

# **Assessment using partnership arrangements**



Department of Education,  
Training and Youth Affairs



*The Training Package Assessment Materials Project is an initiative of the Australian National Training Authority with funding provided by the Department of Employment, Training & Youth Affairs.*

*The project has been established to support high quality and consistent assessment within the vocational education and training system in Australia.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

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## FOREWORD

This guide is one of a suite of ten guides developed in the *Training Package Assessment Materials Project*. The project was one of several initiatives managed by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and funded by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) to facilitate the implementation of Training Packages and in particular New Apprenticeships.

The guides in this *Training Package Assessment Materials Project* aim to provide assessors and managers of assessment processes within the vocational education and training (VET) sector with a range of practical tools and resources for improving assessment practices in both on- and off-the-job situations. The ten guides are:

- Guide 1: Training Package assessment materials kit
- Guide 2: Assessing competencies in higher qualifications
- Guide 3: Recognition resource
- Guide 4: Kit to support assessor training
- Guide 5: Candidate's Kit: Guide to assessment in New Apprenticeships
- Guide 6: Assessment approaches for small workplaces
- Guide 7: Assessment using partnership arrangements
- Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment
- Guide 9: Networking for assessors
- Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment.

Each guide is designed to cover a broad range of industries and VET pathways, with relevance to workplace assessors as well as those working in off-the-job and VET in Schools programs.

The *Training Package Assessment Materials Project* was completed prior to the review and redevelopment of the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training. The project managers and writing teams worked closely with National Assessors and Workplace Trainers (NAWT), a division of Business Services Training, to ensure that the material contained in these guides is in line with future developments in the Training Package.

Consequently the guides do not make direct reference to the units of competency in the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training.

The project managers and the writing teams would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who generously provided advice, case study materials, assessment tools and their time to review and pilot these materials.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

The introduction of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and Training Packages has increased the opportunities for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to establish partnerships with organisations such as schools, enterprises, professional associations and industry bodies to offer a broad range of training and assessment services. The establishment of such arrangements:

- increases people's access to nationally recognised qualifications
- ensures that national training and assessment arrangements meet industry requirements
- facilitates the efficient use of training and assessment resources
- promotes the exchange of ideas, information and resources between different groups in the national vocational education and training (VET) system.

## Why collaborate to do assessment?

One of the major reasons any organisation enters into a partnership arrangement with another organisation is that it allows the first organisation to outsource those activities which it cannot perform as profitably or competently as its partner. Establishing a partnership arrangement provides an opportunity to share skills, effort, cost and resources for mutual benefit.

As this type of arrangement has key players working together, organisations are able to obtain assessment services that directly address their particular needs at the time they need them.

Such partnership arrangements provide VET partners with opportunities to:

- share expertise, competencies and best practice
- reduce costs, by achieving economies of scale while using the distinctive capacities of other partners
- innovate, by bringing together different technologies and approaches to form new goods and services
- create new synergies between providers of training and enterprises that use training
- develop holistic assessment solutions
- promote and improve communication between diverse groups.

Non-registered organisations '... may enter into an agreement with a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to deliver nationally recognised training or assessment services on behalf of the RTO and the RTO will be responsible for compliance with the AQTF for those services, see Standard 1.6' (*AQTF Standards for RTOs*).

Under the AQTF, RTOs may enter into partnership arrangements with non-registered organisations (eg enterprises or schools) or other RTOs for the conduct of assessments, record keeping and quality assurance. Non-registered organisations may not wish to commit resources for the conduct of assessments, but they may be committed to having the outcomes of their training recognised. RTOs on the other hand may wish to utilise the expertise and worksites of other organisations to facilitate assessments. For these reasons, organisations and RTOs may enter into partnership arrangements to ensure the integrity and quality of the assessments and the maintenance of all aspects of the assessment system.

### **What is included in this guide?**

This guide is intended for RTOs, enterprises and VET in Schools participants. It provides potential partners with:

- guidance on developing partnership arrangements
- an outline of the mechanisms that may be used to quality assure assessment arrangements
- a range of templates and guidelines to assist the implementation and maintenance of the arrangements.

For organisations already working in partnerships, this guide provides ideas and advice on how to enhance existing partnership arrangements.

Partnership arrangements are often established to provide and/or share training and assessment services. However, this guide only deals with the ways in which assessment arrangements may be organised within partnerships.

### **Defining the terms**

To 'collaborate' is to work jointly.

Formal 'partnership arrangements' are the written agreements that are undertaken between an RTO and other organisations or RTOs. These arrangements enable the partners to share for mutual benefit their resources, effort, time, cost, responsibility and expertise. These arrangements are regulated by the *Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations (AQTF Standards for RTOs)*. These arrangements relate to situations in which assessment is conducted by an organisation on behalf of an RTO.

In this guide, the term 'organisation' refers to an enterprise, a school or other form of non-registered organisation.

Within partnership arrangements the RTO that issues a qualification or a Statement of Attainment under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is referred to as the 'lead RTO'. The other RTOs, enterprises or schools are referred to as 'partner organisations'.

'Assessment' means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace expressed in the relevant endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards. Assessment encompasses all forms, purposes and contexts under which competency based assessments can occur, for example, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Current Competency (RCC), on-the-job assessment and off-the-job assessment.

A 'written agreement' is a formal document that records details of a partnership arrangement between a lead RTO and one or more partner organisations. It details how each party will discharge its responsibilities for compliance with the *AQTF Standards for RTOs*. In this guide, 'written agreements' and 'formal agreements' mean the same thing.

Quality assurance of assessment is a planned and systematic process of ensuring that the requirements of the assessment system, competency standards and any other criteria are applied in a consistent manner. Quality assurance mechanisms or procedures are an integral part of an assessment system.

# CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT

## Australian Quality Training Framework

The AQTF provides the basis for a nationally consistent, high quality vocational education and training system. Under the framework any organisation that wishes to conduct assessments for the purposes of national recognition must be registered through the relevant registering body in their State or Territory. Organisations may be registered to provide:

- training and delivery services and products, and issue AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment
- assessment services and products, and issue AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

Organisations are registered for a defined 'Scope of Registration'. This specifies the AQF qualifications or unit(s) of competency from Training Packages or accredited courses that can be provided by an RTO (*AQTF Standards for RTOs*). To gain and maintain registration an RTO must comply with all the Standards set out in the *AQTF Standards for RTOs*.

Information regarding these Standards may be obtained from the following website address:  
[www.anta.gov.au](http://www.anta.gov.au)

Within the *AQTF Standards for RTOs* it is clear that responsibility for assessment activity within a partnership arrangement lies with the lead RTO. These requirements are specified in Standard 1.6 of the *AQTF Standards for RTOs* which states that:

- a) 'the RTO must have and comply with, a written agreement with each organisation that provides training and/or assessment on behalf of the RTO. For example, through partnership arrangements with industry, schools, other providers of education and training. It is not intended that such partnership arrangements be used by the RTO as the mechanism for expanding its scope of registration

- b) the agreement must specify how each party to the agreement will discharge its responsibilities for ensuring the quality of the training and/or assessment conducted under the agreement
- c) each RTO must maintain a register of all agreements.'

### **What are partnership arrangements in assessment?**

Within the *AQTF Standards for RTOs*, the term 'partnership arrangements' relates to assessment activity that:

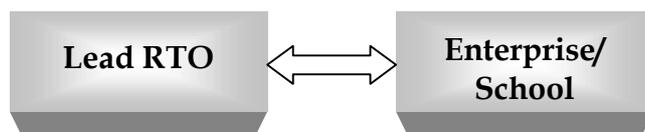
- results in a Statement of Attainment or a qualification being issued under the AQF
- is carried out on behalf of the lead RTO by the other partner/s.

While these arrangements may take a variety of forms, it is possible to organise three broad partnership models. These models involve an RTO partnering with either:

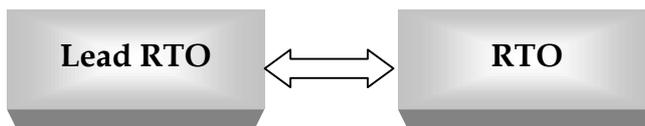
- an enterprise or school
- another RTO
- a number of RTOs and/or enterprises and/or schools.

In each case the RTO that issues the AQF qualification and/or Statement of Attainment is the 'lead RTO'. The other RTOs, enterprises or schools are 'partner organisations'.

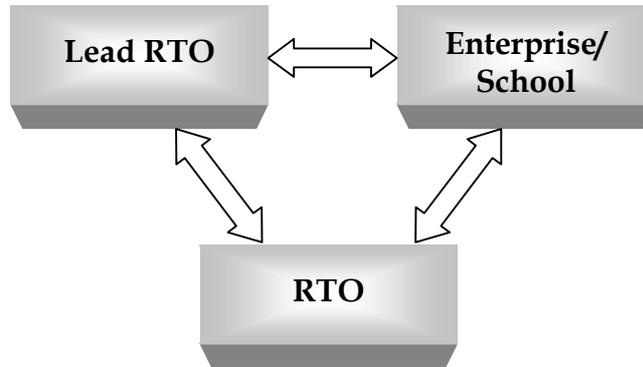
**Example 1:** The lead RTO enters into an agreement with an enterprise/school.



**Example 2:** The lead RTO enters into an agreement with another RTO.



**Example 3:** The lead RTO enters into a more complex agreement with a number of enterprises or schools and/or RTOs.



In each of these models:

- the candidate is enrolled with the lead RTO
- training and/or assessment is conducted by the partner organisation on behalf of the lead RTO
- training and/or assessment records are transferred to the lead RTO
- the lead RTO quality assures the training and assessment in an ongoing way throughout the life of the agreement
- the lead RTO is responsible for issuing the AQF qualification and/or Statement of Attainment.

In considering these three different models it should be noted that:

- the lead RTO must identify what records are to be transferred; at a minimum this should be the assessment results and credit transfer outcomes
- the lead RTO needs to ensure that the partner organisation is aware of the training and assessment records that must be kept and maintained by the partner organisation
- in the case of New Apprenticeships the detail of information required to be kept and/or transferred may be different
- responsibilities for issuing qualifications and Statements of Attainment in school based New Apprenticeships need to be clarified by all partners involved
- State or Territory Registering Bodies may require access to these training and assessment records, regardless of where they are kept
- the lead RTO can only issue an AQF qualification and/or Statement of Attainment for those qualifications that appear on its scope of registration

- in the case of New Apprenticeships it is important to delineate between subcontracting and auspiced assessment (lead RTOs must comply with their State or Territory Registering Body's User Choice funding arrangements). Subcontracting involves the subcontracted RTO being responsible for the enrolment, the quality assurance of training and/or assessment and the issuance of the AQF qualifications and/or Statement(s) of Attainment.

### **Responsibilities of the partners**

Regardless of the form that the partnership takes, it is the responsibilities of the partners that matter, not the nature of the partners.

The possible range of partnership arrangements between RTOs and partner organisations is varied. These variations can best be understood by establishing which organisation is responsible for each fundamental operation within the assessment and reporting process.

