Australian Industry and Skills Committee

Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy

Approved by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee
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Contents

1. Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy 3
2. About Training Packages 3
3. Stakeholder roles 4
4. Training Package Quality Principles and Reform Priorities 6
5. National consultation 8
6. Categories of Change 10
7. Summary of the process for training package development and endorsement 12
8. IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work 14
9. Other pathways for initiating training package development 15
10. National Schedule 17
11. Drafting training packages 18
12. Developing the Case for Endorsement 19
13. Training package quality assurance 22
14. AISC consideration 24
15. Skills Ministers endorsement 25
16. Glossary 26

1. Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy

The *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy* is one of three documents that form the Training Package Organising Framework. These documents should be read in conjunction with each other and with any associated guidance material.

The Training Package Organising Framework consists of the:

- The *Standards for Training Packages*
  The *Standards for Training Packages* are the overarching standards as endorsed by Skills Ministers. The Standards establish the Training Package Organising Framework and define the components that comprise a training package.
- The *Training Package Products Policy*
  The *Training Package Products Policy* outlines the rules that training package developers are required to comply with when developing (or modifying) a training package product.
- The *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy*
  The *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy* outlines the process to be followed for the development of a training package through to approval for implementation by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) and endorsement by Skills Ministers.

This document is referred to in Standard 3 of the *Standards for Training Packages 2012*, requiring training package developers comply with the *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy*.

This document sets out the pathways and processes for training package development through to endorsement and identifies specific roles and accountabilities for relevant stakeholders. It also sets out where the full development and endorsement process applies and when and how minor changes can be made to existing training packages.

Also of relevance to the design, development and delivery of training packages are the:

- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015
- Standards for Vocational Education and Training Regulators 2015
- National Register of Vocational Education and Training
- Australian Qualifications Framework
- IRC Operating Framework.

2. About Training Packages

Training packages specify the knowledge and skills required by individuals to perform effectively in the workplace, known as 'competencies' and expressed in units of competency. Training packages also detail how units of competency can be packaged into nationally recognised qualifications that align to the *Australian Qualifications Framework* (AQF).

Training packages prescribe assessment requirements but they do not prescribe how an individual should be trained.

Training packages are used for a number of purposes, but predominantly:

- by training providers, to design training curriculum tailored to support individual learner needs, and the needs of employers and industry
- by employers, to assist with workforce design, development and structure.

Training packages consist of the following nationally endorsed training package products:

- units of competency, which specify the standard of performance required in the workplace
- assessment requirements (associated with each unit of competency)
- qualifications aligned to the AQF (Certificate I to Advanced Diploma, and Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma)
- credit arrangements, specifying existing arrangements between training package qualifications and higher education qualifications in accordance with the AQF.

Training packages include non-endorsed quality assured Companion Volume Implementation Guides and can include industry recognised skill sets. Although these do not require endorsement, they must be provided for consultation and validation as part of the training package development process and be included as part of the Case for Endorsement when submitted to the AISC for approval.

3. Stakeholder roles

3.1 Skills Ministers Meeting

The Skills Ministers Meeting (Skills Ministers') provides a forum for intergovernmental collaboration and decision-making about skills development and national training arrangements, including training packages.

Under the *National Vocational and Education Training Regulator Act 2011*, the Skills Ministers' have authority to endorse training packages.

3.2 Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC)

The AISC was established by Skills Ministers in May 2015 to give industry a formal role in commissioning training package development work and approving training packages for implementation. The AISC's role is to ensure that the directions taken by Skills Ministers are informed by an industry-based perspective focused on the quality and relevance of the national training system. The AISC is responsible for appointing Industry Reference Committee (IRC) members.

3.3 Industry Reference Committees

Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) are the key industry advisory bodies to the AISC. IRCs are made up of experts in relevant industry sectors and play a critical role in identifying and responding to emerging skills and training needs. Through IRCs, industry requirements for skills are considered and defined in training packages. IRCs:

- gather industry intelligence to inform advice on training package development and review
- direct the work of their Skills Service Organisations (SSOs) so that training packages contain the correct industry content
- provide sign off for IRC Skills Forecasts and Proposed Schedules of Work, Cases for Endorsement and other submissions for consideration by the AISC
- report to the AISC on the progress of their work
- promote the use of VET in the sectors they represent.

3.4 Skills Service Organisations

Skills Service Organisations (SSOs) are funded by the Australian Government to support IRCs in their role. SSOs act as independent, professional service organisations and undertake the training package related work commissioned by the AISC, under direction of the relevant IRC(s). SSOs:

- support IRCs in their engagement with industry/employers/enterprises (including across industry sectors) and other stakeholders to identify the skills required for jobs, and to drive the training package development and review process so that units of competency and qualifications align with modern work-practices
- develop quality training packages that are fit for purpose in the modern economy, are embraced by industry and maximise the potential for individuals to access employment
- provide technical, operational and secretariat support to IRCs.

3.5 The Australian Government

The Australian Government:

- provides the AISC Secretariat
- provides support to the AISC and its network of IRCs
- manages funding agreements for SSOs
- provides structured input to the training package development and review process
- actively engages with stakeholders to identify and resolve any national issues relating to training package development, including policy interpretation.

