

Industry Skills Council Quality Assurance Panel Operations, Professional Development and Moderation

OVERVIEW

- The Industry Skills Council Quality Assurance Panel (the Panel) comprises panellists with expertise in one or more of the following three areas:
 - Holistic quality assurance
 - Equity expertise
 - Editorial expertise.
- The Panel was established through public invitation and became operational on 1 April 2008. Information on the operations of the Panel is provided at Attachment A. Details of appointed Panel members are available at:
http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/tpk/Industry_Skills_Council_Quality_Assurance.htm
- Panellists' on-going **currency** and **consistency** of knowledge will be complemented through a program of professional development and moderation activities.
- The program recognises that:
 - While panellists are required to have skills in their specific area of expertise, panellists will require briefing in relation to the contemporary Training Package environment
 - The Panel must comprise sufficient numbers to ensure that panellists are available when required by Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)
 - The Panel must operate as a coherent service through consistent interpretation of policy and role by each panellist
 - ISC staff with responsibility for equity, editing or quality assurance of Training Packages may attend the moderation and professional development program as part of their professional development and to assist in ensuring the transparency of Panel operations.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ... to ensure currency

- Professional development (PD) of the Panel is both a formative and on-going activity. It recognises the need for panellists' advice to reflect prevailing policy and that for most Training Packages, continuous improvement is the overriding focus. An initial PD session for all Panel members was held in Sydney on 1 May 2008.
- Longer term, PD activities will focus on ensuring panellists have a full understanding of any new or emerging policy and its implications on the Panel's scope or activities.
- While panellists are required to commit to PD as a condition of appointment, costs incurred by Panel members to participate will be minimised where possible and future meetings may involve teleconferencing/videoconferencing if the subject matter/duration permits.

MODERATION ... to ensure consistency

- Moderation of the Panel's activities ensures its members *consistently* interpret their role, and provide a consistent level of service and advice to ISCs. Moderation will also be an important mechanism in refining the overall process. It is a condition of a panellist's appointment that he or she participate in on-going moderation activities.

- Moderation meetings may be held once a critical mass of Training Package development work has started to progress under the new process. A draft structure for these initial sessions is at Attachment B. As with the PD sessions, Panel member costs to participate will be minimised where possible and teleconferencing/videoconferencing may be utilised.

- In addition to formal moderation meetings there may be ad-hoc teleconferences between panellists and the Department as issues requiring discussion and clarification arise.

Industry Skills Council Quality Assurance Panel Operations

OVERVIEW

The Industry Skills Council Quality Assurance Panel (the Panel) is an expert resource for Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) to assist in the quality assurance of Training Packages, in particular, matters relating to equity and editing.

The Panel is part of the Training Package development and endorsement processes approved by the National Quality Council (NQC) which are being progressively implemented from January 2008. The Panel is managed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (the Department) on behalf of the national vocational education and training system.

The overarching policy paper, *National Quality Council Training Package Development and Endorsement Process 2008*, outlines the new process and is supported by a revised online *Training Package Development Handbook* (available at: <http://www.tpdh.deewr.gov.au/>).

Panels which previously supported Training Package development (the Equity Evaluators, Editorial Panel and Employability Skills Panel) have been replaced by the single ISC Quality Assurance Panel.

The Panel will play an important role in providing quality assurance expertise in relation to two key aspects of Training Package development:

1. **Providing mandatory quality assurance** through a *Quality Report* on new or revised units of competency, skill sets¹, qualifications or whole Training Packages prior to submission to the NQC. *ISCs must use Panel members for this purpose.*
2. **Assisting and/or building ISCs' internal capability** and understanding across three key areas of (a) holistic quality assurance, (b) equity and (c) editing. ISCs will choose whether to access Panel members for this purpose depending on their existing in-house expertise and the ISC's business model.

The range of services provided by the Panel recognises that different business models are in place across the ISCs, and that each will utilise the Panel in accordance with its needs.

OPERATIONS

Establishment of the Panel

Membership of the Panel was determined through an open selection process advertised nationally.

Panel members have been appointed for a two-year term. All Panel members have signed a Deed of Agreement with the Department which outlines their obligations as a Panel member and a Code of Practice.

¹ Skill sets using existing units of competency are an *ISC Upgrade* and do not require NQC endorsement. Further information on *Categories of Change* is at page 25 of the *Training Package Development and Endorsement Process 2008* paper.

ISC Engagement of Panel Members

Contact details of Panel members are available on the Department's public website (http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/tpk/Industry_Skills_Council_Quality_Assurance.htm). Engagement of individual Panel members will be a decision for each ISC in accordance with its needs and 'fit' of a Panel member's skills and knowledge with the ISC's requirements. Contractual arrangements and payment for services will be between the ISC and the relevant Panel member.

Mandatory use of the Panel

An ISC *must* use a Panel member to undertake the *Quality Report* on the draft Training Package, skill sets, qualifications or units of competency being submitted to the NQC for endorsement.

