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Executive Summary

The National VET E-learning Strategy for 2012–2015 will play a key role in enabling the Australian training sector to take advantage of the roll-out of the National Broadband Network (NBN) to make major advances in the achievement of government training objectives. Coordinated action to develop sector-wide capability in using the new technological environment will, at the same time, stimulate innovative approaches to increasing participation in training and work, and improving the skill levels of the Australian workforce.

This strategy has been developed as a three-year program of action with a series of on-going business activities reflecting its strategic objectives. Continuous measurement of outcomes and an annual review of progress will influence approaches used from year to year to allow for on-going improvements and responses to change in the environment.

Key characteristics of the 2012 - 2015 strategy are:

- The pursuit of leverage from the roll-out of the NBN, and partnerships with industry, RTOs and the community to harness resources available through different channels.
- The promotion of broadband–enabled training progressively as the NBN roll-out unfolds.
- Research and system support for the technical and educational aspects of using broadband-enabled and emerging technologies.
- Support for practitioners to develop and share e-learning content using contemporary technologies.
- Engagement with peak industry bodies and peak support groups for disadvantaged individuals to coordinate plans for e-learning approaches.
- Sponsorship of innovative training approaches giving priority to individual participation and access, and industry-based workforce development.
- Co-investment conditions for all sponsored programs to multiply the achievement of outcomes.
- Support for learner pathways through the pursuit of a national e-portfolio-based approach to recognition of learning.
- Evaluation processes with a feedback loop into further planning, including:
  - Measurement of outcomes for learners in sponsored programs to reflect relationships with government targets.
  - Measurement of training provider impacts from e-learning including sustainability and ability to respond to need.
- Online and jurisdictional support for RTOs, industry and the community to access the available opportunities, resources and advice.
The strategy is driven by a vision and three goals supported by a number of interconnected approaches as follows:

**Vision:** A globally competitive Australian training system underpinned by world class e-learning infrastructure and capability.

**Goal 1:** Develop and utilise e-learning strategies to maximise the benefits of the national investment in broadband.

The utilisation of broadband for training will be maximised by the following approaches:

- Sponsorship of e-learning programs at NBN sites to demonstrate the benefits and encourage take-up of broadband in all jurisdictions.
- Research and system support for the educational and technical aspects of using broadband-enabled and emerging technologies.
- A broadband-enabled content services centre encouraging VET practitioners to create and share e-learning content.

**Goal 2:** Support workforce development in industry through innovative training solutions.

Industry workforce development using e-learning will be stimulated by:

- Large-scale industry-wide planning for e-learning integration.
- Regional partnerships between business and providers to deliver e-learning for the needs of local industry.
- A workforce development service providing comprehensive e-learning advice for industry and business.

**Goal 3:** Expand participation and access for individuals through targeted e-learning approaches.

Opportunities for individual participation and access will be strengthened through:

- E-learning programs in foundation skills and e-literacy for learners experiencing disadvantage, as preparation for further training and employment.
- E-learning initiatives allowing individuals with access difficulties to develop skills reflecting jurisdictional labour market needs.
- Support for the use of e-portfolios to assist learners to identify and manage their evidence of learning, and the pursuit of a national e-portfolio approach including
electronic access to qualification data, allowing seamless recognition of learning as learners move between education and training settings.

- Support for learner pathways through innovative programs leading to higher VET qualifications, skill sets and/or entry to higher education.

**Re-focused priorities under the 2012-2015 strategy**

This strategy builds on the strengths of previous national strategies while re-focusing to take advantage of the changed technological environment and directly support government targets for participation and access, and higher workforce skill levels.

The following new activities reflect the current priorities:

- **NBN E-learning Programs** will promote the development of new training options using the infrastructure of NBN pilot sites
- **Partnerships for Participation** will focus on e-learning delivery of foundation skills and e-literacy programs for disadvantaged groups
- **Access to Skills** will support improved learner access to programs based on jurisdictional labour market priorities.

