course assessment and workplace assessment 'on the job'. It should be possible to evaluate each and every course held in ESA, and over time it should be possible to identify each skill used 'on the job' and review its contribution to training and learning outcomes when training resources are being reviewed and created. Responsible personnel should endeavour to review a representative sample.

#### **Participant Feedback**

At the conclusion of each program, course or workshop feedback from participants must be gathered as a part of the evaluation and continuous improvement process. There are a number of designs available for this purpose and participants are encouraged to comment on a number of areas including relevance of training materials, value of the program to them and quality of instruction.

Completed feedback forms and/or survey results must be provided to ESA Training for review. Where amendments to the program, course or workshop are recommended, details are recorded in the continuous improvement register and action is taken according to processes outlined in this policy.

For advice on and/or templates for feedback forms contact ESA Training.

#### **Trainer and Assessor Feedback**

Feedback from trainers and assessors is principally used to determine whether there are alternate strategies that can be employed to deliver programs. It is also an opportunity for trainers and assessors to reflect on their performance and if relevant, provide advice to ESA Training that may assist other trainers and assessors. Where amendments to the program, course or workshop are recommended, details are recorded in the continuous improvement register and action is taken according to processes outlined in this policy.

### **50. Validation of Assessment Products**

Validation is a quality review process that confirms the assessment system can consistently produce valid assessment outcomes. Validation of assessment products involves confirming that the assessment tools are designed such that the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence can be met consistently across a range of assessors and candidates.

Validation of assessment products is undertaken by a Training Review Panel.

Where amendments are recommended, details are recorded in the continuous improvement register and action is taken according to processes outlined in this policy.

#### **Schedule for product validation**

The ESA RTO must review its training products at least once in a five-year period. At least 50% of the training products on scope must be validated within the first three years of the schedule. For some high risk training activities it may be necessary that validation occurs more frequently. The frequency of validation of any high risk programs is undertaken in consultation with the relevant service.

The ESA RTO manages this requirement by ensuring all assessment products are validated prior to each delivery of a course or program. Where a course or program is not delivered within a 3 year period, a review is undertaken to determine the suitability for the product to remain on the ESA RTO scope of registration. This review is undertaken in consultation with the relevant service.

Undertaking a product validation process in the planning stages for each course or program ensures that only current Training Package products are referenced and that each program meets current operational requirements.

## **51. Validation of Assessment Judgements**

Validation of assessment judgements includes reviewing a statistically valid sample of all completed assessments and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tools and/or processes and acting upon such recommendations. The purpose of conducting systematic validation of assessment judgements is to confirm that judgements are being made correctly, in accordance with the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence and allows a reasonable inference to be made that assessment judgements have been valid overall.

Where amendments are recommended, details are recorded in the continuous improvement register and action is taken according to processes outlined in this policy.

### **Schedule for validation of assessment judgements**

The ESA RTO must validate a statistically valid sample of judgements across each product in its scope of registration at least once in a five-year period. A sample of judgements from at least 50% of the training products on scope must be validated within the first three years of the schedule. For some high risk training activities it may be necessary that validation occurs more frequently.

The ESA RTO manages this requirement by conducting a validation workshop for each service area annually. A statistically valid sample of assessment judgements made in the preceding 6-month period is reviewed by an Assessment Validation Panel as described in this policy.

In addition to the annual validation workshop, each assessment is checked for completeness as results are recorded into VETtrak. In the event of missing or incomplete documentation, ESA Training support staff liaise with the relevant service to ensure correct and complete records are held.

## **52. Moderation**

Moderation is the process of aligning assessment judgements and standards. It is a process that ensures the same standards are applied to all assessment results within the same unit of competency. Moderation is conducted **before** the finalisation of the assessment judgement. It is an active process in the sense that judgements are adjusted to overcome differences in the difficulty of the tool and/or the severity of judgements.

Moderation involves assessors collectively discussing, comparing, practising and agreeing on assessment methods, assessment tools and assessment outcomes. The process ensures the interpretation of performance standards and benchmarking of assessment judgements.

There is no regulatory requirement to conduct moderation systematically. Moderation is conducted according to service needs and is encouraged for newly endorsed trainers and assessors. Records of moderation activities should be provided to ESA Training to inform the annual professional development schedule.