Completion of an *Equity Report* and *Editorial Report* on the draft Training Package, skill sets, qualifications and units of competency may be completed by a Panel member or otherwise as arranged by the ISC.

Note: If the ISC chooses to complete an *Equity Report* or *Editorial Report* using persons external to the Panel, that person must possess capability equivalent to the skills required of Panel members and will be required to provide such evidence as part of the relevant Report.

Currency and consistency of Panel member advice

The Deed of Agreement signed by each Panel member includes an obligation to on-going professional development and moderation activities managed by the Department. This will ensure a consistent understanding of the Panel's role, its service standards, and that advice being provided to ISCs reflects prevailing policy.

Relevant ISC staff member(s) may attend the professional development and moderation activities managed by the Department. This will ensure that internal capability keeps pace with policy developments and Panel member expertise and that, irrespective of how quality assurance is undertaken, Training Packages being forwarded for endorsement consistently meet the *Training Package Quality Principles* (Attachment C).

HOLISTIC TRAINING PACKAGE QUALITY ASSURANCE

Holistic quality assurance experts on the Panel have three primary roles:

- A. **Mandatory quality assurance** – completion of a *Quality Report* for each submission being forwarded to the NQC through the evaluation of draft endorsed components against the *Training Package Quality Principles*. Panel members contracted by ISCs to undertake a *Quality Report* must not have been involved in the development and/or validation activities, including undertaking the *Equity Report* and/or *Editorial Report*, for which they are completing a *Quality Report*.
- B. **General quality assurance** – ISCs may seek quality assurance expertise at any time prior to the *Quality Report*. This is more likely where a whole Training Package is being reviewed or where there are a large number of new qualifications and units of competency added to an existing Training Package.
- C. **Capability building** – Panel members may be requested by an ISC to assist in the development of their internal quality assurance capabilities. This may involve the provision of customised in-

house professional development for ISC staff with the aim of raising their awareness of quality assurance issues and improving the quality of the draft product throughout the process. The scope of capability building required will be determined by an ISC based on their business model.

The Quality Report

Prior to the *Quality Report* being commissioned, the ISCs must ensure an *Equity Report* and an *Editorial Report* are both completed. Copies of both reports are to be provided to the Panel member undertaking the *Quality Report*.

The *Quality Report* and the ISC's commentary on how it has responded to the recommendations form part of the *Case for Endorsement* for the Training Package.

The templates for the *Quality Report*, *Editorial* and *Equity Reports* are contained in '*Document Templates – Model 2008*'.

EQUITY EXPERTISE

Equity experts on the Panel have two primary roles:

- A. **Equity quality assurance** - Working with ISCs at strategic points in the development of Training Packages which may include:
 - Identifying potential equity issues prior to the commencement of work on planned revisions or the development of new units
 - Identifying potential equity issues by examining a sample of draft units of competency, skill sets, qualifications and Training Packages
 - Completion of the *Equity Report* by analysis of draft units of competency, skill sets, qualifications and Training Packages.

- B. **Capability building** – Panel members may be requested by ISCs to assist them gain a better understanding of their responsibilities in relation to equity issues and to build their own internal equity quality assurance capabilities. This may involve the provision of customised in-house professional development for ISC staff outlining, for example, relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, latest research, current issues and particular issues/challenges facing an industry. The scope of capability building required will be determined by an ISC based on their business model.

Note: The *Training Package Quality Principles* require that a Training Package provide the level of flexibility needed to meet individual enterprise and learner needs. The online *Training Package Development Handbook* contains policy and guidelines on equity issues. ISCs may choose to contract more than one Equity Panel member to provide equity expertise across the breadth of their industry issues (for example, specialist Indigenous and disability expertise may be sought).

The focus for equity quality assurance is the content of the draft units of competency, skill sets, qualifications and Training Packages under examination. Delivery issues remain the responsibility of Registered Training Organisations providing training against endorsed Training Packages and are not the responsibility of ISCs to address or resolve.

The Equity Report

The ISC must provide a copy of the completed the *Equity Report* to the Holistic quality assurance Panel member undertaking the *Quality Report* on the draft endorsed components. An ISC must attach brief documentation or commentary on any negative findings and/or provide succinct reasons why a recommendation/s has not been fully actioned.

The templates for the *Equity Report*, *Editorial* and *Quality Reports* are contained in '*Document Templates – Model 2008*'.

EDITORIAL EXPERTISE

Editorial experts on the Panel have two primary roles:

- A. **Editorial quality assurance** – Panel members will primarily undertake an *Editorial Report* of a final draft Training Package.