3.6 State and territory governments

The role of state and territory governments is to:

- influence the development of high quality training package products so that they meet the Standards for Training Packages and associated policy
- engage with stakeholders to identify jurisdictional issues related to proposed training package changes, including at the early stages of project development, to ensure that any local issues can be considered, discussed and addressed prior to the Case for Endorsement being submitted to the AISC
- identify potential implementation issues and impacts of proposed training package changes and provide advice to minimise negative impacts
- provide expert advice to the AISC, via the ex-officio and state and territory nominated representatives, on Training Package Standards, associated policy, implementation issues and how they can be addressed
- contribute to the resolution of any outstanding issues as required
- prepare a report by exception for inclusion in the final Case for Endorsement, when a jurisdictional issue is unable to be resolved.

State and territory governments monitor the implementation of training packages in their jurisdiction and identify implementation issues to provide feedback directly to training package developers and AISC Secretariat.

State and territory governments' level and mode of engagement may vary in the development and endorsement process, and depends on the strategic priorities of each jurisdiction.

3.7 Vocational education and training regulators

Vocational education and training regulators are responsible for regulating the training and assessment strategies and practices of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), including the scope of training they provide.

The national VET regulator is the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). Victoria and Western Australia also regulate RTOs that deliver training in their states through the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority and Western Australian Training Accreditation Council respectively. Any RTO that provides nationally recognised training services across multiple jurisdictions or that provides training services to international students must be regulated by ASQA.

VET regulators are also responsible for approving VET Accredited Courses that address niche or emerging skills requirements for industry, enterprises and the community where they are not already covered by an endorsed training package.

4. Training Package Quality Principles and Reform Priorities

4.1 Training Package Quality Principles

The following table describes the Training Package Quality Principles. These principles provide a high level statement of the purpose of training packages and their role in meeting the needs of industry, individuals and the economy. In order to be endorsed, a training package must be consistent with the requirements of Training Package Quality Principles (where applicable), which are outlined below.

Principle 1: Reflect identified workforce outcomes

Key Features	Examples of evidence
1. Driven by industries' needs	• Changes demonstrate a clear link back to relevant AISC decisions commissioning the work, the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work, National Schedule and/or case for change, or demonstrate other evidence of industry needs.
2. Compliant and respond to government broad policy initiatives	• Training package components are compliant with the *Standards for Training Packages 2012*, the *Training Package Products Policy* and the *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy*. • Evidence that the training package components respond to Ministers' policy initiatives, in particular the COAG Industry and Skills Council 2015 training package reforms.
3. Reflect contemporary work organisation and job profiles incorporating a future orientation	• Open and inclusive consultation and validation commensurate with scope and impact has been conducted.

Principle 2: Support portability of skills and competencies including reflecting licensing and regulatory requirements

Key Features	Examples of evidence
4. Support movement of skills within and across organisations and sectors	• Packaging rules, qualifications framework, and pathways support movement within and across sectors • Identification of skill sets that respond to client needs.
5. Promote national and international portability	• Other national and international standards for skills are considered.
6. Reflect regulatory requirements and licensing	• Solutions to incorporate licensing and regulatory requirements are brokered and there is clear evidence of support from licensing and industry regulatory bodies.

Principle 3: Reflect national agreement about the core transferable skills and core job-specific skills required for job roles as identified by industry

Key Features	Examples of evidence
7. Reflect national consensus	• Active engagement across industry has sought to achieve a national consensus about the advice being provided to the AISC.
8. Recognise convergence and connectivity of skills	• Best use is made of cross-industry work and participation bank units.

Principle 4: Be flexible to meet the diversity of individual and employer needs, including the capacity to adapt to changing job roles and workplaces

Key Features	Examples of evidence
9. Meet the diversity of individual and employer needs	• Provide flexible qualifications that enable application in different contexts.
10. Support equitable access and progression of learners	• Provide multiple entry and exit points. • Pre-requisite units of competency are used only when required.

Principle 5: Facilitate recognition of an individual's skills and knowledge and support movement between the school, vocational education and higher education sectors

Key Features	Examples of evidence
11. Support learner transition between education sectors	• Provide pathways from entry and preparatory level as appropriate to facilitate movement between schools and VET, from entry level into work, and between VET and higher education qualifications.

Principle 6: Support interpretation by training providers and others through the use of simple, concise language and clear articulation of assessment requirements

Key Features	Examples of evidence
12. Support implementation across a range of settings	• Industry advice about delivery is provided via a Companion Volume Implementation Guide ready for publication at the same time as the Training Package.
13. Support sound assessment practice	• Units of competency and their associated assessment requirements are clearly written and have consistent breadth and depth.
14. Support implementation	• Compliance with the TGA/National Register of VET requirements for publication. • Implementation advice is provided in a Companion Volume Implementation Guide that is ready for publication at the same time as the Training Package.

4.2 Reform Priorities

A key priority for the AISC is supporting the training package reform priorities agreed by Ministers in November 2015, which are as follows:

- ensure obsolete and superfluous qualifications are removed from the system
- ensure that more information about industry's expectations of training delivery is available to training providers to improve their delivery and to consumers to enable more informed course choices
- ensure that the training system better supports individuals to move easily from one related occupation to another
- improve the efficiency of the training system by creating units that can be owned and used by multiple industry sectors
- foster greater recognition of skill sets.

Further priorities were agreed by Skills Ministers on 9 October 2020 to support streamlining, prioritisation and rationalisation including:

- removing training products that have had not been used in the past three years from the national training system
- implementation of a prioritisation framework for training package development.