The following activities, based on existing work, will have expanded roles in the new strategy:

- **New Generation Technologies for Learning** will extend the e-standards function to provide system support for broadband-enabled and other emerging technologies.
- **Learner Pathways** will accelerate the technical work required to develop a national e-portfolio approach for seamless recognition of learning and support learner pathway programs leading to higher level qualifications.
- **Industry System Change** will enable support for larger-scale industry-wide e-learning plans and programs.

There will be a change in emphasis and reduced funding priority in the following activities:

- **Broadband Content Services** will reduce the focus on centrally-funded development of e-learning content, with new developments limited to areas of market failure. A new emphasis has been adopted to assist practitioners to develop and share content using contemporary technologies with online and jurisdictional support.
- **Supporting E-learning Take-up** will maintain the flexible learning website and provide support, at a reduced level, for action in jurisdictions to promote the opportunities, support and resources produced by the strategy.
Overview and rationale

The National VET E-learning Strategy for 2012–2015 has the primary objective of developing the Australian training system's capacity to capitalise on the roll-out of the National Broadband Network (NBN). Strategically utilised, the new technological environment will provide unprecedented opportunities to extend the reach, effectiveness and customised nature of training, and significantly impact achievement of government objectives for a more inclusive and better qualified workforce. This strategy seeks to build the capability of RTOs, industry and community stakeholders to create more accessible training options and facilitate new ways of learning through technology, while stimulating new ventures in e-learning to support individual participation in training and employment, and the alignment of workforce skill levels with economic needs.

Maximising the benefits of the national investment in broadband

The major aim of the strategy is to accelerate the training system’s adoption of broadband–based training, building momentum with a coordinated approach rather than fragmented, sporadic initiatives. No jurisdiction will be disadvantaged as each will be supported to create new training options for learners, initially using the infrastructure of NBN pilot sites, and extending further as the broadband roll-out proceeds. Sustainability and transferability of outcomes will be promoted progressively across the country.

All VET providers and staff will be able to access advice on facilitating the new ways of learning made possible through broadband and other emerging technologies. The findings from research, controlled trials and practical experience from live programs will be accessible online and promoted in jurisdictions. On-going work to maintain nationally agreed technical standards will promote streamlined connectivity between online services, resources and systems, with new technological trends incorporated annually.

There will be enhanced support for RTOs and business to develop e-learning content for VET program delivery via broadband. A leading edge online content services centre will provide easy-to-use tools, templates and a publication environment to facilitate creation and sharing of content by VET personnel. National development of new content will be limited to priority areas including equity and foundation skills, and will serve as a model of educational and technical quality for other developers. The value of the previous investment in national content will be preserved through availability of the content online and updates to maintain its currency. A jurisdictional expertise base will provide local level assistance in using the content services.
Supporting workforce development in industry

A large-scale approach will be used to stimulate the adoption of e-learning for industry workforce development. Co-investment opportunities will be provided at the level of whole industries through their peak bodies. The focus will be on long-term planning and progressive roll-out of e-learning across the industry sectors involved, using e-learning champions to facilitate the process. There will also be encouragement for regional business-led initiatives through partnerships between local business and training providers to develop e-learning programs responding to local needs.

In addition, the wider industry and business community will be able to access a workforce development service providing comprehensive business-focused advice on the planning and implementation of e-learning including the integration of broadband-supported training.

Expanding participation and access for individuals

This strategy gives high priority to supporting individual participation in training and employment, acknowledging the limited financial resources of many non-participants. A significant funding commitment will be targeted to developing e-learning approaches to improve the e-literacy, foundation skills and employability of individuals experiencing disadvantage. There will be strategic engagement with the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) and other peak bodies representing relevant client groups to clarify criteria and appropriate channels for reaching the target audiences effectively. The involvement of communities and support groups will be sought with opportunities to co-invest in e-learning solutions addressing the training requirements of their clientele.