## Records Management

### 53. Record Keeping Overview

The ESA RTO is required to comply with a series of records management provisions as described in:

- The Territory Records Act 2002
- The VET Quality Framework
- Contractual arrangements e.g. The ACT Funding Agreement

Keeping accurate training and administration records is vital to the ongoing compliance of the ESA RTO. The ESA RTO must ensure the integrity, accuracy and currency of records that include, but are not limited to:

- secure storage, including backup of electronic records
- retention, archiving and retrieval of student results for a period of 30 years and transfer consistent with regulatory requirements
- retention, archiving, retrieval and transfer of all other records consistent with contractual and legal requirements and the requirements of the State or Territory registering body that has registered the organisation
- compliance with external reporting requirements e.g. the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS)
- safeguarding any confidential information obtained by the RTO and committees, individuals or organisations acting on its behalf
- ensuring that, except as required under the *Standards for RTOs* or by law, information about a client is not disclosed to a third party without the written consent of the client
- clients are able to access their personal records

The ESA RTO will maintain an accurate recording system for all assessment records and qualifications, consistent with the quality standards required of a RTO. The ESA must maintain up-to-date records of:

- verified qualifications and experience of all staff and persons working on behalf of the RTO as trainers and assessors
- enrolments and participation
- assessment results
- appeals and complaints

Assessment results will be archived and stored electronically by the ESA RTO for the required 30 years.

The ESA RTO will maintain the training database (currently VETtrak) with records for each person (personnel or volunteer) who has enrolled in a course or program related to their ESA activities. Individuals may request to review their records at any time. For more information contact ESA Training.

## 54. Specific records retention requirements

### Completed Assessment items

In accordance with the General Direction: [Retention requirements for completed student assessment items](#) issued by ASQA, the ESA RTO is required to retain all completed student assessment items for a minimum of six months. To ensure consistency with Australian Apprenticeship recordkeeping requirements, the ESA RTO will maintain all student records for a period of 7 years from the date the candidate was deemed competent.

All completed assessment items must be submitted to ESA Training along with the Assessment Outcomes form as soon as possible but no later than 15 days from the determination of competence.

### Misplaced completed assessments

In the event a student's completed assessment items are misplaced the assessor must:

- Inform the Service Training Officer/Training Coordinator immediately;
- Provide a copy of the Training Record form with the student's signature;
- Provide any available evidence of the candidate's engagement with the assessment event (e.g. attendance records)
- Provide a copy of the assessment tools used for the assessment event; and
- Complete a statutory declaration detailing the assessment details, performance of the candidate and judgement of competency.

These are to be forwarded to the Service Training Officer/Training Coordinator and then to the ESA RTO for processing.

### Evidence of Attendance

It is essential that each participant's attendance at learning or development activities is recorded. An attendance sheet must be made available by administration staff and retained with the learning and development event material. This attendance sheet not only details who attended the program, but also provides information about people on site should an emergency occur or an evacuation be required. It also provides as a record that the participant has been inducted into the training site.

### Records related to Australian Apprenticeships

In addition to the above, the ESA RTO must retain records related to an Australian Apprentice for a minimum of seven years from completion of the Contract of Training. The following documentation must be retained:

- AVETMISS compliant enrolment form
- Signed Training Plan
- Signed Assessment Records
- The qualification or statement of attainment issued to the Australian Apprentice



### Australian Apprentices participation in training

The ESA RTO is required to retain evidence of the Australian Apprentices participation in training and assessment for each unit of competency listed in the Training Plan. This evidence must clearly identify:

- the trainee by name;
- the unit/s of competency involved; and
- the date of participation.

Examples of the types of acceptable record include:

- work submitted by the Australian Apprentice
- attendance records
- assessment documentation
- login records for online learning

### Australian Apprentices support and monitoring

The ESA RTO is required to retain evidence that the Australian Apprentice has received sufficient support to develop the skills and knowledge required for successful completion of the qualification, and that the RTO has monitored the Australian Apprentices progress in accordance with the contact requirements outlined in the ACT Compliance Guide.

In most cases, this will require the ESA RTO to record a minimum of monthly contact with each Australian Apprentice over the full duration of the Contract of Training. Examples of contact records include:

- attendance records
- assessment documentation
- contact records such as file notes, emails, contact logs

These records must be kept on the Student file for each Australian Apprentice and made available to ESA Training and/or ACT Funding Agreement auditors and/or ASQA auditors at any time.