Therefore the variations in the partnership models depend on who has responsibility for:

- quality assuring the assessments
- developing the assessment tools
- collecting the evidence
- making the judgement
- issuing the AQF qualifications and/or Statement(s) of Attainment.

As indicated in the following table, there are three broad types of partnership arrangements within which assessments are conducted on behalf of the lead RTO.

**Table 1: Partnership arrangement models and responsibilities**

<b>Responsibility for key aspects of assessment</b>					
<b>Model</b>	<b>Quality assurance</b>	<b>Developing assessment tools</b>	<b>Collecting the evidence</b>	<b>Making the judgement</b>	<b>Issuing the qualification</b>
A	RTO	RTO	Partner	Partner	RTO
B	RTO	Partner	Partner	Partner	RTO
C	RTO	RTO/Partner	RTO/Partner	RTO/Partner	RTO

As can be seen in Table 1, the RTO is always responsible for:

- quality assuring the assessments conducted on their behalf
- issuing the AQF qualification and/or Statement of Attainment.

However, the other operations within the assessment and reporting process may be the responsibility of either the lead RTO or the partner organisation.

Partnership arrangements occur within a broader social, legislative and regulatory context. Therefore, things such as the *Education Services to Overseas Students Act 2000*, occupational, health and safety legislation, industrial relations agreements and licensing requirements can all impact upon the agreement and the way the partners work together.

For example, RTOs and their partners intending to provide education services for overseas students must comply with the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students. This Code of Practice places obligations on registered providers and is a legally enforceable instrument, with sanctions attached.

In other words, all of the partners to an arrangement will have additional external obligations that must be considered in the framing of the agreement. In forming partnership arrangements, RTOs should be mindful of the industrial relations environment and the organisational culture within the partner organisations.

In most cases, the RTO should ensure that employers, employees and the relevant unions have been consulted and are aware of the nature and purpose of the partnership arrangement. This may involve discussions within both the lead RTO and the partner organisation(s).

While it is beyond the scope of this guide to consider such obligations, all partners must ensure they comply with any obligations that they are legally or ethically bound to meet, including ensuring that key stakeholders within their organisations are informed of the partnership arrangements.

## **AQTF compliance requirements**

Under Standard 1.6 of the *AQTF Standards for RTOs*, RTOs must establish (and comply with) a written agreement with each organisation that provides training and/or assessment on their behalf. RTOs are also required to maintain a register of such agreements and take responsibility for the quality assurance that these agreements entail. RTOs should refer to their State or Territory Registering Body for any additional requirements that may relate to this Standard.

### **Formal agreement**

Subsection 1.6 (b) of the *AQTF Standards for RTOs* notes that the written agreement must contain information about how each partner in the relationship will carry out their roles and responsibilities. Further information about the written agreement can be found in Chapter 3: The formal agreement and Appendices A and B.

### **Register**

The requirements for maintaining a register and the details that it should contain may differ according to the requirements of each State or Territory Registering Body. However, it is envisaged that the register will contain at a minimum the:

- names of the partner organisation(s)
- names of people legally responsible for the agreement within the partner organisation(s), eg Chief Executive Officers (CEOs)
- principal contact person
- unit(s) of competency and/or qualifications covered by the agreement
- summary of the services provided by each partner
- duration of the agreement
- critical review/reporting dates
- details of where the written agreement is stored.

Figure 1: Sample register

<i>Details of partner organisation</i>	<i>Services to be provided by RTO</i>	<i>Services to be provided by partner</i>	<i>Duration of agreement</i>	<i>Stored</i>	<i>Review dates</i>
<p><b>Happy Pty Ltd</b></p> <p><b>CEO</b> Mr Jones</p> <p><b>Contact</b> Ms Clasp</p> <p><b>Scope</b> Certificate I-II in Hospitality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issuance of qualifications</li> <li>• Provision of Training Package</li> <li>• Mentors</li> <li>• Record of outcomes</li> <li>• Support, record keeping</li> <li>• Update of changes</li> <li>• New Apprenticeships rules</li> <li>• Information to candidates</li> <li>• Information to assessors</li> </ul>	<p>Equipment</p> <p>Assessors</p> <p>Record of files</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Assessment tools</p>	Dec 2001 to Dec 2003	Central Records	<p>Jun 2000</p> <p>Dec 2000</p> <p>Dec 2001</p> <p>Dec 2002</p>

The lead RTO needs to establish clear guidelines for maintaining the register. It needs to be held in a format that enables the ready retrieval of information for purposes such as State or Territory Registering Body audits. Decisions as to how and where it will be held, who has access and who is responsible for the register should be consistent with any requirements of the relevant State or Territory Registering Body and the policies and procedures of the lead RTO.

More importantly, the register must be accessible by the principal contact person, the CEO of the lead RTO and auditors of the State or Territory Registering Body.

### **Quality assurance**

The lead RTO within these partnership arrangements is responsible for the quality of the assessments conducted on its behalf. It is therefore responsible for the quality assurance mechanisms.

In general terms, this means that the lead RTO can either:

- provide assessment materials and/or the assessment system, as well as monitor processes and outcomes
- quality assure the partner's assessment system and assessment materials, as well as monitor processes and outcomes.

It should be noted that the lead RTO cannot delegate this responsibility.

The key quality assurance mechanisms that can be employed by both the lead RTO and the partner organisation(s) are outlined in Chapter 4 and a number of sample checklists for planning quality assurance are included in Appendices C – F.

### **Experiences from the field**

**This is an example of a partnership arrangement between an RTO and an enterprise.**

*Teresa is the Human Resources Manager in a medium-sized service industry. She tells why her organisation chose to work with a lead RTO.*

Our core business is to deliver a service to our customers. While we have a small training unit, we did not want to commit the resources to becoming a Registered Training Organisation. We have many, many trainees. While we do our own training and assessment, we also want our people to get recognition for their efforts against the relevant unit(s) of competency in the Training Package for our industry. Bringing in a Registered Training Organisation has meant that we can get not only a qualification, but also an in-built system of quality assurance. This has meant that the training has a lot of credibility with the people completing the training. That's important to us.

**This is an example of a complex partnership arrangement.**

*Lee is a training manager in a large wholesale business. Jacqui is a program manager within a college, the lead RTO in this instance. Maria is an experienced trainer and workplace assessor who is a casual employee at a smaller RTO in the region. Her organisation, like Lee's, became a partner organisation in this collaboration. Together, they tell us about how they negotiated their agreement.*

**Lee:** Head Office decided that all the firm's counter trainee staff should undertake the Certificate II in Retail Operations. I phoned Jacqui because I knew her college delivered this training, but I wasn't sure if they had the capacity to provide what we wanted. The firm wanted just-in-time training to be delivered in our five stores around the State. Her RTO is a large one, but I thought the job might be too big to be handled by them alone. However, Jacqui agreed to take on the job and to find another RTO to assist in training and assessment.

**Jacqui:** As soon as Lee called I began to think of possible partners because I knew we couldn't handle a job this size. Maria was an obvious choice because she's an excellent operator and being a casual means she has some flexibility for travel which my staff and I don't have. So the three of us began to talk about how we might make it happen. We had to work out who would do what, and what staff and resources would be required. Once we knew we could work together, we had to get other people within our organisations involved — the ones who are responsible for formalising such agreements.

**Maria:** It took a lot of negotiation to confirm the program content, roles and responsibilities, resourcing, staffing, timeframes, the costs and the form of the agreement. It suited my organisation that Jacqui's was the lead RTO, because they took on all the responsibility for establishing what the quality assurance processes would be and communicating this information to everyone involved in the delivery and assessment of the program.

**Jacqui:** Once the formal agreement was signed, we as the lead RTO made sure that both our partner organisations were clear about their roles. From now on, it will also be our responsibility to ensure that there is open communication about the day-to-day workings of the partnership. However, I know Lee has to report to his Head Office every month on how the program is progressing, so I'm sure he'll be talking to us both regularly.



## **CHAPTER 2: PREPARING TO COLLABORATE**

### **Clarifying an intent to collaborate**

Both the lead RTO and the partner organisation need to establish a very clear picture of their organisations' needs, commitment, resources and strategic intent before inviting others into a partnership arrangement. Furthermore, it is important to establish the gaps that each organisation would be looking to fill in a potential partnership arrangement.

The sorts of questions that would be helpful to ask are listed below.

- What is the main reason for entering into an arrangement?
- How will this arrangement benefit each organisation?
- Is the current organisational climate favourable towards establishing such an arrangement?
- What represents a fair and equitable input of resources (personnel, money, materials, space and equipment) from each partner?
- How will each partner negotiate their expectations in terms of time and deliverables?
- Is there a sense that all partner representatives can work together?
- How will representatives from each partner be supported in a partnership arrangement?
- What attitudes and values does each partner bring to the partnership arrangement?
- What are the differences in culture that partner organisations have and are they likely to negatively influence collaboration?
- Is there a sound basis for mutual respect and teamwork?
- Are there any reasons why partners would not wish to be involved in a partnership arrangement?
- What are the likely strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration?

## Understanding effective partnerships

Once all partners have decided to form a partnership arrangement, time is well spent establishing a framework that deals with what will be achieved and how it will be achieved. It is working on this together that is the key to achieving mutual agreement and building a climate of respect, trust, honesty and integrity. It is important that all partners state their key interests, intent and needs before developing the details of the partnership.

A successful partnership allows time to build the relationship and invests much of its effort in establishing the ground rules. Naturally, knowing what things can cause problems in the development of effective relationships will help partners to avoid getting into difficulties. More importantly, knowing the things that need to be done to build a strong partnership means true collaboration is more likely to be achieved.

Some of the crucial features of good working relationships are:

- a common vision
- an action plan
- fair distribution of responsibilities and risks
- clearly expressed compliance requirements
- willingness to accommodate the partner's organisational culture
- agreed strategies to share information and resources
- compatible and effective ways of communicating
- committees to include the appropriate stakeholders
- effective leadership
- fair division of power
- adequate time spent in drawing up arrangements
- induction procedures for new members
- established and documented support networks behind each partner
- commitment from managers/supervisors/committees/unions
- ability and willingness to change when necessary
- clear, achievable outcomes
- no hidden agendas
- defined roles and responsibilities
- agreed and realistic goals
- industrial relations issues identified and information disseminated
- continuous revision of the partnership arrangement
- measures of progress and criteria for success

## **Negotiating the details of assessment and quality assurance**

Initial discussions about possible partnership arrangements will involve consideration of all aspects of the potential agreement. A key aspect of these discussions should be the assessment and quality assurance arrangements.

The lead RTO and partner organisations need to identify and clarify the nature of the assessment and quality assurance arrangements prior to establishing the agreement. This should involve discussions with employee and employer representatives, including union representatives and site consultative committees, and other stakeholders in the training and assessment arrangements.

The initial stages of a partnership arrangement require a great deal of effort. However, such preparation determines each partner's willingness to work together and provides an opportunity for partners to assess whether or not it is in their interest to proceed.