- B. **Capability building** – Panel members may be requested by an ISC to assist it to develop its internal editorial capabilities. This may involve the provision of customised in-house professional development for ISC staff with the aim of raising their awareness of editorial issues and improving the editorial quality of the draft product throughout the process. Panel members may also work directly with an ISC employee/s on professional development where, for example, that person/s has relevant skills or training but limited practical experience. The scope of capability building required will be determined by an ISC based on their business model.

Note: The editorial requirements for Training Packages changed with the introduction of the Content Authoring Tool (CAT) for the National Training Information Service. These arrangements automate editorial aspects of Training Packages, requiring a less comprehensive edit than was previously the case. A full copy of the draft endorsed components (as they would appear post endorsement on the National Register and including both automated text and the text unique to the relevant Training Package) may therefore be of most benefit to the editor. To obtain a copy, the ISC must first submit draft CAT files to the National Training Information Service and then request a 'working copy'.

The online *Training Package Development Handbook* contains policy and guidelines on editorial issues.

The Editorial Report

The ISC must provide a copy of the completed the *Editorial Report* to the Holistic quality assurance Panel member undertaking the *Quality Report* on the draft endorsed components. An ISC must attach brief documentation or commentary on any negative findings and/or provide succinct reasons why a recommendation/s has not been fully actioned.

The templates for the *Editorial Report*, *Equity* and *Quality Reports* are contained in '*Document Templates – Model 2008*'.

Moderation Program (DRAFT)

Target Audience – Mandatory for all Panel members. Moderation sessions for any of the three specialisations may also be run if significant areas of inconsistency arise.

Timing – Second half of 2008. On-going, thereafter and as required.

Duration – Approximately four hours but will more accurately be determined closer to the time and as the extent of issues arising are analysed.

Location – TBC. Where appropriate, videoconferencing/teleconferencing will be utilised.

Outcome – Panellists will have a full understanding of new policy, issues of inconsistency and any revised practices or standards of service.

STRUCTURE

Update on new TP policy

- Implications for Training Package Quality Standards
- Implications for Panel operations

Issues arising from the *Quality Reports*

- Recurring issues across Training Packages requiring resolution
- Isolated problems requiring resolution/agreement
- Good practice examples

Equity Reports and findings

- Recurring issues across Training Packages requiring resolution
- ISC feedback

Editorial Reports and findings

- Recurring issues across Training Packages requiring resolution
- ISC feedback

Capability building

- Good practice and initiatives being introduced to support high quality development

ISC Quality Assurance Panel - feedback on outcomes

- Procedural efficiencies/inefficiencies
- Summary of feedback on Panel services from ISCs/the Department

Note – the moderation structure of the first sessions should be shaped by preliminary feedback gathered prior to the meetings from panellists, ISCs and the Department.

QUALITY PRINCIPLES	KEY FEATURES <i>The endorsed components of a Training Package must ...</i>	EVIDENCE <i>How do the endorsed components of a Training Package achieve this?</i>
<p><i>Ensures ...</i></p> <p>RESPONSIVENESS</p> <p><i>... to the needs of contemporary industry and its workforce</i></p>	1. Reflect contemporary work organisation and job profiles incorporating a futures orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open and inclusive consultation and validation commensurate with scope and impact is conducted Other national and international standards for skills are considered
	2. Be driven by industry's needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clever, sustainable approaches to incorporate feedback from stakeholders
	3. Respond to government broad policy initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative responses to government policy initiatives
<p><i>Enables ...</i></p> <p>RECOGNITION</p> <p><i>... of an individual's competence across industries and occupations</i></p>	4. Recognise convergence and connectivity of skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporation of cross industry units and qualifications
	5. Support movement of skills within and across organisations and sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and consistent packaging rules for qualifications Qualification framework and pathways are effectively designed Incorporation of skill sets
	6. Promote national and international portability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualification outcomes are aligned with the Australian Qualifications Framework Other national and international standards for skills are considered
	7. Reflect licensing and regulatory requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solutions to incorporate licensing and regulatory requirements are brokered
<p><i>Provides ...</i></p> <p>FLEXIBILITY</p> <p><i>... to meet individual enterprise and learner needs</i></p>	8. Meet the diversity of individual and enterprise needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and consistent packaging rules for qualifications Provide flexible qualifications that enable application in different contexts
	9. Support equitable access and progression of learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide multiple entry and exit points Pre and co-requisite units of competency are minimised Units of competency are clearly written and have consistent breadth and depth
	10. Support learner transition between education sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice is provided on implementation/pathways
<p><i>Ensures ...</i></p> <p>FUNCTIONALITY</p> <p><i>... through ease of understanding, clever design and consistency with policy and publication requirements</i></p>	11. Support implementation across a range of settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice is provided on implementation/pathways
	12. Support sound assessment practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Units of competency are clearly written and have consistent breadth and depth
	13. Not impose structural barriers to implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and consistent packaging rules for qualifications Compliance with the National Training Information System (NTIS)/National Register standard for loading and publication Compliance with Training Package policy