Better options for undertaking accredited training in priority skills areas will also be available to individuals with access difficulties, providing them with opportunities to improve their employment status. State and territory training authorities will be invited to set the priorities for e-learning developments based on labour market needs in their jurisdiction.

Supporting learner pathways into and across the education and training system is another key focus for the strategy. Many learners new to the VET system have problems identifying and mapping their learning to gain recognition for course entry or articulation, and can be assisted by an electronic portfolio (e-portfolio) as an access and equity tool enabling individuals to manage their learning evidence. A national e-portfolio approach will be pursued with the aim of establishing a seamless technology-based system for recognition of learning wherever acquired. This work will align with national planning for a Unique Student Identifier which allows tracking of individual learner progress.

Pathways to higher skill levels will be supported through innovative programs leading to higher level VET qualifications, recognition for higher skill sets and entry into higher education. Co-investment will be available to business, RTOs, and community organisations to conduct
pathway programs as a workforce development initiative for employees or to provide opportunities for individuals seeking to upgrade their skills.

**Enabling activities**

A number of enabling activities will assist in the implementation of the strategy, contributing to integrated planning, capacity building and dissemination of outputs. A measurement function will ensure effective collection of data to enable evaluation of the progress of all activities and inform further planning. Measuring student outcomes in relation to key government targets will be an important component of this process. Occasional commissioned research will assist with planning for strategic action.

A website will provide access to the information and resources produced as outputs of the strategy, and serve as a community hub for e-learning networks and connections. Action at jurisdictional level will encourage RTOs and other organisations to become involved in the opportunities promoted through the strategy and take advantage of the available advice, support and resources.
Table 1 provides the detail of the various elements of the strategy showing the relationship between the goals and associated business activities, the strategic objectives of each activity, the key approaches to be undertaken, the projected outcomes and the measures to be used for evaluating progress.
### Table 1: Elements of a National VET E-learning Strategy 2012 – 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business activity</th>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Measures</th>
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</table>
| 1.1 National Broadband Network (NBN) e-learning programs | 1.1.1 Conduct partnership –based e-learning programs (seeking co-investment) based in NBN pilot sites and focused on improved learner outcomes.  
1.1.2 Expand the number of programs receiving funding support for broadband-based training progressively as the NBN roll-out proceeds. | Models and strategies for broadband –based training delivery, that contribute to achieving VET goals.  
Opportunities for every jurisdiction to develop strategies for take-up of new training options provided by the NBN.  
Partnerships between regional and metropolitan providers to deliver new training solutions for learners and communities.  
Improved access and skills attainment for learners through broadband-based training programs. | Numbers of learners participating in the e-learning programs who:  
- improve their qualification status by:  
  - advancing in foundation skills levels  
  - progress towards Cert III  
  - progress towards higher VET qualifications.  
Other measures will be included for specific target groups (eg indigenous) as amplified under 3.1. Partnerships for Participation.  
Numbers of participating RTOs who sustain the use of broadband beyond the initial period of funding.  
Numbers of participating learners who agree that broadband has improved their access to training. |
### Business activity

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<tr>
<th>Business activity</th>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Measures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1 New generation technologies for learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Objective</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support the capacity of the VET system to use broadband and emerging technologies for learning, through research, standards development and advice.</td>
<td>1.2.1 Support the VET sector's use of broadband-enabled and evolving learning technologies through research, resources and advice.</td>
<td>Greater capacity of VET providers and staff to use broadband-enabled and emerging technologies (e.g., web and video conferencing, and mobile technologies).</td>
<td>Extent of usage of broadband-enabled and emerging technologies by VET providers and practitioners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.2.2 Increase VET sector capacity to facilitate new ways of learning with technology through sponsored trials of emerging technologies focusing on educational outcomes.</td>
<td>Increased VET sector knowledge of techniques for maximizing educational outcomes with new generation technologies.</td>
<td>Knowledge captured in rich case studies of the trials showing the potential of new technologies to support new ways of learning as compared with traditional methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2.3 Update the national technology standards to support new technological trends through management of the annual ratification process by jurisdictions and national agencies.</td>
<td>Technology standards agreed nationally to promote flexible, interoperable training services and resources.</td>
<td>National agreement maintained between jurisdictions and national agencies on standards for e-learning infrastructure.</td>
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<td>1.2.4 Promote interoperability of training services and resources by providing a leading source of technical standards advice to VET sector initiatives.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Extent of usage and satisfaction with the standards advisory service and its support resources.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2.5 Promote compatibility of e-learning infrastructure with relevant national VET electronic services, including those available through the Vocational Education Network (VEN).</td>
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</table>