This initial process of thinking through the issues and requirements is valuable even if the partners decide not to continue with a partnership arrangement. If they do, their independent evaluations will have provided a solid foundation on which to proceed with negotiations of the formal agreement.

Decisions from this phase of the discussions between partners can then be translated into the final negotiations for the agreement. Remember, the lead RTO is always responsible for quality assuring the assessments conducted on its behalf and issuing the relevant AQF qualification or Statement of Attainment.

At the same time, it should be understood that the partner organisation is purchasing a service from the lead RTO and the partner will be interested in the ability of the lead RTO to deliver what is agreed.

Some of the critical aspects of the assessment and quality assurance arrangements that must be clarified are listed in Table 2 on the following page.

**Table 2: Decision table for assessment and quality assurance**

ASPECT	CONSIDERATIONS
Target candidates	Who are the candidates to be assessed under the partnership arrangement?
Target Training Package(s), unit(s) of competency or accredited course	What Training Package(s), unit(s) of competency or accredited course(s) are to be assessed?
Timing	What is the timeline for the agreement? When must assessments occur? Are there external factors, such as business issues, which may impact on the timing?
Assessor requirements	What are the assessor requirements outlined in the Training Package(s) and the <i>AQTF Standards for RTOs</i> ? Are there any other requirements that assessors will need? Is there a need for further training or support?
Assessment policy, processes and tools	Does the partner organisation have an established assessment policy and processes? Whose grievances and appeals policy will be used? To whom will candidates appeal if they have concerns about their assessment?  Are the assessment tools already available? Have existing tools been validated? If no tools are available, will these need to be developed in collaboration or will one partner take responsibility for the development?
Information on assessment	Who will be responsible for providing assessment information to the candidates and the assessors? What form will this take? If information is not already available, who will develop it? What rights in the assessment process will the candidates have?
Collecting the evidence and making the judgement	What types of evidence are agreed to be appropriate? How will the evidence be collected? Who will collect it? Who will make the judgement?
Recording and reporting	What records of assessment will be needed? What form will the records take? How will information on the recognition or achievement of unit(s) of competency be transmitted to the lead RTO?
Communication approaches	Who will be the contact person from each partner? How and when will induction, planning, implementation and review meetings occur? How will key stakeholders in the agreement be involved?
Quality assurance	What quality assurance strategies will be used? What information will be gathered? At what stages during the period of the agreement will evaluation occur? Who will be involved in the review? How will improvements be actioned? How will improvements be documented?

**Experiences from the field**

**This is an example of a partnership arrangement between an RTO and three schools.**

*Gerard is a program coordinator in a lead RTO. This is his story about establishing a process for information and data exchange between a lead RTO and three secondary schools delivering the Certificate I in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations) from the Hospitality Training Package.*

If I had only known what I was getting myself into! What I needed to do was stop and think about the questions I needed to ask much more carefully. As we talked about going into partnership, we made assumptions that we understood exactly what our roles and responsibilities were going to be. That turned out to be not quite right. After all, we are four quite different organisations with our own particular administrative processes and ways of doing things.

When the Memorandum of Understanding was put together we didn't think it through well enough. We neglected to identify clearly how and when information was going to be exchanged, and in what form. Our systems for keeping records didn't match. The constant assessment demand meant that I spent a lot of time chasing the information I needed. Then I had to translate it to fit in with my organisation's requirements for record keeping and reporting the outcomes of assessment.

What we needed to do was to be much more specific about the form and set up of the assessment records we required. We needed to set up a timeline for collecting this information and a strategy for sending it across which meant transfer was as simple and accurate as possible. It took some renegotiation, but we have a much better system now.

*Rick is a trainer in an organisation that entered into a partnership arrangement. This is what he had to say about the value of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).*

Just because you have an MOU, there is no guarantee that it will work. The critical thing is that everyone has to work together. It all comes down to the people involved – they have to have trust and confidence in each other. The formal agreement will only ever work if there is a real feeling of trust and understanding.



## **CHAPTER 3: THE FORMAL AGREEMENT**

### **Introduction**

Under Standard 1.6 of the *AQTF Standards for RTOs*, RTOs are required to establish a written agreement with each organisation that provides training and/or assessment on their behalf.

These written agreements can take a number of forms, including:

- Memorandum of Understanding
- Memorandum of Agreement
- Service Agreement
- Letter of Agreement.

These different forms of agreements are described in the ensuing sector of this guide.

Remember that it is a good idea to check with a legal adviser before entering into any partnership arrangement. Partners do not want to be in the position of promising a service they cannot provide or that their organisation is not willing or able to support. There may be people who can provide the necessary advice within each organisation.

### **Types of agreements**

#### **Memorandum of Understanding**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a document setting out the arrangements under which two or more organisations will work in relation to something. It is not an agreement or a contract which is enforceable in the courts. An MOU usually describes, in broad general terms, the areas of mutual interest that are to be addressed cooperatively by the organisations involved in the partnership. Its main virtue is that it commits things to writing, lessening the room for misunderstanding.

### **Memorandum of Agreement**

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is an agreement in writing, usually formal and enforceable in a court of law. It must therefore comply with the law of contract by having valuable consideration (for example, money) and be between separate legal entities with the capacity to enter into contracts.

### **Service Agreement**

A Service Agreement is an MOA relating to a service that one of the parties to the contract is to deliver or undertake on behalf of the other party or parties. To be enforceable, it must satisfy the elements mentioned under Memorandum of Agreement above.

### **Letter of Agreement**

A Letter of Agreement is a form of MOA set out on letterhead. It usually requires the other party to sign at the foot of the letter or to respond with their agreement to the terms and conditions stated in the letter. It is not uncommon for agreements to be negotiated and formalised by letters between parties. Provided the agreement is clear and the other elements as identified above are satisfied, Letters of Agreement are as good a way as any to proceed.

### **Deciding which agreement to use**

A good formal agreement will clearly establish the basic rules under which a partnership arrangement will operate. The type of agreement chosen will be influenced by:

- the policies and procedures on partnership arrangements set by an organisation and those in the organisation(s) with whom there is a proposed collaboration
- how much an organisation is required to put into the partnership in terms of money, time and effort
- the degree of risk that may be entailed in the partnership.

Because an MOU is not legally enforceable, it is best used in partnership arrangements which entail a low level of risk for the lead RTO and the partner organisations, or where the partners are not separate legal entities. As the potential risk increases it is wise to ensure that the contracts between partners are enforceable in a court of law.

Some of the important factors involved in low risk and high risk partnership arrangements are set out in the following decision table. Use this table to make an assessment of risk before deciding which agreement to use.

**Table 3: Decision table: risk assessment**

Low risk	High risk
Memorandum of Understanding	Memorandum of Agreement, Letter(s) of Agreement, Service Agreement
Limited commitment of money, resources, effort and people	Extensive commitment of money, resources, effort and people
Simple roles and responsibilities	Complex roles and responsibilities
Simple and straightforward quality assurance processes	Detailed and complex quality assurance processes
Program delivered over a short period of time	Program delivered over an extensive period
Low number of learners	High number of learners
A single partner in the partnership arrangement	A range of partners involved in the partnership arrangement

### **The use of proformas in writing formal agreements**

A proforma is another name for a sample document. Included in Appendix A is a proforma for an MOU. There is no problem with one party sending its proforma contract or agreement to the other stating that this is the form they would like the agreement to follow. It is important to check with the relevant State or Territory Registering Body and each organisation to determine what is acceptable.

It is a matter of negotiation, but legal advice is always that it is the content which is important, not the form. Make sure whatever is signed satisfies the elements of an enforceable agreement or contract and the form will not matter.

### **Preparing the agreement**

While it may be appropriate to use a proforma as a guide, it is critical that each agreement is written to suit the particular requirements of each relationship into which an organisation is entering. In other words, make sure that the content matches the intent.

## **What should be contained in a written agreement?**

There is no standard approach to writing an MOU or any of the other forms of agreement outlined previously. Nor are there set rules for what should be contained in an agreement document (except for formal requirements) although some components are advisable and others optional.

A list of the key sections which may be included in a written agreement are outlined below.

### **Description of collaborating organisations**

- name and status of lead RTO and partner organisation(s).

### **Objectives and scope**

- a statement of purpose
- a description of goals and expectations
- the justification for the arrangement
- identification of other compliance requirements, for example, New Apprenticeships regulations, licensing.

### **The nature of the collaboration**

- the ways in which the partners will collaborate
- the services which are to be provided by the lead RTO, including such things as provision of quality assurance processes, moderation and evaluation, record keeping and records maintenance plus the issuance of qualifications and/or Statement(s) of Attainment
- the services that are to be provided by the partner organisations.

### **Definitions and interpretations**

- clear explanation of key terms.

### **The terms of the agreement**

- indication of the duration or proposed life of the agreement
- the way in which amendments are to be negotiated and agreed in consultation with collaborating partners
- processes for renewal or extension of the formal arrangement.

### **Organisation and management of the agreement**

Under this heading it is wise to allocate the various activities to each organisation in the partnership arrangement, for example, under subheadings for the lead RTO and for each of the partner organisations.

For the lead RTO, this needs to include quite specific information on the roles and responsibilities of the personnel involved in the various components of the partnership. For example, the document should include:

- the name and contact details of the principal contact person for this particular agreement
- clear guidelines on lines of communication and agreed processes for communicating within and across the collaborating organisations, for example team meetings, assessor meetings
- details of record keeping associated with delivery and assessment, including what, when, how and by whom this will be managed
- an outline of the advice that can be provided on quality assurance of assessment and also how the lead RTO will be involved
- a framework for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of the objectives set by the agreement
- a strategy for ensuring the timely issuance of AQF qualifications and/or Statement(s) of Attainment.

For the partner organisations, this section needs to include quite specific information on the roles and responsibilities of the personnel involved in the various components of the partnership. For example, the document should include:

- the name and contact details of the principal contact persons and coordinators for this particular agreement
- an outline of the qualifications of staff involved plus relevant facilities and learning resources required for delivery and assessment

- details of maintenance of record keeping associated with delivery and assessment of programs, including how and by whom this will be managed and submitted to the lead RTO
- an outline of how personnel will be involved in the quality assurance processes agreed to on the advice of the lead RTO
- an outline of involvement in the processes for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of the objectives set by the agreement.

### **Resources and facilities**

- a description of the equipment, learning materials and facilities that will be contributed by each of the collaborating partners.

### **Financial arrangements**

- the details of the fees, charges and disbursements associated with the arrangement.

### **Quality assurance**

Under this heading outline the lead RTOs obligations in relation to assuring the quality of all aspects of assessment, including the:

- assessment system
- assessment processes
- assessors
- collection of evidence
- making of the judgement.

### **Communication and exchange of information**

- an outline of how information generated by the partnership is to be handled by all parties to the agreement
- an outline of agreed lines of communication and strategies for communicating, for example team meetings, information sharing and consultations
- details relating to confidentiality.