5. National consultation

5.1 Purpose

An open and inclusive national consultation process that enables contributions from key users of the training product being reviewed is essential throughout the training package development process. This will help to ensure industry relevance and stakeholder support for the final product as fit for purpose. Consultation begins at the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work and/or Case for Change stage, and continues through to AISC consideration of the Case for Endorsement. Consultation is also intended to ensure that the Training Package Quality Principles (outlined above) are applied to training package work from the beginning of the process.

The AISC has adopted five principles that articulate expectations in relation to stakeholder consultation:

1. Purposeful: set a clear understanding of what is to be achieved
2. Inclusive: identify relevant stakeholders and make it easy for them to engage
3. Timely: involve stakeholders early in the process and agree on when and how to engage
4. Transparent: be open, honest and set clear expectations
5. Respectful: acknowledge the expertise, perspectives and needs of stakeholders.

5.2 Key characteristics

Consultation should be commensurate with the product being developed, the scope and urgency of the work, the breadth and geographic spread of the industry sectors to which the product applies, the level of risk, the level of industry support and industry's timeline and requirements for access to new skills.

The consultation strategy should have a focus on supporting participation by key stakeholders who have a direct interest in the training product including employers, state and territory governments, unions, peak bodies, and registered training organisations.

Consultation should comprise inclusive engagement practices which are responsive to the needs of the stakeholders concerned (for example, particular cohorts of the population including people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people). Consideration must be given to capturing the views of stakeholders in metropolitan,

regional and remote areas. Throughout the training package development process, consideration must also be given to smaller states and territories and employers and organisations with limited representation.

Where training products include mandatory workplace requirements, consultation with employers must demonstrate evidence of support for proposed requirements (including from small to medium sized enterprises), and employer willingness to support student work placements.

Advice to the AISC on training packages should include information on how industry has been consulted, and the outcomes, across each state and territory and evidence of employer and broader industry support for the proposed changes.

IRCs (supported by their allocated SSO) must consider the most appropriate consultation strategy for the project, based on the scope and complexity of the training products being reviewed. This must be consistent with the consultation timeframes outlined at section 5.3 below and be achievable in the agreed timeframe for the project.

SSOs, under the guidance of their IRCs, must analyse stakeholder views and undertake stakeholder mapping, taking account of the role that the stakeholder plays in the industry and/or VET sector and the impact of such views.

At a minimum, SSOs must make the following documents publicly available:

- a draft IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work and/or draft Case for Change for the duration of the relevant consultation and then the final products of each IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work/Case for Change once submitted to the AISC
- a detailed summary of the changes made and why, at each stage of consultation
- draft training package products for review and validation, including mapping information and justification for changes made to existing training package products (limitations may apply for training package products that are not for public access)
- a draft Case for Endorsement and Companion Volume Implementation Guide (for consultation)
- the final Case for Endorsement and quality assured Companion Volume Implementation Guide once submitted to the AISC
- evidence of consultation that includes a description of the methodology followed and why it is appropriate.

Where training package products or associated materials are deemed confidential due to security or public safety risks, appropriate controls will be put in place to protect sensitive, confidential and Not for Public Access products of the training package (for further information about these controls, please contact the AISC Secretariat).

The following stakeholders must be provided the opportunity to participate in the national consultation and development processes:

- employers and their representatives/peak bodies
- employees and their representatives/unions
- the Australian, state and territory governments (including licensing and regulatory bodies)
- RTOs
- learners and other interested stakeholders as appropriate.

5.3 Consultation timeframes

Reasonable time must be allocated for consultation with stakeholders to allow for considered feedback to be developed and for conflicting views to be addressed. Timeframes should be commensurate with the priority, scope and urgency of the work undertaken.

Minimum requirements regarding consultation timeframes are outlined below:

Consultation stage	Stakeholder	Timeframe
Draft 1 (with mapping)	All stakeholders	4 weeks
Validation draft (with mapping)	All stakeholders	At least 2 weeks
Case for Endorsement (with mapping)	State and territory governments	At least 2 weeks

Truncated timeframes for stakeholder consultation may be acceptable for fast-track projects where these are agreed by the AISC. Additional time may also be given for more complex or contentious training package development work (for more information see section 7.1).

6. Categories of Change

6.1 Endorsement process

The endorsement process is a fundamental part of the governance arrangements for the national training system. It is intended to ensure the development of high quality training packages are informed by appropriate levels of consultation, transparency and industry engagement.

Wherever possible, training package development work (including deletion of qualifications and units of competency) should be packaged up as part of a broader Case for Endorsement. Cases for Endorsement should not be put forward with small numbers of changes unless they have been deemed as a fast-track update through the prioritisation framework (see section 7.1) or otherwise meet an urgent, emerging need of industry or can be otherwise justified.

Changes to training packages that are subject to the endorsement process include:

- creating new units of competency and qualifications
- deleting units of competency and qualifications from the national training system
    - The deletion of training products with no enrolments over the previous three years is not subject to the endorsement process when this is the result of meeting the Skills Ministers' priority of removing training products that have not been implemented within the previous three years and agreed by the AISC.
    - AISC decisions in relation to the deletion of training products in this category will be informed by the views of Industry Reference Committees and state and territory governments.
- the following changes to existing units of competency:
    - updating a unit of competency where this does not meet the criteria for a minor change (refer to section 6.2 below)
    - adding or removing a pre-requisite to a unit of competency
    - updating a pre-requisite to a unit of competency
- the following changes to existing qualifications:
    - adding or removing units of competency to or from the core of a qualification
    - removing units of competency from the electives within a qualification
    - revising units of competency in the core of a qualification
    - changing the total number of units required to complete a qualification
    - creating a new specialisation or removing an existing specialisation
    - adding or removing units of competency to or from a specialisation within a qualification.