## 55. Document Control

Document control, including version control, allows for consistent identification of the approved version of a document. It is critical that all documentation related to training and assessment is controlled to ensure compliance. Features of the document control system are to:

- control the preparation, distribution, implementation, maintenance and review of documentation
- maintain a list of physical and digital locations where documentation is held and notify such locations of changes to the documentation
- identify, control and maintain the integrity and currency of coursework materials
- ensure relevant personnel have current versions of ESA documentation and other relevant training publications

Each service is responsible for ensuring all training and assessment documentation is updated and includes a document version control mechanism. Version control is to be applied to all electronic or hard copy documents, including, but not limited to:

- learner guides and materials
- instructor guides and materials
- lesson plans
- assessor guides
- assessment tools
- on-the-job packages
- recognition packages
- assessment cover sheets
- joining instructions
- mapping of units of competency and qualifications
- evaluation material
- all other training and assessment documents (assessment material which support assessment tools, and exercise and activity instructions)

Each service is to inform ESA Training of any version changes in order to ensure the Document Control Register is current. See the Continuous Improvement section of this policy for a description of the continuous improvement process including classification of types of changes. A major/version change will require a Training Review Panel or Assessment Validation Panel to be convened.

ESA Training is responsible for ensuring the currency of governance documentation including but not limited to:

- policies and procedures
- the document control register

### **Document Control Register**

ESA Training will develop, maintain and make available a document control register. The document control register is a table listing all documents that need to be published, maintained and controlled. The register provides details of the current version of the document. It provides users the opportunity to ensure the currency and accuracy of approved documentation. Each service is to inform ESA Training of any version changes in order to update the document control register.

## **Version Control**

Each controlled document must clearly denote its version number. The following version numbering convention must be applied by all document authors. The document version number must be included in the electronic file name and in the footer of the document.

### Draft document version number

- The first draft of a document will be Version 0.1.
- Subsequent drafts will have an increase of '0.1' in the version number. For example: 0.2, 0.3, 0.4, ...0.9, 0.10, 0.11.

### Final document version number and date

- When a document has been approved for publication, the document is deemed to be final.
- The first final version of a document will be Version 1.0. It is good practice to include the date when the document becomes final in any version identification protocols.
- Subsequent final documents will have an increase of "1.0" in the version number (1.0, 2.0, etc).

### Final documents undergoing revisions

- Final documents undergoing revision will be Version '#.1' for the first version of the revisions.
- While the document is under review, subsequent draft versions will increase by '0.1'
- When the revised document is deemed final, the version will increase by '1.0' over the version being revised, e.g., the draft 1.3 will become a final 2.0.

## **Version Identification**

All documents are to contain an approved document version control mechanism. The two most common mechanisms are:

- a document control footer; and
- a document control table.

Either method is acceptable under this policy.

### Document Control Footer

A document control footer is to include the following information:

- title of document
- page number
- version number
- review date
- controlled document statement (title page only)

The document footer is to be applied as detailed in the example below:

Document Control Register Version 1.0	Page 1 of 1 Last reviewed 24 Aug 2015
This is a controlled document. Any documents appearing in paper form are not controlled and should be checked against the document control register prior to use.	

### Document Control Table

A document control table is included at the beginning of a document before the Table of Contents. An example of a document control table is:

<b>Version #</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Approved Date</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
1.0	February 2013	Initial Release	16 Jan 2013	February 2014
2.0	March 2014	Minor typographical corrections	2 March 2014	March 2015
3.0	August 2014	Updated Section 5 to reflect new responsible officer		
4.0	March 2015	Amended to reflect changes in legislative responsibilities	6 March 2015	March 2016

Note that the document control table only records whole numbers (i.e. 'final' versions). It is not necessary to document draft versions in the control table.

## 56. VETtrak governance and access principles

Preservation of the integrity of the student management database is essential for RTO registration requirements; therefore, different levels of security access will be applied according to demonstrated business need.

All users must abide by the following protocols:

- all governance (including level of security access) and policy arrangements set by the ESA RTO for use of the system
- all requests for access to VETtrak and any changes to security levels/proposed modifications to the system must be approved by the Director, ESA Training
- individual access to VETtrak will be restricted to the relevant Division/Department/Section according to identified business requirement (need to know basis)
- access to the Certificate Reports (for issuing of qualifications/statements of attainment) will be restricted to ESA Training staff
- all disputes, if unable to be resolved by the Director, ESA Training will be referred to the Executive Branch Manager, People and Culture

### VETtrak Access Levels

Access Level	Description	Category	Business Requirement
Security	'Administrator' access	1, 2	Management of all security aspects and upgrades of system
Advantage Pro	'Write' access	1, 2, 3	Creation of new clients with in system and update personal information (within Department/Section)
			Management of service programs and occurrences
			Reporting requirements
Viewer	'Read only' access	1, 2, 3, 4	View client information; produce reports*

\* Access to the report functionality is restricted and will be provided on a demonstrated needs basis and limited on a 'need to know' basis.