### **Intellectual property**

- description of who retains the rights to any intellectual property produced.

### **Marketing and publicity**

- an outline of how and what activities will be promoted.

### **Settlement of disputes**

- a description of the process for resolving disputes that may arise among the partners to the agreement.

### **Review and evaluation**

- mechanisms for deciding how the overall objectives of the collaboration have been achieved, for example seeking feedback from candidates, partners and other key players
- strategies for regular review of operational processes and issues, such as collection of relevant data (eg success rates and reassessments) and team meetings.

### **Further headings**

- other items such as disclaimers, transfer and assignment, warranty and indemnity as required.

### **Effective dates and signatures**

- appropriate authorities from each partner involved in the collaboration.

### **Schedules**

- these may include details of what will be assessed under the agreement, including details of the relevant Training Package(s) and a full listing of the qualifications to be covered.

## Experiences from the field

### Formalising the agreement

*Allan is the head of a small RTO that provides training and assessment services for a number of small businesses. He has established separate partnership arrangements with two other enterprises that are undertaking the training of their staff using the relevant Training Package.*

These businesses are only training and assessing against a few of the units of competency in the Training Package and they do not have many trainees at the one time. Our partnership arrangements are relatively straightforward and the timeframes short. I just use a Letter of Agreement to formalise the arrangements. Because there are not any great amounts of money or resources involved, there is no real need to have a more formal document drawn up. I simply include a list of what will be done to quality assure the assessment, who will be responsible and when it is to occur. The managers of the businesses then simply sign off their agreement to the processes and so do I.

## **CHAPTER 4: QUALITY ASSURING THE ASSESSMENTS**

### **What does the AQTF prescribe for quality assuring assessment?**

The *AQTF Standards for RTOs* specify the requirements for quality assuring assessment. The subsections within the *AQTF Standards for RTOs* that focus on quality assuring assessments are:

1.4(a): 'The RTO must conduct an internal audit\* of its compliance with these Standards and the policies and procedures in 1.1(a) at least annually.

\*Alternatively the RTO may conduct self-assessments of equivalent rigour.'

9.2: 'The RTO must validate its assessment strategies by:

- a) reviewing, comparing and evaluating the assessment processes, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same competency standards, \*\*at least annually; and
- b) documenting any action taken to improve the quality and consistency of assessment.

\*\* These may be internal processes with stakeholders involvement or external validations with other providers and/or stakeholders.

Standard 8 relates to RTO assessments and underpins the above subsections. This Standard clearly specifies the requirements for valid, reliable, fair and flexible assessments.

It makes sense for all partners to be involved in the quality assurance approach that is established. All partners have independent and mutual obligations in this process.

Remember, a lead RTO cannot pass on the responsibility for quality assurance of assessment to its partner(s).

### **Aspects of assessment that need to be quality assured**

The key aspects of the assessment that need to be quality assured in any partnership arrangement are the:

- assessment system
- assessment processes
- assessors
- collection of evidence
- making of the judgement.

The assessment system is a controlled and ordered process designed to ensure that assessment decisions made in relation to many individuals, by many assessors, in many situations are consistent, fair, valid and reliable. Therefore the assessment system incorporates the assessment processes, the assessors, the evidence collection and the making of the judgements.



### **Links to other guides in the *Training Package Assessment Materials Project***

Other guides in this series provide detailed information regarding quality assuring assessment. An explanation of each of the key aspects and the range of possible strategies that may be used to quality assure assessment can be found in *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment*, while additional information relating to validation strategies can be found in *Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment*.

Strategies that can be used to quality assure the assessment arrangements in a partnership are set out in Table 4. The strategies in this table are listed alphabetically rather than in order of importance. Each one is mapped to the component of assessment to which it is relevant. For example, *RTO self-assessment* addresses the quality assurance requirements of the assessment system, the assessment process and the assessors. On the other hand, *Mechanisms to support professional judgement* addresses the quality assurance requirements of the assessment process, the assessors, the collection of evidence and the making of the judgement.

It is the selection of these strategies that underpins an important part of the negotiations that precede a partnership arrangement. Careful consideration needs to be given to selection of these strategies as they are integral to the quality assurance of the assessments.

Table 4: Quality assurance strategies

Quality assurance strategy	Relevant aspect of assessment				
	Assessment system	Assessment process	Assessors	Collection of evidence	Assessment judgement
	A	B	C	D	E
Assessment plan		◆	◆	◆	◆
Assessment policy	◆	◆	◆		
Assessment system procedures	◆	◆	◆		
Assessment tools		◆	◆	◆	◆
Benchmarking	◆				
Evidence collection guidelines			◆	◆	
Exemplar and benchmark materials		◆	◆	◆	◆
Guidelines for gathering third party evidence			◆	◆	◆
Information for assessors			◆	◆	◆
Information for candidates		◆		◆	
Internal audit	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Mechanisms to support professional judgement		◆	◆	◆	◆
Partnership assessment arrangements			◆	◆	◆
Professional development of assessors			◆		
Record keeping	◆	◆	◆		
RTO self-assessment	◆	◆	◆		
Selection and training of assessors			◆		
Simulated assessment guidelines			◆	◆	◆
Team assessments		◆	◆	◆	◆
Validation strategies	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

### Making decisions about what strategies to use

It is not feasible or even necessary to implement all of the strategies outlined in Table 4. Within the agreement, what is chosen will be influenced by the resources available to each partner. Working together will make use of combined resources.

For the lead RTO, the options may be relatively straightforward, as all decisions need to be consistent with the policies and procedures of that organisation; however, decisions will need to be made giving consideration to the workplace culture and needs of the partner organisation(s).

For partner organisations, a number of decisions relating to quality assurance need to be made. Partner organisations may already have well-established assessment systems. Can aspects of these systems be utilised in the partnership arrangement? For example they may already have:

- qualified assessors who are able to conduct assessments against relevant Training Packages
- a record keeping system that maintains candidate information
- assessment documentation that underpins the lead RTOs existing system such as:
  - a Code of Practice for assessors
  - grievance and appeals policy
  - assessment policy
  - assessment processes and procedures.

Partner organisation(s) may have an existing assessment system and will need to negotiate with their lead RTO exactly what features of their system can be used under the partnership arrangement. For example, a partner organisation's existing record keeping system may be required to transfer a candidate's data in a particular format to the lead RTO. It will be necessary to negotiate with the lead RTO whether the record keeping system is adequate and in what form the information is to be transmitted.

On the other hand, a partner organisation that does not have a fully fledged assessment system may agree to use the lead RTOs system. Alternatively, the organisation may decide to use components of the lead RTO's system and develop other aspects of the system internally. This decision will be driven by:

- the needs of the organisation
- the time, resources and personnel available to do the developmental work
- value for money.

### **Key strategies**

Lead RTOs and partner organisations should only select some of the strategies that are listed in Table 4. However, it is recommended that all partnership arrangements should use a mix of up-front and ongoing quality assurance strategies.

At a minimum, the up-front strategies should cover the selection and training of assessors, the development of assessment information, the development of assessment tools and system procedures, as well as record keeping. These up-front strategies are outlined in Table 5.

Minimum ongoing strategies should include audit (or self-assessment), professional development and validation strategies. Both validation strategies and an annual internal audit are specific requirements of the *AQTF Standards for RTOs*. Ongoing professional development is a requirement of Standard 7, *AQTF Standards for RTOs*. These ongoing strategies are described in Table 6.

**Table 5: Strategies for up-front quality assessment**

Strategy	What might be included
Selection and training of assessors	Assessors meet the requirements of the <i>AQTF Standards for RTOs</i> and the qualification detailed in the assessment guidelines section of the relevant Training Package(s).
Development of assessment tools	May take the form of exemplars and benchmarks, templates, collaborative approaches to design, evaluation against assessment principles (valid, reliable, fair and flexible), requirements of Training Package(s) and funding agreements.
Development of assessment information	Assessor information regarding assessment can take the form of induction, assessment kits, networks and meetings. Candidate information on assessment can take the form of induction, candidate kits and one-to-one information sessions.
System procedure and record keeping	Where the lead RTO's assessment system procedures and record keeping system are not used there is an acceptance that the partner organisation's documentation and record keeping system meets the requirements for audit.

**Table 6: Strategies for ongoing quality assurance**

Strategy	What might be included
Internal audit <sup>1</sup>	Involves an evaluation of whether assessment activities, services and outcomes generated in the partnership comply with the <i>AQTF Standards for RTOs</i> , lead RTO policies and procedures and requirements of the formal agreement.
Professional development	May take the form of ongoing assessor training, mentoring, coaching, participation in validation activities, assessor networks and action learning groups.
Validation strategies	May involve a consensus process where assessors review, compare and evaluate all aspects of their assessment; or an assessor may choose to work with an expert in the field to validate approach <sup>2</sup> .

To help partners plan the quality assurance approach, a planning implementation proforma has been included in Appendix D. This proforma may be used to work out what up-front quality assurance strategies are going to be used and what ongoing strategies are going to be employed. Also use the proforma to identify the personnel and resources that will be needed to implement these strategies and recording and reporting requirements.

**Experiences from the field**

**Quality assuring the assessment arrangements**

*Leonie is the coordinator of a program that is being delivered in enterprises all around the country. The challenge for her organisation as the lead RTO is to monitor the arrangement and the assessments of the workplace assessors from a distance.*

Once we had worked out what quality assurance strategies we were going to use, we then worked out how we could make it work for everybody spread around the country. Everybody had access to a computer and Excel, so we developed a simple template for record keeping. The template has space for results and comments and once every two months, the assessors send their spreadsheet to us in Sydney. In that way we can systematically monitor the progress of assessments and provide advice where necessary. This is all backed up by regular emails and telephone contact, which gives us an idea about what is going on.

<sup>1</sup> Alternatively a self-assessment may be conducted. An internal audit checklist appropriate for use in a partnership arrangement is included in Appendix C.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the other products in the *Training Package Assessment Materials Project*, specifically, *Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment* and *Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment* for additional information.

### Selecting the quality assurance strategies

*Sonia is an assessor in a lead RTO. Here she describes how her organisation established the quality assurance process.*

We have put most of our effort into quality assuring the front end of the assessment process. We have developed standardised information which is given to candidates. The assessors are provided with an orientation session and print-based information on how the assessment is to be done. They are very familiar with the Training Package and we have discussed with them what competent performance looks like. Most of the assessment is done during work, so they have a performance checklist and several sets of questions to ask the candidates while they perform the assessment activities. They provide us with review sheets which are also signed by the candidates.

### Getting the right mix of up-front and ongoing strategies

*Gemma and Carlos are negotiating an agreement for a partnership arrangement. Gemma is the Training Services project officer from the lead RTO, while Carlos is the manager of a business that has always done its own training.*

Two experienced workplace supervisors in the company have been trained as workplace assessors. However, Carlos would like his new trainees to get a Statement of Attainment as there is now a Training Package that covers the units of competency that they do. As they are working through the way that the partnership might work, Gemma explains to Carlos that there is a requirement for her RTO to check the assessment that is carried out by the assessors under the Australian Quality Training Framework. Carlos is immediately concerned about how much time and money this review process might cost, but acknowledges that he wants the best quality outcome that he can get. Gemma explains that they can pick quality assurance strategies to suit their particular needs.