6.2 Minor changes

Minor changes are made after the training package is available on the National Register of VET and are not subject to the full development and endorsement process. Minor changes **do not** need AISC approval for implementation or to be included as part of a Case for Endorsement.

Minor changes include:

- correcting errors including to ensure the training package on the National Register of VET accurately reflects the relevant AISC decision
- updating outdated references (for example to licensing and regulation arrangements)
- providing clarification to the text of the training package without changing the requirements
- the following changes to existing qualifications:
    - adding elective units of competency to a qualification
    - updating elective units of competency in a qualification that do not form part of a specialisation
    - adding, updating, or removing groups of electives (without adding or removing units of competency to or from the qualification itself), where this does not change the number of units of competency required to be completed
- deleting training products which have had no enrolments over the previous three years where the proposal to delete is as the result of meeting the Ministers' priorities to remove training products that have not been implemented within the past three years and are agreed by the AISC
- The addition of existing units of competency to the electives within a qualification is a minor change, unless the AISC Secretariat considers endorsement necessary (for example where a large number of electives have been added to a qualification).

6.2.1 Making minor changes

An SSO may make a minor change to a training package and associated Companion Volume Implementation Guide, where that change meets one or more of the criteria outlined in section 6.2 and is authorised by a decision of the IRC (in consultation with appropriate stakeholders) with responsibility for that training package. This will be identified as a minor release on the National Register of VET.

The SSO must:

- keep a record of the minor change, setting out the date the change was made, a detailed description of the change, the reason for the change, and evidence of IRC support for the change
- provide this information to the AISC Secretariat prior to the change being actioned on the National Register of VET
- advise relevant stakeholders of the minor change.

In extenuating circumstances, minor changes can be made to a training package product without a minor release. In these circumstances, the SSO must seek the AISC Secretariat's agreement. In making its decision, the AISC Secretariat will consider the following factors:

- the impact of the error to be corrected
- the complexity and size of the training package product
- the number of RTOs with the training package product on scope
- the level of uptake of the training package product
- the time since the last release of the training package product
- the impact on current students
- licensing and regulatory implications.

If unclear whether a change to a training package product is a minor change or requires endorsement, clarification must be sought from the AISC Secretariat, and consultation with state and territory governments may be required regarding potential impacts.

7. Summary of the process for training package development and endorsement

The training package development and endorsement process

The training package development and endorsement process is based on the following principles:

- open and inclusive industry participation in the development, validation, and endorsement process for training packages
- high quality, best practice stakeholder engagement and the opportunity for industry, including employers, to drive and influence change
- transparency of the changes made to training package products and the reasoning at all stages
- highly responsive and flexible processes, capable of meeting industry needs and priorities for new skills and responsive to a range of factors such as scale, urgency, scope and complexity of work, level of risk and complexity and strength of stakeholder views
- an awareness of and transparency about implementation issues that may result from training package design and development
- clear and transparent arrangements for resolving issues
- accountability of all stakeholders for their role in the process
- minimisation of frequency of change in the system.

7.1 Timeframes

Timeframes for the overall process and capacity to respond to industry's priorities are dependent upon:

- IRC Skills Forecasts and Proposed Schedules of Work, Cases for Change and Cases for Endorsement providing the AISC with the evidence required to make its decision
- comprehensive project scoping and planning to ensure that the timeframes can be met
- consultation, development and validation processes being 'fit for purpose' and commensurate with the scope and impact of the proposed changes
- proposed training package products being fully compliant with the *Standards for Training Packages 2012*, the *Training Package Products Policy*, and the *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy*
- stakeholders undertaking their role in the process in a timely manner.

Timeframes for consultation are outlined in section 5.3 of this document.

7.1.2 Training Product Prioritisation Framework

The Training Product Prioritisation Framework (the framework) sets expected maximum timeframes for training package development work. These are set out in the table below, along with the key characteristics for each prioritisation category:

Priority	Key characteristics	Expected maximum Timeframes
Fast-track	• Training product update is urgent (e.g. due to health and safety reasons, regulatory/legislative changes, royal commission recommendations, coronial inquest findings) ○ For example, mandatory changes to first aid/ CPR courses which have high enrolment and are important for health and safety reasons • Training product update is important (e.g. given high employment/employment growth, rapid task change, high enrolments)	6-8 months
Routine	• Training product/s needs to be updated but the change is not urgent or complex based on industry intelligence and analysis. • For example, an update to a business qualification that is neither urgent or complex.	12 months
Complex	• Training product update is more difficult due to a range of factors e.g. cross-industry, significant legislative changes, IR implications, and therefore will take longer to update • For example, development of new cyber security training products that cut across sectors and involve large changes	18 months

IRCs are required to put forward recommendations to the AISC regarding the proposed prioritisation category for each project in their IRC Skills Forecast and Cases for Change. To inform these considerations, AISC Secretariat will provide a report tailored for each IRC at the beginning of each calendar year showing the recommended prioritisation category of training products in their remit based on usage and need. These reports will be developed utilising enrolment and labour market data. IRCs will use this report alongside their industry expertise to recommend the priority to be assigned to the project.

