

## NATIONAL QUALITY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 12 JULY 2006

## THIS EDITION:

**INTRODUCTION 1**

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has asked the National Quality Council to develop new quality arrangements for vocational and technical education - one of a number of major training reforms.

**WHY IS THIS WORK BEING UNDERTAKEN? 1**

The National Quality Council is therefore giving top priority to the development of a new quality framework with standards that provide for an essential level of quality assurance for training outcomes that must be achieved by registered training organisations.

**WHAT IS HAPPENING? 2**

As part of the project work will also be undertaken on an additional level or levels for the quality standards, which registered training organisations may use on a voluntary basis as a focus for continuous improvement and achievement of excellence.

**THE NEW QUALITY FRAMEWORK 2****IMPLEMENTATION 3**

The Department of Education, Science and Training is coordinating this project on behalf of the National Quality Council.

**WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS? 3**

This newsletter is the first in a series to be issued by the National Quality Council that will provide reports on the development of the new arrangements and include information about implementation, timelines and transition to the new quality framework. The aim is to keep stakeholders informed as the work progresses and to assist with a smooth transition to the new arrangements.

**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

For more information on the National Quality Council including:

- Official communiqué
- Terms of reference
- Charter
- Members

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**Why is this work being undertaken?**

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) has served the purpose of providing a framework for quality assurance to meet the needs of the stakeholders in vocational and technical education and registered training organisations (RTOs).

During the time the AQTF has been in place there has been an increasing awareness among stakeholders and registered training organisations that the quality arrangements, including the standards, auditing and supporting processes need to be more strongly focused on training outcomes.

Recent COAG discussions have highlighted the necessity for development and implementation of new quality arrangements that focus on outcomes. The National Quality Council has been requested to oversee the work in collaboration with representatives of the key stakeholders and RTOs.

COAG set the following timelines and key actions for the project:

- Review and amendment of the Australian Quality Training Framework standards to provide a stronger focus on quality skills outcomes - by October 2006;
- Development of an outcomes-based auditing model for registered training organisations, to support the new standards - by October 2006;
- Introduction of the new outcomes-based auditing model and standards - from 1 July 2007;
- Implementation that ensures national consistency of the revised standards by States and Territories; and
- The Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE) to provide COAG with a report on the new framework and implementation arrangements - by December 2007.

### What is happening?

The National Quality Council has established a steering committee with stakeholder representatives to oversee the work which will be undertaken through close collaboration between the Australian Government, States and Territories, industry, RTOs, industry regulators and other key parties.

The work will build on the foundation

provided by the AQTF, including recent improvements and experience gained by stakeholders working with that Framework. Work undertaken by the Department of Education, Science & Training (DEST) and the States and Territories will contribute to the development of the new quality framework, as required by the COAG resolution.

The new quality framework will provide for registration at the essential level - a requirement for all registered training organisations - and a subsequent level, or levels that provide opportunities for registered training organisations to focus, on a voluntary basis, on continuous improvement and achievement of excellence.

Key work currently underway includes:

### The new quality framework

- a) **Streamlining the AQTF Standards for RTOs** - this work is being led by State/Territory Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies on behalf of the National Quality Council, with input from auditors and registered training organisation representatives. The aim is to simplify the AQTF standards and focus on training outcomes with a reduced emphasis on administrative processes and inputs.
- b) **Identification of the key features of an outcomes-based audit model** - this work is being led by DEST in consultation with representatives of the stakeholders, on behalf of the National Quality Council, to identify the key features that should be included in the model.

- c) **Development of outcomes measures** – this work is being led by a working group of State/Territory representatives, on behalf of the National Quality Council and it will contribute to the features to be incorporated in the new quality framework.
- d) **Piloting to assist with the development of the new quality framework** – piloting is being used to develop the new framework. Thirteen RTOs are participating in the pilot, which is being conducted on a phased basis to allow for improvements in the drafting of the new framework as the piloting proceeds.

## Implementation

**Development of a strategy for transition and implementation** – a comprehensive strategy that addresses all key considerations, with particular attention to briefings and professional development to support the transition of auditors and RTOs from the present AQTf system to the new quality framework, within the timelines set by COAG.

*It is planned that representatives of all the key stakeholders and registered training organisations will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed new quality framework in early October 2006, prior to finalisation of recommendations for consideration by the Ministerial Council later this year.*

## What are the next steps?

A workshop is to be held on the 20th July to bring together the work undertaken to date.

The NQC Steering Committee will meet again on the 26th July to progress and guide further work and consider the key actions and timelines.

Trialling of possible components of a new model will continue during August and September with selected RTOs.

The National Quality Council will consider a progress report and determine any adjustments to the work program for the project at its meeting on 21 September 2006.

Future editions of this newsletter will provide updates on progress made with the project, including information about implementation, timelines and transition arrangements.

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