Gemma outlines the possible quality assurance strategies that can be used and together they discuss how each might work in their situation. Carlos believes that the strategies must be easy to implement and should not take up too much time for his people. Gemma explains that a good way to go is to pick a few strategies that can be used at the beginning of the arrangement, and others that can be used in an ongoing way to review various aspects of assessment.

For the up-front quality assurance, Gemma starts by reviewing the information that the assessors are working with to make sure that they have a good framework for making consistent decisions. The information provided to the trainees is also checked. Do trainees have all the information they need about the assessment process and the evidence that they are required to provide? Is the information written in a user-friendly way? Is the information accurate? The company already has a policy about what trainees should do if they are unhappy about their assessment and Gemma and Carlos agree that this is a sound strategy.

For the ongoing quality assurance of the assessment, Gemma agrees to work with the workplace assessors to build their skills in developing integrated assessment activities and exemplars. The workplace assessors will also work more closely together to check whether they are conducting the assessments and making the judgements about trainee competence in a consistent way. Carlos agrees on several short sessions every few months to undertake this comparison and review of their assessment. Gemma will sit in on these sessions and provide advice where necessary.



## **CHAPTER 5: EVALUATING AND MAINTAINING AN AGREEMENT**

### **Evaluating the chosen quality assurance strategies**

Once partners have identified the quality assurance strategies to use, they should work out how they will evaluate the implementation of the strategies. This means quality assuring the quality assurance! This process should not be too complicated. To assist, an evaluation planning proforma has been provided in Appendix E. Use this proforma to develop evaluation strategies for the chosen quality assurance strategies.

As each quality assurance strategy is evaluated it is important to record how the processes can be improved. From this, partners can then determine what actions need to be taken to continue to improve quality assurance strategies. It is important to record this stage of the evaluation process, as these documents will provide evidence for audits (which may be undertaken by a State or Territory Registering Body). To help in this process an evaluation outcomes form is provided in Appendix F. Use this form to help undertake and record evaluations.

### **Making the agreement work**

For lead RTOs or partner organisations, the continued success of a partnership arrangement depends upon how well it is maintained, and how prepared partners are to learn from the experience. The chances of success are increased if evaluation is carried out continuously, if the relationship is actively nurtured and if the partnership is concluded properly.

### **Fostering continuous improvement**

Effective maintenance of a partnership arrangement involves all partners in collecting data on whether they are achieving what they set out to do. This involves evaluation. The details of how this will be conducted should have been set down in the formal agreement.

However, evaluation also occurs on an informal basis and continuous feedback can be the most valuable information to act upon. How is evaluation fostered within the partnership?

- When giving feedback, try to frame it positively; that is, emphasise what it is working well, and then ask how other aspects of the program might be made to work as well, rather than only pointing out what is not working well.
- If there is dissatisfaction, partners should say how they would prefer things to be, not merely that they are dissatisfied.
- Accept informal feedback, otherwise the first indication that a partner is not happy might be when program evaluations are received or when an offer to renew the agreement is declined.

Remember, through ongoing evaluation the partnership arrangement can be reshaped so that it continues to suit all parties.

### **Nurturing the relationship**

Lead RTOs or partner organisations should continue to do those things that they promised they would do when they formed the partnership arrangement. They should also:

- meet regularly to conduct progress checks and to re-focus everyone's energies
- be frank, honest and open in discussions with each other about the arrangement
- be sure that the division of labour and resources is fair and keep checking that workplans reflect any changes in circumstances
- follow the conflict management plan that was agreed to if problems arise; do not leave seeking external assistance until it is too late
- respect each other's confidentiality, especially in contexts where issues are commercially or politically sensitive for a partner
- celebrate successes, especially where they have been achieved in the face of difficulty, such as where a challenge has been transformed into an opportunity for improved service
- emphasise quality rather than quantity

- make sure that new staff are inducted properly and introduced formally to their contacts in partner organisation(s)
- publicly acknowledge individual achievements
- respect partners' other obligations, for example, the demands of their other work, their external compliance requirements, their organisational values and culture
- provide ongoing professional development for team members
- be willing to take risks.

### **Concluding the partnership arrangement**

Eventually, the timeframe for the partnership arrangement will come to an end. The activities associated with this ending are sometimes referred to as 'closure'. As that time approaches, all partners within the agreement should prepare to meet in order to debrief.

At this time these questions might be asked.

- Were the goals reached?
- Was the experience of working together a rewarding one?
- Are there lessons to be learned from this partnership that can be applied to future relationships, whether they be with the current partners or future ones?
- How effective was the planning?
- Was the partnership effectively and fairly managed?
- Was the budget acquitted to the satisfaction of all partners?

Whether it is decided that this present collaboration should be renewed, or whether there is a decision to part company, all partners will have learned useful lessons from this exercise, and a process like this brings the collaboration to a constructive close.

## Experiences from the field

### Nurturing the partnership

*Claude is a coordinator within a lead RTO that is in a partnership with an enterprise. Now that there is a new Training Package in the area, the enterprise has decided that new trainees will undertake Certificate II. Claude tells how he supports the workplace assessors.*

Not all of the workplace assessors get together as a group. Some of them do. I find that it is a simpler process to have meetings with the individual assessors and workplace supervisors. It would be nice to bring them all together so that they could hear what is happening in another production area, but it's difficult. It's a time factor. Process areas operate at different times. So, the normal thing is to sit down and have lunch together and discuss the assessment of the trainees in each area. That's how I keep tabs on what they are doing.

This company has always delivered its own training so they have a workplace training culture. Training is also part of their enterprise agreement now. With the implementation of the new Training Package we've had to re-negotiate the agreement with them.

### Reviewing partnership arrangements

*Matt manages a small RTO which has been working in partnership with a government department for about six months. Since the beginning of the partnership, some modifications have been made to the way it works. Matt and the Human Resources Manager are keen to re-evaluate their approach, particularly to the quality assurance of the assessment.*

We place a great deal of trust in our assessor kits in this arrangement. Everyone is using the same assessment tools, but I'm not sure that the assessment judgements being made are consistent across all of our branches around the State. We've decided that we will use a sampling strategy to validate the assessment judgements. The RTO team will check a percentage of written responses from candidates. Feedback will be systematically circulated by email to all assessors after this process of sampling has been completed.

We are also going to ask a number of the workplace assessors to review the material they've been using to make sure that it is still relevant given some changes in work practice have occurred since we first set up the arrangement. Currency is always an issue in the workplace.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Sample Memorandum of Understanding**

The following pages contain a sample Memorandum of Understanding. It is a relatively simple agreement that uses only some of the suggested headings detailed in Chapter 3: The formal agreement.

Remember, you must tailor your written agreement to suit your particular partnership arrangement. When negotiating with your partner or partners, consider which headings are really important to each of you and ensure that they are covered in the document.

Discuss the outcomes of your negotiations with your legal adviser to ensure that you satisfy not only your requirements but those of your organisation as well.

Memorandum of Understanding

This document represents an agreement between

---

**ORGANISATION 1 (The lead RTO)**

**and**

**ORGANISATION 2 (The partner organisation)**

---

**Provision of advice on training and assessment, the quality assurance of assessment and the issuance of AQF qualification and/or Statement of Attainment.**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. This Agreement is designed to provide a framework for the development of a constructive, cost-effective partnership between Organisation 1 (the lead RTO) and Organisation 2 (the partner organisation).
2. It is based on recognition of the responsibility of both parties to contribute to the broad strategies of a quality assured assessment system as prescribed under the Australian Quality Training Framework requirements for XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.
3. It should serve the mutual benefit of both parties by providing an agreed understanding of operating arrangements.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this agreement is to record the agreement of **Organisation 1** (the lead RTO) to provide advice on training and assessment, to quality assure that assessment and to issue credentials attained.

**PERIOD OF AGREEMENT**

1. The Agreement will take effect from XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. It will be renegotiated as appropriate to reflect the ongoing nature of the service provision.
2. The Agreement may be varied at any time by mutual agreement with the changes noted and the details recorded as an additional Appendix.
3. It is the intention that any practical difficulties encountered are resolved by the parties in a cooperative and practical manner. As a consequence, there is no provision for either party to walk away from the arrangement or cancel it prematurely.

## THE SERVICE PACKAGE

**Organisation 1** (the lead RTO) will provide the following services:

### 1. Assessment support and quality assurance

- a) Provide orientation training and professional development for Organisation 2's (the partner organisation) workplace assessors and workplace supervisors in accordance with terms separately agreed in writing between the parties;
- b) Work with Organisation 2 (the partner organisation) to evaluate the existing assessment tools, information for assessors and information and feedback for candidates to ensure that they meet audit and quality requirements;
- c) Establish a timetable for validation meetings with assessors from Organisation 2 (the partner organisation);
- d) Set up a system for the interchange of information on candidate progress and results to Organisation 1 (the lead RTO) according to agreed timelines;
- e) Record all assessment results and maintain candidate records on its usual system for recording applications for assessment and awards;
- f) Validate the assessment undertaken by the assessors of Organisation 2 (the partner organisation) by examining a 10% sample of all assessments completed in a calendar year.

### 2. Working arrangements

To ensure effective functioning of the arrangements, each party is to nominate the operational manager contacts who will carry general responsibility for operations, performance delivery, review and problem resolution.

Operational managers are: XXXXXX for the lead RTO and XXXXXX for the partner organisation.

## PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

The provider (the lead RTO), as part of the constructive partnership, accepts responsibility for:

1. the delivery of agreed services in a competent, ethical and professional manner.
2. seeking at all times to deliver quality and value to the client on schedule and to budget.
3. following the procedures set out in the Agreement.
4. participating constructively in the monitoring and quality assurance process.
5. providing a regular report to the partner organisation on the outcomes of the validation of assessment.
6. notifying the partner organisation as soon as possible of any major concerns, issues or opportunities relating to the services provided.
7. treating in confidence information obtained or provided in the course of negotiating, or monitoring the arrangements covered in this Agreement and undertaking not to divulge that information to any parties without prior written authority.
8. issuing AQF qualifications and/or Statement(s) of Attainment.

## **CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The client (the partner organisation), as part of the constructive partnership, accepts responsibility for:

1. regarding the lead RTO as the preferred provider of the services outlined in the Agreement.
2. acting in a competent, ethical and professional manner.
3. providing timely and detailed forward planning to maximise the cost and other benefits from the quality assured training and assessment system.
4. regularly sharing the outcomes of this planning with the lead RTO to enable them to plan ahead more effectively and, in so doing, better serve clients.
5. acknowledging and considering professional advice given by the lead RTO.
6. following all procedures set out in the Agreement.
7. notifying the lead RTO as soon as possible of any major concerns, issues or opportunities relating to the services provided.
8. participating constructively in the monitoring and quality assurance process.
9. treating in confidence information obtained or provided in the course of negotiating, or monitoring the arrangements covered in this Agreement and undertaking not to divulge that information to any parties without prior written authority.