Each project proposal will relate to products falling within a single prioritisation category – fast-track, routine, complex. As set out in section 6.1, IRCs are encouraged to group training products for review wherever possible and appropriate, to minimise churn for stakeholders and to maximise opportunities for rationalisation. Industry Skills Forecasts and Cases for Change must also set out the proposed approach to stakeholder consultation, and the project implementation strategy, which demonstrates achievement of the timeframes can be met.

8. IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work

8.1 Purpose

The IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work identifies training package development work required to meet the needs of industry and includes supporting evidence. The AISC prioritises and commissions work based on this information, which is then reflected in the four-year rolling National Schedule of training package development projects.

8.2 Key characteristics

IRCs work with the support of their SSOs to develop an IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work that details current and future industry skill needs and:

- provides a robust evidence base about critical emerging opportunities and trends with regard to skills and knowledge relevant to the industry/sector, and the occupations within the industry/sector
- considers enrolment trends and employment data
- acts as an early warning system by identifying potential risks and issues at an industry or sector level and how these may impact on the occupational skills required for that industry sector
- reflects the views of a wide range of industry stakeholders and the available evidence
- presents information in a concise and clear manner and focusses on key skills-related insights
- considers other industries/sectors that utilise the IRC's training package products (including an assessment of how many training packages, qualifications, and skill sets that individual units of competency are contained in).

8.3 Content

The IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work sets out a clear justification for change. The AISC uses this information to determine whether the proposed training package development work should proceed.

Importantly, the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work must include:

- detailed information on the consultation undertaken, including with state and territory governments and the feedback provided, including issues and sensitivities
- advice about the expected scope of training package development work required and the timeframes for undertaking that work
    - this must include identification of the units of competency, qualifications and skill sets that will be impacted, as well as enrolment profiles, review history and state funding arrangements
- information about the industry need/support for the proposed change, including advice about any dissenting views and how those issues will be addressed
- information about the industry and workforce changes including what has changed in the job role or workplace that has caused the need for the proposed change to the training package
- evidence of future demand for graduates from employers if there are no enrolments in a qualification
- an overview of the expected impacts of the proposed change on industry, RTOs, learners and other stakeholders
- a description of any interdependencies, for example where the proposed change would impact on other training packages
- a justification where a decision has been made to develop a new unit where there is an existing unit of competency that could be imported and contextualised

- a proposed consultation plan commensurate with the level of change and the breadth of industry sectors impacted
- an explanation of how Minister's reform priorities have been considered or addressed
    - this may include proposed deletion of training package products, including skill sets, that are obsolete or superfluous
- any other information relevant to the AISC decision.

In preparing the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work, IRCs must consider the Training Product Prioritisation Framework (see section 7.1), previous training package development work undertaken, and must propose grouping work together where possible, to reduce frequency of change in the system.

The IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work template can be found on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's website.

8.4 Development of new units

In preparing the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work, IRCs, with the support of their SSO, must determine if there are suitable existing units of competency prior to developing a new unit of competency. A justification must be provided in the case for change where a decision has been made to develop a new unit where there is an existing unit of competency that could be imported and contextualised. Where a unit is proposed to be revised or developed that is, or could be, used across a number of training packages, this must be reflected in the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work so the AISC can consider whether the development of a cross-sector unit is appropriate.

Prior to proposing the development of a new cross-sector unit, the SSO should check to see if an existing unit could form the basis for a cross-sector unit.

8.5 Involvement of governments and regulators

SSOs must consult with relevant government authorities and VET regulators in developing IRC Skills Forecasts and Proposed Schedules of Work to ensure a shared understanding of the scope of work, industry imperatives and proposed project timelines.

It is expected that relevant government authorities and VET regulators will provide early advice about:

- the nature and extent of their engagement in the process
- key stakeholders to be consulted (note: this will be especially important for fast-track projects)
- implementation issues that need to be considered
- scheduled regulatory changes which might impact the scope and timing of work.

9. Other pathways for initiating training package development

While the primary pathway for initiating training package development work is through the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work there are other possible pathways.

9.1 Case for change

Cases for change can be submitted to the AISC outside of the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work process. In this case, training package developers should use the relevant template to outline the details of the project. The requirements set out at section 8.5 also apply to Cases for Change.

9.2 Industry Proposals

The AISC will consider proposals for change submitted by interested stakeholders. Industry proposals can be submitted to the AISC through the AISC Secretariat by any party using the Industry Proposal Template and should include:

- details of the proposed work and the reason(s) the proponent would like to see a change to the training package
- rationale for why the AISC should see the work as a priority including an explanation of how the work or proposed changes meet industry needs and government priorities
- information about the breadth of industry and other stakeholder support for the proposed change, including the views of the relevant IRC.

The industry proposal will be discussed with the relevant IRC(s) and forwarded to the AISC for consideration where appropriate.

If supported by the AISC, approved industry proposals will be reflected in the National Schedule and training package development would continue through the usual process.

The Industry Proposal Template can be found on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's website.

9.3 Strategic directives by the Skills Ministers or the AISC

Strategic directives by the Skills Ministers or the AISC may also result in training package development work.

The AISC may also direct training package development work as a result of a strategic review undertaken by ASQA, particularly where the review identified issues directly associated with the quality of a training package product.

10. National Schedule

10.1 Purpose

The National Schedule lists the training package development work to be undertaken over a four-year period. Every training package product in the national VET system is expected to be considered on average every four years, and a judgement made as to whether or not training package development work is required and based on industry needs, for example in response to change in job roles.