## Key to Access Categories

Category	Description
1	Director, ESA Training
2	ESA Training Staff
3	ACTSES Learning and Development Coordinator ACTSES Community Liaison Coordinator ACTRFS Learning and Development Coordinator ACTRFS Membership Support Officer
4	ACTSES Senior Director Operations & Governance ACTSES Operations and Capability Coordinator ACTSES Logistics and Resource Coordinator ACTSES Manager Policy & Planning ACTSES Volunteers – Commander, Admin Officer and Training Officers (limited to their unit only)  ACTRFS Operations Manager ACTRFS Volunteers – Brigade Captains and Training Officers (limited to their brigade only)  ACTF&R Commanders (limited to their platoon only) ACTF&R Firefighter Development staff

## 57. Confidentiality and Privacy

Privacy and access to information stored about ESA personnel and volunteers is an important issue. ESA is committed to maintaining staff and volunteer privacy and restricting access to information (including training information) on a 'need to know' basis and in accordance with the *Standards for RTOs* and relevant legislation. Additionally, the ESA RTO maintains the privacy and confidentiality of all participants and, as such, the personal records of individuals will not be disclosed to a third party without prior written consent.

Given the duality of ESA as an enterprise RTO and a government function of an ACT directorate, confidentiality and privacy must satisfy two requirements: ACT Government policy and legislation; and Commonwealth policy and legislation governing RTOs. More information the *Information Privacy Act 2014* can be accessed at <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2014-24/default.asp>

## Reporting Requirements

### 58. Total VET Activity reporting requirements

The ESA RTO is required to comply with regulatory requirements detailed in the *Data Provision Requirements 2012* which states that RTOs must collect and report 'Total VET Activity' data in accordance with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS). AVETMISS is a national data standard which ensures the consistency and accuracy of VET information.

In order to meet the Total VET Activity reporting requirements, the ESA RTO is required to collect demographic information as well as provide details about where and what our students study. ESA Training has designed a course nomination process that requires the student to provide this demographic data once, updating it only when the person's circumstances change.

The Data Policy requirements are that the RTO must seek this data, however, the student may choose not to disclose this information. All students must complete a Privacy Notice and Student Declaration as evidence that they are aware of how their personal information may be used or disclosed. ESA must retain evidence that the student has signed or electronically acknowledged the mandatory information contained in the Privacy Notice and Student Declaration.

### 59. Unique Student Identifier

Each individual student requires a Unique Student Identifier (USI) when studying a nationally recognised training course in Australia. The ESA RTO has previously been exempt from collecting the USI, however, this exemption is no longer valid effective 1 January 2018. Students can register for a USI online through the Student Identifiers Registrar.

The ESA RTO cannot issue nationally recognised awards to anyone without a verified USI.

#### What is a Unique Student Identifier?

The USI is a reference number made up of ten numbers and letters that:

- creates a secure online record of your recognised training and qualifications gained in Australia, from all training providers you undertake recognised training with
- will give you access to your training records and transcripts
- can be accessed by you online, anytime and anywhere
- is free and easy to create and
- stays with you for life

### 60. Quality Indicators

The Quality Indicators form part of the [Data Provision Requirements 2012](#).

Quality Indicators have been designed to help RTOs conduct evidence-based and outcomes-focused continuous quality improvement, and assist ASQA to assess risk associated with an RTO's operations. RTOs are required to collect and use data on three Quality Indicators.

#### Employer Satisfaction

This indicator focuses on employer evaluation of learner competency development and the relevance of learner competency to work and further training, as well as employer evaluation of the overall quality of the training and assessment.

The source of data to measure this indicator is a survey called the Employer Questionnaire. RTOs must gather and analyse this data each year.

## **Learner Engagement**

This indicator focuses on the extent to which learners are engaging in activities likely to promote high-quality skill outcomes. It includes learner perceptions of the quality of their competency development and the support they receive from the RTO.

The source of data to measure this indicator is a survey called the Learner Questionnaire. RTOs must gather and analyse this data each year.

The procedure for the collection and reporting of quality indicator data is the responsibility of Director, ESA Training.

## **Financial Management**

### **61. Finance**

For all issues relating to financial management refer to the Chief Executive Officers Financial Instructions and Delegations.