## **FEES AND CHARGES**

According to organisational policy and agreement between parties.

## **REPORTING**

All candidate results and details of assessment will be forwarded by Organisation 2 (the partner organisation) to Organisation 1 (the lead RTO) for recording and reporting in line with that organisation's policy and procedures.

## **EVALUATION**

1. Several times<sup>3</sup> during the life of the Agreement, participants in the arrangement will meet to review the partnership. The following will be evaluated:
  - a) feedback from candidates
  - b) feedback from assessors
  - c) communication strategies
  - d) all aspects of the quality assurance process
  - e) administrative issues
  - f) other issues as identified.
2. Where agreed by partners in the partnership arrangement, modifications will be made to the working arrangements and the Agreement in accordance with the findings of the evaluation.

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<sup>3</sup> What constitutes 'several times' will depend on the life of the agreement.

Memorandum of Understanding

This document represents an agreement between

**ORGANISATION 1 (The lead RTO)**

**and**

**ORGANISATION 2 (The partner organisation)**

**Provision of advice on training and assessment, the quality assurance of assessment and the issuance of AQF qualification and/or Statement of Attainment.**

Name of Organisation 1 (the lead RTO)	Name of Organisation 2 (the partner organisation)
Name:	Name:
Title: <i>For example, the Director</i>	Title: <i>For example, the Manager, HRM</i>
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Memorandum of Understanding template**

This Appendix contains a template for a written agreement for a partnership arrangement. To use this, select the headings you wish to incorporate in your document, highlight the text and type over the top. You can delete the headings you do not wish to include and add others that better suit your purposes.

It is important for you and your partners to work out exactly what you need to include in your agreement. This template is a guide only.

A blank template that can be customised is available on the *Training Package Assessment Materials Project* CD-ROM.

When you have entered your own text, remember to name save it as a document file.

## Memorandum of Understanding

This document represents an agreement between

---

**Name of lead RTO**

and

**Name of partner organisation**

---

### **Description of collaborating organisations**

Under here include a brief description of the lead RTO and the partner organisations.

For example, (The name of the lead RTO) is a Registered Training Organisation for the purpose of providing training, assessment and credentials in vocational education and training.

(Name of partner organisation) is a company that undertakes training and assessment of workers in the industry against the XXX Training Package and wishes to have that training and assessment recognised and qualifications and/or Statement(s) of Attainment awarded.

### **Objectives and scope**

Under here include a statement of purpose. Other things that can also be covered in this section are a brief description of goals and expectations, a justification for the arrangement or the identification of other compliance requirements, for example, New Apprenticeships regulations and licensing.

### **The nature of the collaboration**

Under here you need to describe the ways in which the partners will collaborate.

Outline the services which are to be provided by the lead RTO, including such things as advice on quality assurance processes, moderation and evaluation, record keeping, records maintenance and the issuance of credentials.

Outline the services that are to be provided by the partner organisation(s).

### **Definitions and interpretations**

If there are specific terms that need to be made clear, they should be included here. For example, you might want to make it very clear what you mean when you talk about the 'materials' that are used in

the partnership. Therefore, you would provide a definition of 'materials' (documents, equipment, stored data).

### **The terms of the agreement**

Here you need to include the duration or proposed life of the agreement, how amendments are to be negotiated and agreed in consultation with collaborating partners, and processes for renewal or extension of the formal arrangement.

### **Organisation and management of the agreement**

Under this heading it is wise to allocate the various activities to each organisation in the partnership arrangement, eg under subheadings for the lead RTO and for each of the partner organisations.

#### **The lead RTO**

For the lead RTO this needs to include quite specific information on the roles and responsibilities of the personnel involved in the various components of the partnership. For example, the document should include:

- the name and contact details of the principal contact person for this particular agreement
- clear guidelines on lines of communication and agreed processes for communicating within and across the collaborating organisations, eg team meetings, assessor meetings
- details of record keeping associated with delivery and assessment including what, when, how and by whom this will be managed
- an outline of the advice that can be provided on quality assurance of assessment and also how the lead RTO will be involved
- a framework for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of the objectives set by the agreement
- a strategy for ensuring the timely issuance of certification/qualifications.

#### **Partner organisation**

For the partner organisation this needs to include quite specific information on the roles and responsibilities of the personnel involved in the various components of the partnership. For example, the document should include:

- the name and contact details of the principal contact person/coordinators for this agreement
- an outline of the competencies/qualifications of staff involved and relevant facilities and learning resources required for delivery and assessment
- details of maintenance of record keeping associated with delivery and assessment of programs including how and by whom this will be managed and then submitted to the lead RTO
- an outline of how personnel will be involved in the quality assurance processes agreed to on the advice of the lead RTO
- an outline of involvement in the processes for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of the objectives set by the agreement.

#### **Resources and facilities**

Under this heading you need to identify the equipment, learning materials and facilities that will be contributed by each of the partners.

#### **Financial arrangements**

Here include details of the fees, charges and disbursements associated with the arrangement.

### **Quality assurance**

Here set out clearly the lead RTOs obligations in relation to assuring the quality of all aspects of the assessment including the assessment system, the assessment processes, the assessors, the assessment evidence and the assessment judgements. Check Chapter 3 for the sorts of things that you should have covered under this heading.

### **Communication and exchange of information**

Under here include an outline of how information and data that is generated by the collaboration is to be handled by all parties to the agreement. Include issues of confidentiality.

### **Intellectual property**

Here you will need to include details of who retains the rights to the intellectual property if produced.

### **Marketing and publicity**

Include a simple outline of how and what activities will be promoted here.

### **Settlement of disputes**

In this important section, describe the process for resolving disputes that may arise among the partners to the agreement.

### **Review and evaluation**

Here set out your plan and methods of determining whether you have met your objectives. Include how you will get feedback from candidates, your partners and any other key players that you think will provide information on the effectiveness of your partnership arrangement.

You should also set out your strategy for regularly reviewing your operational processes and identifying issues of concern. Success rates and reassessments are data that is worth collecting.

### **Further headings**

There may be other items such as disclaimers, transfer and assignment, warranty and indemnity that you want to include here.

### **Effective dates and signatures**

Do not forget that for a written agreement to have the impact you need, appropriate authorities from each partner involved in the partnership, and all partners, should sign the document.

### **Schedules or appendices**

Schedules or appendices may include details of what will be assessed under the agreement, including details of the relevant Training Package(s) and a full listing of the qualifications to be covered.

## APPENDIX C

### Internal audit checklist

This is an internal audit checklist that may be used by the organisations within the partnership arrangement to check whether they comply with the assessment requirements as set out in the *AQTF Standards for RTOs*.

It is important for the lead RTO and the partner organisation to establish how the audit will be conducted. Consider:

- when and who will undertake the audit
- the sample to be audited
- action to be taken.

Use this checklist to monitor whether all parties are meeting their responsibilities as identified in the agreement. Use the Yes/No column as a self-evaluation tool to identify areas for improvement within the assessment system (including all partners). It may be that the Yes/No column could be adapted using three categories (that is, Yes, No, Needs Review). Use the Action column to list the personnel responsible for actioning the identified areas for improvement.

This checklist is a guide only. The lead RTO must check that the arrangements comply with the requirements of their State or Territory Registering Body.

A blank template that can be customised is available on the *Training Package Assessment Materials Project* CD-ROM.

When you have entered your own text, remember to name and save it as a document file.



Evidence to be provided	Yes/No	Action
<b>Partnership arrangements</b>		
Are arrangements entered on register?		
Are arrangements documented? Do they include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear roles and responsibilities of the partner organisations?</li> <li>• quality assurance arrangements?</li> </ul>		
<b>Policy related material</b>		
Evidence of the following policy document(s) and procedures to ensure quality of assessment services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Practice or policy for assessment (including review mechanisms)</li> <li>• policy for Recognition processes (RPL/RCC)</li> <li>• grievance/appeals policy</li> <li>• business plan</li> <li>• risk management strategy</li> <li>• compliance with State/Territory laws, and Commonwealth and State legislation</li> <li>• protection of student fees and/or refund policy.</li> </ul>		
<b>Procedure/Guideline information</b>		
Evidence of information to assessors (eg process, roles and responsibilities).		
Evidence of information to candidates (eg process, rights and responsibilities) is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear and unambiguous</li> <li>• accurate</li> <li>• provided prior to enrolment/assessment.</li> </ul>		
<b>Assessment</b>		
Evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relevant copies of Training Package/accredited course</li> <li>• assessment plans (evidence of industry/enterprise consultation, adherence to principles of validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility)</li> <li>• copies of assessment tools (evidence of industry/enterprise consultation)</li> <li>• samples of evidence provided (where feasible)</li> <li>• details of assessment outcomes recorded.</li> </ul>		
<b>Validation</b>		
Evidence of policy and procedure for validation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regular validation activities (eg minutes, summary of outcomes, action taken)</li> <li>• evaluation of feedback from candidates</li> <li>• industry/enterprise participation (if required).</li> </ul>		
<b>Assessor qualifications</b>		
Profiles of assessors that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assessment qualifications</li> <li>• industry/technical qualifications</li> <li>• relevant current industry experience</li> <li>• relevant unit(s) of competency they are assessing</li> <li>• records of professional development.</li> </ul>		

Evidence to be provided	Yes/No	Action
<b>Access and equity</b>		
Evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access and equity issues being addressed in assessment documentation/strategies</li> <li>• support available in the assessment process.</li> </ul>		
<b>Record keeping</b>		
A secure system that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enrolment details</li> <li>• assessment outcomes</li> <li>• information on appeals/grievances</li> <li>• qualifications/Statements of Attainment issued.</li> </ul>		
Adequate procedure for the transfer of data to relevant authorities to ensure integrity of the information (eg partnerships arrangements, State/Territory requirements).		
An appropriate procedure for archiving data		
<b>Marketing information<sup>4</sup></b>		
Marketing material is accurate and ethical		
<b>Statements of Attainment/Qualifications</b>		
Statements of Attainment/qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• issued regularly</li> <li>• accurate.</li> </ul>		
Evidence of mutual recognition		
<b>Resources</b>		
Appropriate assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• resources</li> <li>• equipment</li> <li>• facilities.</li> </ul>		
Compliance with relevant occupational health and safety and legislative requirements.		
<b>Documentation of quality assurance strategies</b>		
A process and evidence of action of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring assessment outcomes</li> <li>• results of surveys/evaluations</li> <li>• annual audit or self-assessment of assessment system.</li> </ul>		

<sup>4</sup> Marketing material in a partnership arrangement may be information provided to committees, employer and employee representatives and candidates regarding such things as the partnership arrangements, the assessment process, the assessment outcomes and the qualifications to be issued.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Quality assurance strategies: planning proforma**

This partially worked proforma may be used by you and your partner(s) to plan the quality assurance approach. Use this proforma to work out:

- what up-front and ongoing strategies are going to be employed
- what key personnel and resources will be needed to implement these strategies
- the recording and reporting requirements.