The National Schedule allows industry stakeholders to ascertain when relevant training packages are due for review, or are being reviewed so that they can actively engage with the process. It also enables government stakeholders, those involved in the delivery of training and VET regulators to better plan their related activities.

10.2 Key characteristics

The National Schedule is agreed by the AISC based on IRC Skills Forecasts and Proposed Schedules of Work and Cases for Change with consideration given to relative priority across the national economy. The National Schedule takes account of risk, regulatory need, strategic industry and government priorities, economic impact, current levels of VET activity (where available)[1], and available budget.

In determining relative priority, the AISC will engage with the following stakeholders as necessary:

- the Australian Government
- state and territory governments
- IRCs and SSOs
- licensing and regulatory bodies.

The National Schedule is reviewed regularly, including following each AISC meeting. The AISC may, in consultation with the relevant IRCs and SSOs, amend the National Schedule at any time to meet more urgent or critical priorities as they emerge.

The National Schedule is published on the AISC website.

[1] VET activity – refers to the national VET provider data collection (Total VET Activity) that covers training activities by all Australian training providers.

11. Drafting training packages

11.1 Purpose

The purpose of training package development work is to amend existing or develop new training package products. SSOs are funded to undertake the technical drafting of training package products, industry consultation and other processes necessary under the direction of the relevant IRC.

In the course of the development of training packages, an IRC may, through its SSO, establish and work through one or more Technical Advisory Committees (TACs). A TAC may include technical industry experts, industry associations, employers, regulators and training providers, and can assist the IRC by providing technical input to the review and development of training packages.

11.2 Key characteristics

SSOs, guided by IRCs, develop draft training package products that:

- meet the needs of industry and take account of the range of issues canvassed in the IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work, including implementation-related issues
- are high quality and meet all relevant requirements, including those set out in:
    - the *Standards for Training Packages 2012*, the *Training Package Products Policy*, and the *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy*
    - the Training Package Quality Principles
    - any relevant national and international industry standards and/or agreements
    - the AQF
    - the commissioning requirements specified by the AISC, including to meet the priorities of Ministers.

11.3 Drafting of cross-sector units

The relevant SSO must work with all affected IRCs and SSOs when developing or revising cross-sector units.

A broader consultation process must be undertaken when developing cross-sector units, due to the need to consult with a wider range of industry stakeholders. All potential impacts on existing training packages must be clearly conveyed to all relevant IRCs as early as possible in the process.

11.4 Consultation

Consultations relating to training package development must be aimed at achieving broad industry consensus about the final content of the training package. Training package developers are expected to engage the following stakeholders throughout the training package development process:

- employers and their representatives/peak bodies
- employees and their representatives/unions
- the Australian, state and territory governments (including licensing and regulatory bodies)
- RTOs
- learners and other interested stakeholders as appropriate.

Timeframes for consultation on draft training packages are outlined at section 5.3 of this document.

11.5 Validation by industry and other stakeholders

Draft training package products must undergo validation processes by industry and other stakeholders and training package quality assurance before they are submitted to the AISC for consideration as part of a Case for Endorsement. Timeframes for consultation on draft training packages are outlined at section 5.3 of this document.

The purpose of validation is to ensure the content and structure of proposed training package products meets industry needs.

As part of validation, SSOs, on behalf of the IRC, are responsible for:

- validating the proposed training package products with relevant stakeholders as determined by the IRC
- developing detailed mapping information for training package products as per section 2.4 and section 3.3 of the *Training Package Products Policy*
- documenting the results of the training package development process, including any issues raised through the validation process, in a Case for Endorsement
- preparing training package products for publication on the National Register of VET
- undertaking a final editorial review of content loaded into the Training Package Content Management System (TPCMS).

12. Developing the Case for Endorsement

12.1 Purpose

The Case for Endorsement should provide the AISC with a compelling case for approving the training package products. The Case for Endorsement is prepared by SSOs under the direction of the relevant IRCs after training package development work has been completed.

The Case for Endorsement is a concise and coherent document written in plain English that assures the AISC that the training package products submitted for approval:

- meet the requirements of the *Standards for Training Packages 2012*, the *Training Package Products Policy* and the *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy*
- represent, to the extent possible, the consensus of industry
- are consistent with the Training Package Quality Principles.

The Case for Endorsement must assure the AISC that mitigation strategies are in place to address implementation issues identified by states and territory governments and that best efforts have been applied to resolving all outstanding issues.

12.2 Key characteristics

IRCs and SSOs must be satisfied that the above requirements are met before forwarding a Case for Endorsement to the AISC Secretariat for submission to the AISC.

Prior to the submission of a Case for Endorsement to the AISC, SSOs must make the draft training package products, one or more Companion Volume Implementation Guides, and the draft Case for Endorsement available for stakeholders' comment. SSOs must publish draft Cases for Endorsement on their website, as well as the final Case for Endorsement at the time of submission to the AISC Secretariat.

Cases for Endorsement, considered by the AISC at meetings or out of session, must reflect the version consulted with state and territory governments and other stakeholders. SSOs must consult with the AISC Secretariat about submission dates for their Cases for Endorsement. Compliant Cases for Endorsement will be forwarded to the AISC for consideration at the earliest available opportunity.

