

## Engaging VET Practitioners Forums

### What are the factors relating to AQTF compliance impeding new practices in VET teaching, learning and assessment in a Training Package environment.

*A think piece to stimulate discussion at the Reframing the Future Forums, August 2005*

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As an Auditor, I have seen many training organisations bend over backwards, keeping their nose to the grindstone and their back to the wall, and still trying to keep their chin up and put their best foot forward in order to make sure they are seen to fit the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Many report that they are crippled by the paper-work required to address the minutiae of the standards and by the need to put in place policies and procedures that are not relevant to their scale and scope of operations.

Can you think of some examples of how an RTO might distort its activities to comply with AQTF or Training Package standards?

Is this really necessary? Should compliance with the requirements of the AQTF or of Training Packages really require such contortions? Is it the function of the AQTF to make all RTOs the same, or is there room for flexibility, individuality and responsiveness? Should 'one size fit all'? Do we really want uniformity?

What impact does the expectation of **uniformity** have on the exercise of professional judgement about VET teaching, learning and assessment?

RTOs frequently resort to purchasing 'ready-made suits' to ensure that they comply with VET quality requirements. These products can include curriculum materials and texts, assessment tools, and AQTF compliance templates. They may carry such esteemed labels as 'NRT' or 'ANTA' ... but are these labels a guarantee of compliance?

Have you come across published curriculum materials or assessment tools that have all the appearance of quality, yet fall short of AQTF or Training Package requirements? In what ways don't these resources fit?

It is the responsibility of the RTO to exercise professional judgement to confirm that published materials comply with VET quality standards ... and to modify or supplement such resources when they don't. It is not uncommon to find these resources carry a disclaimer in very small print denying any responsibility for the quality of the materials or any adverse consequences arising from their use. Recognition of their untested status is also to be found in their request for feedback and improvement from the practitioners who use the materials.

Professional judgement also has to be exercised on matters where the AQTF is silent (such as the evaluation of training delivery) or where Training Packages are imprecise, ambiguous or inconsistent (such as the status of knowledge). In such circumstances the auditor is no better

placed than the RTO in judging compliance, but is well placed to observe whether judgement has been superficial or well thought through.

What aspects of professional judgement are not guided by the AQTF or Training Package standards?

Summary ...

Does quality depend upon uniformity, or can we recognise quality in different ways? How can we enable RTOs to be flexible and distinctive, and yet still demonstrate compliance with the AQTF?

Think peace!



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