This template will provide a summary of the quality assurance approaches adopted in the agreement.

A blank template that can be customised is available on the *Training Package Assessment Materials Project* CD-ROM.

When you have entered your own text, remember to name and save it as a document file.

Quality assurance strategies: planning proforma

Quality assurance strategy	Description of activities	Responsibility	Resources required	Record keeping requirements
1. <i>Information for candidates</i>	<p><i>Information for each unit of competency which outlines:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>assessment tasks</i></li> <li><i>evidence required</i></li> <li><i>timing of assessment.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>To be checked by assessors before distribution.</i></p>	<i>Insert here as per roles and responsibilities in the agreement.</i>	<p><i>Insert here:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>time to develop</i></li> <li><i>resources to produce</i></li> <li><i>number of person(s) to develop.</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Master copy filed</i></p> <p><i>Version control</i></p>
2.				
3.				



Write in the up-front and ongoing quality assurance strategies you will be using.	Describe each of the quality assurance strategies.	Name the person(s) who will be responsible for implementation of the quality assurance activities.	Describe what resources these activities will need, eg people, time, physical resources.	Identify what copies need to be kept and where; what additional requirements apply, eg version control, review dates of documents.
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## APPENDIX E

### **Quality assurance strategies: evaluation planning proforma**

The following evaluation planning proforma has been included to help you develop an evaluation strategy for each of your chosen quality assurance strategies. In developing the evaluation plan you will need to consider:

- the timing of the evaluation activities
- who is responsible for the evaluation
- the resources required to undertake the evaluation
- the record keeping requirements.

The following evaluation planning proforma is a worked example.

A blank template that can be customised is available on the *Training Package Assessment Materials Project* CD-ROM.

When you have entered your own text, remember to name and save it as a document file.

Quality assurance strategies: evaluation planning proforma

Quality assurance strategy	Description of evaluation activities	Timing	Responsibility	Resources required	Record keeping requirements
1. <i>Information for candidates</i>	<i>Seek feedback from candidates (can be verbal).</i>	<i>Two months after use.</i>	<i>Training Coordinator</i>	<i>One reviewer, verbal discussion with group of candidates. Changes checked by candidates.</i>	<i>Changes made to master copy and filed.</i>
2.					
3.					



Write in the up-front and ongoing quality assurance strategies you will be using.	Describe how you are going to evaluate each of the quality assurance strategies.	Indicate the date(s) the evaluation will take place.	Name the person(s) who will be responsible for evaluating the quality assurance activities.	Describe what resources will be needed, eg people, time, physical resources.	Identify what records need to be kept of the evaluation and what form these will take, eg recording sheets, feedback sheets.
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## **APPENDIX F**

### **Quality assurance strategies: evaluation outcomes form**

The following evaluation outcomes form has been included to help you undertake and record your evaluation of each of the quality assurance strategies. This profoma provides a summary of the findings and the suggested actions.

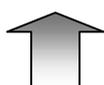
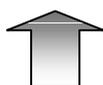
The following evaluation outcomes form is a worked example.

A blank template that can be customised is available on the *Training Package Assessment Materials Project* CD-ROM.

When you have entered your own text, remember to name and save it as a document file.

**Quality assurance strategies: evaluation outcomes form**

Quality assurance strategy	Outcome of evaluation activities	Follow-up action for continuous improvement
<i>Information to assessors</i>	<i>The four assessors were asked to get together and work out how well their assessor kits work for the new units of competency that they were assessing. All agreed that some guidelines need to be developed for handling the portfolios of evidence.</i>	<i>John and Anne will work together with some of the workplace supervisors to put together samples of the documents being included in portfolios. Exemplar materials will be developed from these samples.  Completion and trialing during the next in-service training.</i>
<i>Assessment tools</i>	<i>Some of the checklists need updating because of the changes in work practice.</i>	<i>Phan to complete after talking to supervisors.</i>



<p>Identify which quality assurance strategies were used and which were evaluated.</p>	<p>Outline the outcomes of the evaluation process. What did you find when you evaluated the strategies you had used to quality assure your assessment?</p>	<p>From the findings of your evaluation, set out what you can improve in your quality assurance approach. What changes can you make to do it better? Who will make the changes? When should the changes be made?</p> <p>This form should be kept to use as evidence in your internal audit. It will also be the starting point when you quality assure your assessment again.</p>
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## GLOSSARY

This glossary was compiled for use in the *Training Package Assessment Materials Project*. Where definitions have been sourced from particular documentation they have been noted. Other definitions in this glossary were developed for use in this Project.

### **Accreditation**

Accreditation means the process of formal recognition of a course by the State or Territory course accrediting body in line with the AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Accredited course**

Accredited course means a structured sequence of vocational education and training that leads to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or Statement of Attainment.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Appeal process**

A process whereby the person being assessed, or other interested party, such as an employer, may dispute the outcome of an assessment and seek reassessment.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Assessment**

Assessment means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace as expressed in the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards or the learning outcomes of an accredited course.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Assessment context**

The environment in which the assessment will be carried out. This will include physical and operational factors, the assessment system within which assessment is carried out, opportunities for gathering evidence in a number of situations, the purpose of the assessment, who carries out the assessment and the period of time during which it takes place.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Assessment guidelines**

Assessment guidelines are an endorsed component of a Training Package which underpins assessment and which sets out the industry approach to valid, reliable, flexible and fair assessment. Assessment guidelines include the assessment system overview, assessor requirements, designing assessment resources, conducting assessment and sources of information on assessment.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Assessment judgement**

Assessment judgement involves the assessor evaluating whether the evidence gathered is current, valid, authentic and sufficient to make the assessment decision. The assessment judgement will involve the assessor in using professional judgement in evaluating the evidence available.

### **Assessment materials**

Assessment materials are any resources that assist in any part of the assessment process. They may include information for the candidate or assessor, assessment tools or resources for the quality assurance arrangements of the assessment system.

### **Assessment method**

Assessment method means the particular technique used to gather different types of evidence. This may include methods or techniques such as questioning, observation, third party reports, interviews, simulations and portfolios. Also see Evidence gathering technique.

### **Assessment plan**

An assessment plan is a document developed by an assessor that includes the elements and units of competency to be assessed, when the assessment will occur, how the assessment will occur, the assessment methods to be used and the criteria for the assessment decision. Also see Evidence plan.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Assessment process**

The assessment process is the agreed series of steps that the candidate undertakes within the enrolment, assessment, recording and reporting cycle. The process must best suit the needs of all stakeholders and be both efficient and cost-effective. The agreed assessment process is often expressed as a flow chart.

### **Assessment strategy**

Assessment strategy means the approach to assessment and evidence gathering used by the assessor or Registered Training Organisation. It encompasses the assessment process, methods and assessment tools.

### **Assessment system**

An assessment system is a controlled and ordered process designed to ensure that assessment decisions made in relation to many individuals, by many assessors, in many situations are consistent, fair, valid and reliable.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Assessment tool**

An assessment tool contains both the instrument and the instructions for gathering and interpreting evidence:

- instrument(s) – the specific questions or activity developed from the selected assessment method(s) to be used for the assessment. (A profile of acceptable performance and the decision making rules for the assessor may also be included.)
- procedures – the information/instructions given to the candidate and/or the assessor regarding conditions under which the assessment should be conducted and recorded.

Also see Evidence gathering tool.

### **Audit**

Audit means a systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining evidence to determine whether the activities and related outcomes of a training organisation comply with the *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Auspicings**

See Collaborative assessment arrangements and Partnerships.

### **Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)**

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) means the policy framework that defines all qualifications recognised nationally in post-compulsory education and training within Australia. The AQF comprises titles and guidelines, which define each qualification, together with principles and protocols covering articulation and issuance of qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)**

Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) means the nationally agreed recognition arrangements for the vocational education and training sector.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Candidate**

A candidate is any person presenting for assessment. The candidate may be:

- a learner undertaking training in an institutional setting
- a learner/worker undertaking training in a workplace
- a learner/worker wanting their skills recognised
- or any combination of the above.

### **Competency**

The specification of knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standards of performance required in the workplace.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Competency standard**

Competency standards define the competencies required for effective performance in the workplace. Standards are expressed in outcome terms and have a standard format comprising unit title, unit descriptor, elements, performance criteria, range statement and evidence guide. Also see Unit(s) of competency.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Client**

Client means learner, enterprise or organisation, which uses or purchases the services provided by the Registered Training Organisation.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Clustering**

The process of grouping competencies into combinations which have meaning and purpose related to work functions and needs in an industry or enterprise.

*Adapted from Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Collaborative assessment arrangements**

Formal collaborative assessment arrangements are the written agreements that are undertaken between a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and other organisations or RTOs. These arrangements enable the partners to share for mutual benefit their resources, effort, time, cost, responsibility and expertise. These arrangements are regulated by the *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations*. See also Partnerships and Auspicing.

Informal collaborative arrangements refer to assessors and candidates working together, in partnership, in the assessment process.

### **Customisation**

Customisation is the addition of specific industry or enterprise information to endorsed national competency standards to reflect the work of a particular industry or workplace or to improve the standards' relevance to industry.

### **Delivery and assessment strategies**

Delivery and assessment strategies means delivery and assessment strategies for each qualification, or part thereof, within the Registered Training Organisation's scope of registration.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Dimensions of competency**

The concept of competency includes all aspects of work performance and not only narrow task skills. The four dimensions of competency are:

- task skills
- task management skills
- contingency management skills
- job/role environment skills.

*From Training Package Developers' Handbook*

### **Element**

An element is the basic building block of the unit of competency. Elements describe the tasks that make up the broader function or job, described by the unit.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Endorsement**

Endorsement means the formal process of recognition of Training Packages undertaken by the National Training Quality Council.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation includes all the activities related to the registration of a training organisation to determine whether it meets, or continues to meet, all the requirements of the *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations* necessary for registration. Evaluation may include review of past performance, review of complaints and other feedback, risk assessment, examination of documentation, conduct of audit, consideration of audit reports and other relevant activities in relation to the organisation.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Evidence and 'quality' evidence**

Evidence is information gathered which, when matched against the performance criteria, provides proof of competency. Evidence can take many forms and be gathered from a number of sources. Assessors often categorise evidence in different ways, for example:

- direct, indirect and supplementary sources of evidence
- evidence collected by the candidate or evidence collected by the assessor
- historical and recent evidence collected by the candidate and current evidence collected by the assessor.

Quality evidence is valid, authentic, sufficient and current evidence that enables the assessor to make the assessment judgement.

### **Evidence gathering techniques**

Evidence gathering technique means the particular technique or method used to gather different types of evidence. This may include methods or techniques such as questioning, observation, third party reports, interviews, simulations and portfolios. Also see Assessment method.