12.3 Content

The following information must be provided in the Case for Endorsement:

- administrative details of the Case for Endorsement

- description of the updates to training products that have been made as part of this project and how these respond to changes in industry skills needs (changes in job roles, new technology, regulatory or legislative changes)
- evidence of industry support, and a summary of consultation undertaken, including the issues raised by stakeholders and how they were considered and/or resolved by the IRC
- a justification where a decision has been made to develop a new unit of competency where there is an existing unit of competency (including a cross-sector unit) that could be imported and contextualised
- a justification of the structure of qualifications, including the number of elective and core units of competency, and how this supports the stated occupational outcome and meets the needs of industry, employers and learners
- where a mandatory workplace requirement is included, a justification for why this requirement is necessary, and evidence of employer support for the requirement and willingness to support student placements.
- where appropriate, a rationale, supported by evidence, for project delays which have impacted on agreed project timelines
- a substantiation of the determination of equivalence or non-equivalence of training package products
- industry expectations about training delivery
- Quality Assurance Reports
- how the proposed training products will report the reform priorities for training packages agreed by skills ministers in November 2019 and October 2020.
- a link copy of the full content of the proposed training package products that are impacted.

The Case for Endorsement template can be found on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's website.

12.4 Stakeholder support

The Case for Endorsement must present evidence of the broad-based industry support for the proposed training package products.

It is expected that state and territory governments and the Australian Government support the Case for Endorsement. If not, evidence must be provided as to the efforts made to achieve support/consensus and why the IRC believes the AISC should approve for implementation the proposed training package products without full support.

To confirm state and territory government support, SSOs must:

- provide all relevant government authorities with information about what is proposed, including access to all relevant documentation, such as the draft Case for Endorsement, Quality Reports and the Companion Volume Implementation Guide. SSOs must also clearly identify any training package products proposed for deletion from the National Register of VET
- allow sufficient time for those authorities to consider and consult with their stakeholders (as outlined in section 5.3 of this document)
- confirm with state and territory governments their understanding about the impacts of implementation arising from the proposed training package products including the impacts associated with products proposed for deletion from the National Register of VET
- clarify any actions required to enable successful implementation. This is particularly important where there are occupational licensing requirements and apprenticeship pathways to be considered.

12.5 Report by Exception

Where there is a significantly[2] different view held by one or more industry or government stakeholders, the SSO must seek to resolve that issue. Where resolution is not possible, states and territories prepare a report by exception for inclusion in the final Case for Endorsement. The purpose of a report by exception is to provide the AISC with an objective view of the issue, including a report prepared by the SSO on the steps taken to resolve the matter.

12.6 Deleting training package products

If a training package product is proposed for deletion (excluding those products agreed to be deleted by the AISC as a result of the Skills Ministers' priority of removing training products that have not been implemented within the previous three years), the SSO must consider the number of enrolments in that training package product, and must consult with all IRCs that import that training package product.

Where there is not full support from stakeholders for deletion of a training package product, this must be stated in the Case for Endorsement as part of a report by exception and a management strategy must be developed. Where units of competency are imported into other training packages, the management strategy must include a process for transferring responsibility for those units of competency to another IRC.

12.7 Transition

The AISC recognises the importance of RTOs delivering the most recent training package product, however in rare cases there may be a need for consideration of an extension of the transition period specified in the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)*.

If the SSO receives feedback from state and territory governments or other stakeholders that a change to the standard transition time (12 months) is required, this should be noted in the Case for Endorsement. The AISC may then choose to direct the SSO to discuss the possible extension of the transition period with the relevant VET regulator(s) and follow their relevant transition extension process in a timely manner, so that students and other stakeholders are not disadvantaged in any way.

[2] 'Significant' is where the issue is of such importance that it will impact on the implementation of the product, including issues of non-compliance with the Training Package Organising Framework. The 'viewpoint' relates directly to the content and/or structure of the draft endorsed products.

13. Training package quality assurance

13.1 Purpose

The purpose of training package quality assurance is to:

- assure the AISC and IRC that the training package components are of high quality and meet all requirements set out in the *Standards for Training Packages 2012*, the *Training Package Products Policy* and the *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy*
- build stakeholder confidence that products approved by the AISC are fit for purpose and ready for implementation.

13.2 Independent quality assurance

SSOs manage quality assurance of training package components.

To assist with preparing the mandatory Quality Report (and as required the Equity and Editorial Reports), the Australian Government has, on behalf of the AISC, established an independent Quality Assurance Panel.

13.3 Editorial and Equity Reports

Prior to commissioning a Quality Report for training package components under development, SSOs must have Equity and Editorial Reports completed by either:

- a member of the Quality Assurance Panel with expertise in the learning needs of disadvantaged groups and in editing/proofreading/publishing, or
- an independent SSO-specified person with such expertise. This can include a staff member of the relevant SSO, as long as they can demonstrate independence from the particular training package development work.

SSOs must provide copies of the Equity and Editorial Reports, along with all other relevant documentation (including draft training package products and the draft Companion Volume Implementation Guide) for review to the Quality Assurance Panel member selected to undertake the Quality Report.

The Editorial Report template and Equity Report template can be found on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's website.

13.4 Quality report

All Cases for Endorsement submitted to the AISC for approval must include a Quality Report, prepared by a member of the Quality Assurance Panel.

The Quality Report provides an assessment of whether the proposed training package components meet the requirements set out in the *Standards for Training Packages 2012*, the *Training Package Products Policy* and the *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy*.

SSOs must select a different member of the Quality Assurance Panel to prepare the Quality Report from that chosen to prepare the Equity or Editorial Reports for the same training package components.