**Outcomes** |

Greater capacity of VET providers and staff to use broadband-enabled and emerging technologies (e.g., web and video conferencing, and mobile technologies).

Increased VET sector knowledge of techniques for maximizing educational outcomes with new generation technologies.

Technology standards agreed nationally to promote flexible, interoperable training services and resources.

A technical standards advisory service including a website, tools and guides to support VET initiatives at national, jurisdictional and local level.

Compatibility of relevant VET electronic services with the technical standards for e-learning infrastructure and resources.
### Business activity

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<tr>
<th>Approaches</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Broadband content services</td>
<td>An up-to-date e-learning content services centre for use by VET practitioners for online publication and sharing of e-learning content for VET programs.</td>
<td>Numbers of users accessing the e-learning content services environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic objectives</td>
<td>Increased capacity of the VET workforce and business to create, obtain and use e-learning content, including support to develop and publish content according to VET requirements.</td>
<td>Range of content available through the e-learning content publication environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage VET practitioners to create and share e-learning content by providing a contemporary online content services centre enabled by broadband.</td>
<td>Centrally funded development of e-learning and e-assessment content to support needs unlikely to be met by market forces or when there is urgency to support critical and specialist skills.</td>
<td>Responsiveness of central content developments to priority needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage the development of high quality centrally-funded content in areas of market failure and urgent need, while maintaining the value of existing national content.</td>
<td>The value of the investment in existing national content is maintained through continuing access and currency updates.</td>
<td>Uptake of centrally developed content by providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 Following the initial development of a business case, provide a leading edge content services centre for publication of user-developed content, featuring eg Web 2.0 applications to minimize technology barriers, bandwidth-enabled “cloud computing” (^1) for managing large files and simple media creation tools and templates.</td>
<td>A jurisdictional expertise base assisting VET personnel to use content services.</td>
<td>Numbers of practitioners and RTOs supported by the jurisdictional content service advisors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2 Manage centrally-funded content development in areas of market failure including foundation skills, equity group support and urgent specialist skills.</td>
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<td>1.3.3 Maintain the value of existing nationally developed content through continuing access and updates to subject matter and technical currency.</td>
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<td>1.3.4 Provide an expert contact in each jurisdiction to assist VET personnel to use content services.</td>
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\(^1\) Cloud computing allows on-demand access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources (e.g., networks, servers, storage, applications, and services) that can be rapidly released with minimal user effort or service provider interaction.
## Goal 2: Support workforce development in industry through innovative training solutions

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</table>
| **2.1 Industry system change** | 2.1.1 Co-invest with 2-3 priority industry peak bodies annually to promote industry-wide e-learning adoption by sponsoring:  
- an industry champion to support e-learning development  
- the development of industry-wide e-learning plans addressing critical skills and specialist occupations  
- the conduct of innovative e-learning programs with learners from participating businesses. | Co-investment achieved with priority industries to facilitate industry-wide adoption of e-learning approaches to training.  
Participating industries progressively implement plans for the industry-wide adoption of e-learning to address critical skills and specialist occupation needs.  
Participating businesses benefit from improved access, reduced time loss and responsiveness to business needs, through the use e-learning for their training requirements.  
Regional industry training needs met by e-learning programs developed through business-led partnerships with RTOs.  
Participating learners gain better access to training, attainment of skills and improved employment status. | Co-investments with 2-3 industries annually achieved and sustained.  
Numbers of learners in e-learning programs conducted who:  
- improve their qualification status by:  
  - progress towards Cert III  
  - progress towards higher VET qualifications.  
- Numbers of participating businesses agreeing that e-learning methods:  
  - improved responsiveness of training to business needs.  
  - improved access to training  
  - reduced time lost through staff release for training.  
Numbers of users of the workforce development service. |
Goal 3: Expand participation and access for individuals through targeted e-learning approaches