### **Evidence gathering tool**

An evidence gathering tool contains both the instrument and the instructions for gathering and interpreting evidence in an assessment process:

- instrument(s) – the specific questions or activity developed from the selected assessment method(s) to be used for the assessment (a profile of acceptable performance and the decision making rules for the assessor may also be included)

- procedures – the information/instructions given to the candidate and/or the assessor regarding conditions under which the assessment should be conducted and recorded.

Also see Assessment tool.

### **Evidence guide**

The evidence guide is part of a unit of competency. Its purpose is to guide assessment of the unit of competency in the workplace and/or a training environment. The evidence guide specifies the context of assessment, the critical aspects of evidence and the required or underpinning knowledge and skills. The evidence guide relates directly to the performance criteria and range statement defined in the unit of competency.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Evidence plan**

An evidence plan is a document developed by an assessor, often in collaboration with the candidate and the supervisor or technical expert. It includes the units of competency to be assessed, details of the type of evidence to be collected, information regarding who is to collect the evidence and the time period for doing so. Also see Assessment plan.

### **Flexible learning and assessment**

Flexible learning and assessment means an approach to vocational education and training which allows for the adoption of a range of learning strategies in a variety of learning environments to cater for differences in learning styles, learning interests and needs, and variations in learning opportunities (including online).

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Holistic/integrated assessment**

An approach to assessment that covers the clustering of multiple units/elements from relevant competency standards. This approach focuses on the assessment of a 'whole of job' role or function that draws on a number of units of competency. This assessment approach also integrates the assessment of the application of knowledge, technical skills, problem solving and demonstration of attitudes and ethics.

*Adapted from Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs)**

National and State/Territory bodies comprising representation from the industry parties responsible for the development, review and implementation of competency standards in given industries.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Internal audit**

Internal audit means audits conducted by or on behalf of the organisation itself for internal purposes.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Key competency**

Employment related general competencies that are essential for effective participation in the workplace.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Moderation**

Moderation is a process which involves assessors in discussing and reaching agreement about assessment processes and outcomes in a particular industry or industry sector. This enables assessors to develop a shared understanding of the requirements of specific Training Packages, including the relevant competency standards and assessment guidelines, the nature of evidence, how evidence is collected and the basis on which assessment decisions are made.

### **Mutual recognition**

Mutual recognition applies nationally and means:

1. The acceptance and application of the decisions of a registering body that has registered a training organisation, or a course accrediting body that has accredited a course, by another registering body or course accrediting body, without there being any further requirement for a process beyond the initial process, including:
  - a. the recognition and application by the registering body of each State or Territory of the decisions of the registering body of other States and Territories in relation to the registration of, imposition of sanctions on, including the cancellation of registration of training organisations; and
  - b. the recognition and application by the course accrediting body of each State or Territory of the decisions of the course accrediting body of other States and Territories in relation to the accreditation of courses where no relevant Training Package exists;
2. The recognition by State and Territory registering bodies of the decisions of the National Training Quality Council in endorsing Training Packages.
3. The recognition and acceptance by a Registered Training Organisation of Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by other Registered Training Organisations, enabling individuals to receive national recognition of their achievements.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Nationally recognised training**

Nationally recognised training means training and assessment, delivered by a Registered Training Organisation, which meets the requirements specified in national industry/enterprise Training Packages or accredited courses where no relevant Training Package exists.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo**

Nationally Recognised Training logo means the logo used to signify that training and assessment products and services meet the requirements agreed under the National Training Framework.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **National Training Framework**

National Training Framework means the system of vocational education and training that:

- applies nationally
- is endorsed by the ANTA Ministerial Council
- is made up of the Australian Quality Training Framework and endorsed Training Packages.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **National Training Information Service (NTIS)**

National Training Information Service (NTIS) means the National Register for recording information about Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), Training Packages and accredited courses. Information held on the NTIS is searchable and publicly accessible via the Internet. The NTIS contains comprehensive information on endorsed Training Packages which have been approved by Ministers and includes full details of competency standards; a listing of National Training Quality Council noted support materials with contact source; details of Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) accredited courses/qualifications; and contact details and scope of registration of all RTOs.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **National Training Quality Council (NTQC)**

National Training Quality Council (NTQC) means the body established by the ANTA Ministerial Council as a Committee of the ANTA Board. In relation to quality assurance arrangements in the vocational education and training system the NTQC has a role in:

- providing advice on the operation of, and any necessary change to, the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF);
- providing information and advice to State and Territory recognition authorities on the implementation of the AQTF; and
- providing to the ANTA Board, for incorporation in the Board's reports to the ANTA Ministerial Council (including the Annual National Report), information and advice on the operation of the AQTF in each State and Territory, including by providing such independent advice on State/Territory registration, audit and related processes and related Commonwealth processes as deemed necessary by the NTQC.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **New Apprenticeships**

New Apprenticeships means structured training arrangements, usually involving on- and off-the-job training, for a person employed under an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Non-compliance**

Non-compliance means failure to comply with one or more of the *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Partnerships**

Formal partnership assessment arrangements are the written agreements that are undertaken between a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and other organisations or RTOs. These arrangements enable the partners to share for mutual benefit their resources, effort, time, cost, responsibility and expertise. These arrangements are regulated by the *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations*. See also Collaborative assessment arrangements and Auspicing.

Informal partnership arrangements refer to assessors and candidates working together in the assessment process.

### **Performance criteria**

Evaluative statements which specify what is to be assessed and the required level of performance. The performance criteria specify the activities, skills, knowledge and understanding that provide evidence of competent performance for each element.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Period of registration**

Period of registration means the period for which a Registered Training Organisation is registered. The period of registration is five years (unless cancelled or suspended).

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Qualification**

Qualification means, in the vocational education and training sector, the formal certification, issued by a Registered Training Organisation under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), that a person has achieved all the requirements for a qualification as specified in an endorsed national Training Package or in an accredited course.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Quality**

Quality means the ability of a set of inherent characteristics of a product, system or process to fulfil requirements of customers and other interested parties.

*From AS/NZS ISO 9000: 2000 in the AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Range statement**

Part of a competency standard, which sets out a range of contexts in which performance can take place. The range helps the assessor to identify the specific industry or enterprise application of the unit of competency.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Reasonable adjustment**

The nature and range of adjustment to an assessment tool or assessment method which will ensure valid and reliable assessment decisions but also meet the characteristics of the person(s) being assessed.

*Adapted from Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Reassessment**

An assessment activity initiated as a result of an appeal against the outcome of a previous assessment.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Recognition process**

Recognition process is a term that covers Recognition of Prior Learning, Recognition of Current Competency and Skills Recognition. All terms refer to recognition of competencies currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. Under the Australian Quality Training Framework, competencies may be attained in a number of ways. This includes through any combination of formal or informal training and education, work experience or general life experience. In order to grant recognition of prior learning/current competency the assessor must be confident that the candidate is currently competent against the endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards or outcomes specified in Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) accredited courses. The evidence may take a variety of forms and could include certification, references from past employers, testimonials from clients and work samples. The assessor must ensure that the evidence is authentic, valid, reliable, current and sufficient.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Recognition of Current Competency**

See Recognition process.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning**

See Recognition process.

### **Records of assessment**

The information of assessment outcomes that is retained by the organisation responsible for issuing the nationally recognised Statement of Attainment or qualification.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Registration**

Registration means the process of formal approval and recognition of a training organisation, by a State or Territory registering body, in accordance with the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations and the AQTF Standards for Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Registered Training Organisation (RTO)**

Registered Training Organisation (RTO) means a training organisation registered in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework, within a defined scope of registration.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Registering body**

State or Territory registering body means the body responsible under the State or Territory vocational education and training legislation and decision making framework for all decisions relating to the administration of the registration of training organisations.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Renewal of registration**

Renewal of registration means the subsequent registration of a Registered Training Organisation following an evaluation, conducted prior to the expiry of a registration period, of a Registered Training Organisation against the requirements of the *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Reporting assessment outcomes**

The different ways in which the outcomes of assessment processes are reported to the person being assessed, employers and other appropriate personnel or stakeholders. Assessment outcomes may be reported in a variety of ways including graded, non-graded, statistical or descriptive reporting systems.

*From Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*

### **Risk management**

Risk management means the systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the tasks of identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating and monitoring risk.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Sanctions**

Sanctions means any action imposed for non-compliance with the *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, including:

- a. the imposition of specific conditions on registration (which can cover any aspect of registration including the Registered Training Organisation's scope, location or type of delivery and assessment activities);
- b. amendment of registration (including a reduction in the scope of registration);
- c. suspension of registration; and
- d. cancellation of registration.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Scope of registration**

Scope of registration means the defined scope for which a training organisation is registered that identifies the particular services and products that can be provided. A Registered Training Organisation may be registered to provide either:

- a. training delivery and assessment services and products and issue Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications and Statements of Attainment;  
or

- b. assessment services and products and issue AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

The scope of registration is further defined by AQF qualifications and/or endorsed units of competency.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Self-assessment**

Self-assessment is a process that allows candidates being assessed to collect and provide evidence on their own performances against the competency standards. Self-assessment is often used as a pre-assessment tool to help the candidate and assessor to determine what evidence is available and where the gaps may be.

### **Simulation**

Simulation is a form of evidence gathering that involves the candidate in completing or dealing with a task, activity or problem in an off-the-job situation that replicates the workplace context. Simulations vary from recreating realistic workplace situations such as in the use of flight simulators, through the creation of role plays based on workplace scenarios to the reconstruction of a business situation on a spreadsheet. In developing simulations, the emphasis is not so much on reproducing the external circumstance but on creating situations in which candidates are able to demonstrate:

- a. technical skills
- b. underpinning knowledge
- c. generic skills such as decision making and problem solving
- d. workplace practices such as effective communication.

### **Skills Recognition**

See Recognition process.

### **Statement of Attainment**

Statement of Attainment means a record of recognised learning which, although falling short of an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification, may contribute towards a qualification outcome, either as attainment of competencies within a Training Package, partial completion of a course leading to a qualification or completion of a nationally accredited short course which may accumulate towards a qualification through Recognition processes.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Strategic industry audit**

Strategic industry audit means the compliance audit of Registered Training Organisations operating in a specific industry or industry sector targeted on the basis of identified risks relating to that industry or sector.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

### **Training contract**

An agreement outlining the training and assessment which forms part of a New Apprenticeship training contract and is registered with the relevant State or Territory Training Authority.

**Training Package**

Training Package means an integrated set of nationally endorsed competency standards, assessment guidelines and Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

**Training plan**

Training plan means a program of training and assessment which is required under an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract and is registered with the relevant State or Territory Training/Recognition Authority.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

**Unit of competency**

Unit of competency means the specification of knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance expected in the workplace.

*From AQTF Standards for RTOs*

**Validation**

Validation involves reviewing, comparing and evaluating assessment processes, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same standards. Validation strategies may be internal processes with stakeholder involvement or external validations with other providers and/or stakeholders.