The Quality Report Template can be found on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's website.

13.5 Quality Assurance Panel

13.5.1 Membership

The Quality Assurance Panel is comprised of individuals with demonstrated expertise in:

- training package product policy, design, and development
- implementation of training package components
- editing, proofreading and publishing
- the learning needs of disadvantaged groups.

The panel member undertaking the mandatory Quality Report must demonstrate independence from the training package development process and must not have an actual, or perceived, conflict of interest in a particular outcome being achieved through the provision of quality assurance services.

The panel members must sign an Independence Declaration Form at the time of engagement by an SSO for the purpose of developing a Quality Report.

Panel members are selected through a merit-based open tender process for a term of three years. SSO staff can be appointed as a member of the Quality Assurance Panel, subject to demonstrating the required level of independence.

13.5.2 Operation and management of the Quality Assurance Panel

The Quality Assurance Panel is established and managed by the Australian Government on behalf of the AISC. Panel members provide their services to SSOs under the terms and conditions set out in:

- the Deed of Standing Offer between the Australian Government and the panel members
- the agreement between the SSO and the individual panel member.

14. AISC consideration

14.1 Purpose

The AISC considers each Case for Endorsement. Following approval by the AISC, a Case for Endorsement is provided to the Skills Ministers for endorsement. Once the Skills Ministers has endorsed a Case for Endorsement, the training package products are made available for implementation through publication on the National Register of VET (as outlined in section 14.3).

Where a qualification or unit of competency is identified for deletion in the Case for Endorsement, the IRC must provide clear advice, informed by state and territory government feedback, about the implications for implementation.

The AISC consider Cases for Endorsement based on the evidence provided in the Case for Endorsement that:

- the work commissioned by the AISC has been completed
- the training package meets the *Standards for Training Packages 2012*, the *Training Package Products Policy*, the *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy*, the Training Package Quality Principles, and the AQF
- the involvement of industry, employers and other key stakeholders has been commensurate with the scope and impact of the proposed training package products
- state and territory governments have been consulted appropriately, including about implications for implementation and significant transition issues
- dissenting views have been identified and genuine attempts made to address them
- industry and government support the proposed training package products.

14.2 Notification of the AISC decision

Following consideration of a Case for Endorsement, the relevant IRC and SSO, state and territory governments, and VET regulators will be notified of the AISC decision within 10 working days (as outlined in section 15.1).

AISC decisions are also made publicly available through an AISC meeting communique.

15. Skills Ministers endorsement

15.1 Purpose

Under the *National Vocational and Education Training Regulator Act 2011*, the Skills Ministers' have authority to endorse training packages.

Training packages are provided to the Skills Ministers for endorsement following approval for implementation by the AISC.

Training package updates, approved by the AISC on the basis that no significant issues have been raised, are provided to Skills Ministers' members for endorsement out-of-session. As part of this out-of-session process, the AISC Secretariat will provide the list of training packages approved by the AISC within 15 working days of each AISC meeting.

Out-of-session endorsement will be sought in line with the following protocols:

- Skills Ministers' members generally have 15 working days to respond to the out-of-session item (note: a truncated endorsement process may be requested for fast-track projects)
- Skills Ministers' matters will be resolved once a simple majority vote is recorded by the secretariat, regardless of the deadline for members' responses or any extensions granted.

Training package updates considered to be of higher risk to the system, or where significant issues have been raised in the development process, are held over for consideration at the next COAG Skills Council meeting.

In the event Skills Ministers does not endorse a training package or its components, the AISC will determine and take remedial action as appropriate.

15.2 Publication on the National Register of VET

Training packages are publicly released on the National Register of VET once a simple majority is reached. Publication on the National Register of VET must reflect the training product endorsed by the Skills Ministers'. SSOs are responsible for timely and prompt publication of endorsed training package products on the National Register of VET and Companion Volume Implementation Guides on VETNet.

16. Glossary

AISC
Australian Industry and Skills Committee.

AQF
Australian Qualifications Framework.

ASQA
Australian Skills Quality Authority.

Skills Ministers
Skills ministers will continue to address regulatory requirements and progress other priority areas for the VET sector through this mechanism. These include COVID-19 responses, but exclude reforms tasked to the Skills Committee by National Cabinet. Wherever possible, regulatory functions of ministers should be conducted out-of-session.

Cross-sector unit
Cross-sector units address common knowledge and skill needs across industries, support occupational mobility, and minimise the duplication of units within the training system. Cross-sector units are developed through a deliberate process to create industry-neutral units of competency. As such, they differ from industry-specific units of competency which can be imported into other training packages where they are relevant or useful.

IRC
Industry Reference Committee.

Minor change
Minor changes are updates to training package products that are not subject to the full development and endorsement process.

National Register of VET
The National Register of VET for training in Australia contains the authoritative information about Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), Nationally Recognised Training (NRT), and the approved scope of each RTO to deliver NRT as required in national and jurisdictional legislation within Australia.

RTO
Registered Training Organisation as defined under the *National Vocational and Education Training Regulator Act 2011* (Commonwealth).

SSO
Skills Service Organisation.

TAC
Technical Advisory Committees.

TPCMS
Training Package Content Management System.

VET
Vocational Education and Training.

VETNet
VETNet is a resource library of training materials and information to support the national VET sector. It contains files and provides version-controlled access to the sector's current and historical information.

VRQA
Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority.

Western Australian TAC

Western Australia Training Accreditation Council.