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| 3.1 Partnerships for participation | 3.1.1 Engage peak organisations representing disadvantaged groups to establish priorities, criteria and community channels for targeting e-learning strategies for their clients. Categories of learners include:  
  - Indigenous individuals  
  - People with disability  
  - Unemployed (Job seekers)  
  - Disengaged youth.  
  3.1.2 Seek co-investment with partnerships between client support groups, community groups and education providers to conduct e-learning programs for e-literacy, foundation and pre-vocational skills.  
  3.1.3 Develop centrally funded e-learning content to support e-literacy and foundation skills for disadvantaged learners using client peak group advice (See 1.3.2) | Client support organizations inform the planning of approaches for reaching and supporting learners in key target groups.  
  E-literacy and employability skills achieved by learners through e-learning initiatives tailored to their needs and circumstances.  
  Quality e-learning content developed for target groups, informed by advice from client organisations. | Numbers of participating learners from all client categories who:  
  - advance in foundation skill levels  
  - progress to further training at a higher level  
  - gain employment after training  
  - improve their employment status after training.  
  Numbers of participating learners from key equity groups who:  
  Indigenous  
  - progress towards year 12 equivalent (Cert II)  
  - progress to training at/or above Cert III.  
  People with disability  
  - Achieve employment after training  
  Jobseekers  
  - progress towards a qualification  
  - are enrolled in a critical skill area  
  Disengaged youth  
  - 15-24 year olds who achieve progress towards Cert II or higher qualification. |
### Business activity

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<tr>
<td><strong>3.2 Access to skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.2.1 Invite each state and territory training authority to establish e-learning training priorities annually, reflecting jurisdictional and national labour market needs.</strong></td>
<td>Numbers of participating learners who:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic objective</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.2.2 Seek co-investment from RTOs to develop and conduct e-learning programs to improve access to accredited training for individuals in priority training areas.</strong></td>
<td>- improve their qualification status by:</td>
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<td><strong>3.2.5 Develop centrally funded e-learning content to support critical skills areas and specialist occupations (See 1.3.2)</strong></td>
<td>- progressing towards Cert III</td>
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<td>- progressing towards a higher qualification.</td>
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<td>State and territory training priorities are supported through e-learning.</td>
<td>- achieve improved employment outcomes, including:</td>
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<td>- promotion to more responsible positions.</td>
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<td>Learners gain better access to training, attainment of skills and improved employment status.</td>
<td>- transfer to employment in critical skills areas and specialist occupations.</td>
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<td>Improved capacity of RTOs to conduct training using e-learning.</td>
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<td>Business activity</td>
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<td><strong>3.3 Learner Pathways</strong></td>
<td>3.3.1 Sponsor exemplar projects to demonstrate the use of e-portfolios as tools to assist learners to identify and manage their learning evidence for course entry, RPL or articulation. (Co-investment will be sought with RTOs and the community sector).</td>
<td>Good practice models of e-portfolio usage as access and equity tools to motivate and support learners’ entry into training and subsequent pathways.</td>
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<td>Increased VET sector knowledge and capacity to support learner pathways through e-portfolios.</td>
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<td>A framework of national technical guidelines for an e-portfolio-based approach to presenting learning evidence, including qualification data, for course entry, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Current Competency (RCC), credit transfer, articulation and recording of skill set acquisition by learners.</td>
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<td>New opportunities for learners to gain access to pathways to higher level qualifications and skills sets.</td>
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<td>Engagement of RTOs, industry and community organisations in innovative technology-based programs to support higher level learning pathways.</td>
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**Strategic objective**

