

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.

This guide was developed by:

Ratio Pty Ltd

with support from the Department of Education, Training & Youth Affairs (DETYA), the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services (VETASSESS).



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

© Commonwealth of Australia 2001

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced without prior written permission. However, permission is given to trainers and teachers to make copies by photocopying or other duplicating processes for use within their own training organisation or in a workplace where the training is being conducted. This permission does not extend to the making of copies for use outside the immediate training environment for which they are made, nor the making of copies for hire or resale to third parties. Requests and inquiries concerning other reproduction and rights should be directed in the first instance to the Director, Training Reform Section, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, GPO Box 9880, ACT 2601.

The work has been produced initially with the assistance of funding provided by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs through the Australian National Training Authority. However the views expressed in this version of the work do not necessarily represent the views of the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs or the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth does not give any warranty nor accept any liability in relation to the contents of this work.



Project management and editorial support provided by Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services (VETASSESS).



This project was managed by the Australian National Training Authority on behalf of the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

*Published on demand by Australian Training Products Ltd (ATP)
Level 25/150 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, VIC, Australia, 3000
Telephone: : + 61 3 9655 0600, Facsimile: +61 3 9639 4684, Email: sales@atpl.net.au*

Printed by Document Printing Australia, Melbourne, Australia

ATP Stockcode: 1700101R

ISBN: 0 642 25437 0

First published in July 2001

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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Chapter 1: Context	7
Australian Quality Training Framework	7
What are partnership arrangements in assessment?	8
Responsibilities of the partners	10
Table 1: Partnership arrangement models and responsibilities	10
AQTF compliance requirements	12
Formal agreement	12
Register	12
Figure 1: Sample register	13
Quality assurance	13
Experiences from the field	14

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

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:

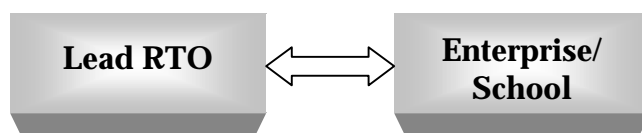
- results in a Statement of Attainment or a qualification being issued under the AQF
- is carried out on behalf of the lead RTO by the other partner/s.

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:

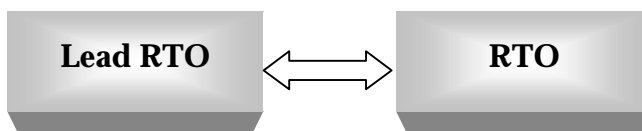
- an enterprise or school
- another RTO
- a number of RTOs and/or enterprises and/or schools.

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'.

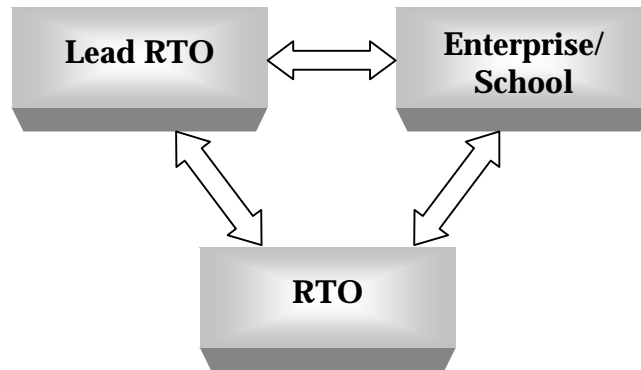
Example 1: The lead RTO enters into an agreement with an enterprise/school.



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

Responsibility for key aspects of assessment					
Model	Quality assurance	Developing assessment tools	Collecting the evidence	Making the judgement	Issuing the qualification
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>Happy Pty Ltd</p> <p><i>CEO</i> Mr Jones</p> <p><i>Contact</i> Ms Clasp</p> <p><i>Scope</i> Certificate I-II in Hospitality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuance of qualifications • Provision of Training Package • Mentors • Record of outcomes • Support, record keeping • Update of changes • New Apprenticeships rules • Information to candidates • Information to assessors 	<p>Equipment</p> <p>Assessors</p> <p>Record of files</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Assessment tools</p>	<p>Dec 2001 to Dec 2003</p>	<p>Central Records</p>	<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.