Assist learners to pursue educational pathways, through e-portfolio tools to manage their learning evidence, a framework of guidelines for a national e-portfolio approach, and e-learning programs for higher qualifications.
### Enabling business activities

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<tr>
<td><strong>4.1 Measurement, research and quality</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic objective</strong></td>
<td>Measure the impacts of e-learning activities conducted through this strategy, research priority topics to inform strategic directions and support quality e-learning practice.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.1.1 Supervise collection of both annual and longitudinal data to identify impacts on learners, providers and stakeholders of all activities undertaken through this Strategy.</td>
<td>Data available to inform assessment of impact and further planning of e-learning activities undertaken through this Strategy.</td>
<td>Data collected provides clear government priority-focused measurement of the impact of e-learning activities undertaken through this Strategy.</td>
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<td>4.1.2 Undertake commissioned research on matters of policy and practice to inform future strategic directions.</td>
<td>Capacity to research topics on policy and practice of e-learning following through on immediate priorities to support strategic action</td>
<td>Research undertaken provides timely, relevant information on e-learning related priorities for this Strategy and the VET system</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.1.3 Collaborate with the national agency responsible for quality in VET to develop and disseminate support resources for quality in e-learning and e-assessment.</td>
<td>Resource material to support the roles of the VET workforce and AQTF quality auditors in improving the quality and consistency of e-learning and e-assessment.</td>
<td>Audit reports from AQTF auditors identify improvements in the quality of e-learning and e-assessment practice.</td>
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<td>Business activity</td>
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<td>4.2 Supporting e-learning take-up</td>
<td>4.2.1 Maintain a comprehensive e-learning support website to provide: • access to all resources produced through the strategy • a platform for online events and connections between VET staff. 4.2.2 Facilitate jurisdictional action to encourage take-up of the co-investment opportunities and the resources and outputs produced this strategy by VET providers and staff.</td>
<td>A readily accessible information website for information on the outputs of this Strategy and a hub for online events and mutual support between practitioners. Jurisdictional action to facilitate RTO co-investment in supported programs and promote usage of the resources, outputs and findings of the strategy.</td>
<td>Numbers of users accessing the website  Numbers of providers co-investing with partners in e-learning approaches. Numbers of providers and professionals using the e-learning outputs and resources of the strategy</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.3 Governance and coordination</td>
<td>4.3.1 Establish governance through FLAG as a strategic group representing jurisdictions and relevant stakeholders. 4.3.2 Manage all business through a Secretariat that ensures relevant inputs, consultation and coordination between activities. 4.3.3 Facilitate planning through regular review and modification of strategies as needed. 4.3.4 Ensure accountability and appropriate reporting 4.3.5 Communicate the outcomes of this Strategy to stakeholders and the wider public.</td>
<td>Effective governance established representing jurisdictions and relevant stakeholders. Coordinated management to avoid fragmented or duplicated outputs and ensure integrated approaches between activities. Regular review and planning to ensure evolutionary development responding to new knowledge and changing contexts. Appropriate accountability and reporting of strategic outcomes. Coordinated communication of the outcomes of this Strategy to stakeholders and the wider public.</td>
<td>Governance is representative and strategically focused. Satisfaction of participants and stakeholders that the Strategy is effectively coordinated to ensure integrated outcomes. Review processes and planning are used to facilitate evolutionary change according to changed circumstances. Satisfaction of stakeholders with accountability and reporting. Stakeholders and the wider public are aware of e-learning outcomes.</td>
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For more information:

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Email: enquiries@flexiblelearning.net.au
Website: flexiblelearning.net.au