

Building capability and quality in VET teaching: opportunities and challenges

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This report was previously published in two parts. It was then reviewed to integrate the findings from the following three separate pieces of work: Overview of the study, Summary of stakeholder contributions and Outcomes of the literature review. This integration has made it easier for the reader to identify the implications of the three pieces of work.

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About the research

Building capability and quality in VET teaching: opportunities and challenges

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This research examines ways to enhance the quality of teaching in the vocational education and training (VET) sector in Australia. It investigates the form and content of existing teacher capability frameworks and professional standards, with the aim of identifying common features of good teaching, then analyses feedback from stakeholders on practical, systematic approaches to improving teaching quality. Consultations were held with industry leaders, peak bodies, registered training organisations (RTOs), representatives from the Australian Education Union, and regulators to obtain their views on the desirability of implementing such frameworks. Other issues explored with stakeholders relate to the registration and accreditation of VET teachers, teacher entry-level requirements, ways of attracting industry practitioners into teaching roles and the development of a capable VET workforce.

Key messages

There are key barriers to attracting and maintaining a capable VET workforce, such as the professional status of VET teachers and difficulties attracting industry professionals into teaching roles. Respondents also report difficulties in recruiting teachers with industry expertise, particularly in areas of skills shortage, among equity groups such as Indigenous Australians, and in regional and remote areas. Addressing these issues and ensuring adequate funding and coordinated systems for ongoing professional development are critical for developing and improving the quality of VET teaching.

- There are mixed views on mandatory registration, with the majority questioning its value and the additional regulatory burden, while others consider it would professionalise the sector and raise its status.
- Stakeholders are generally united on the need to implement systematic approaches to teacher preparation, mentorship support and opportunities for continuing professional development.
- Some respondents advocated a future review the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) qualification to incorporate an increased focus on pedagogy, educational theory and practice, and the use of applied training methods. However, a number of stakeholders have a limited appetite for making any immediate additional changes to the Certificate IV in TAE as the basic entry-level qualification for teachers due to their experiences with the recent qualification upgrade.
- There is strong support for using teacher capability frameworks and/or professional standards as diagnostic tools and guidelines for teacher self-evaluation and reflection, including for the planning of objectives for personal and professional development. Nonetheless, limited appetite exists for a nationally prescribed VET teacher capability framework due to the diversity of the VET sector. The preferred option would be to develop a set of core capabilities, to be locally adapted.
- Other broad strategic initiatives are proposed to address challenges identified, including the regular collection of VET workforce data, and the addition of smaller micro-credentials or skill sets in the VET teaching suite of qualifications that can be scaled-up to a full qualification beyond the entry level qualification.

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Finally, we wish to acknowledge feedback received about the report and thank those informants for their constructive comments. Hugh Guthrie and Melinda Waters helped revise it in collaboration with NCVET.

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Executive summary

This study canvassed the views of stakeholders in order to identify the key features of quality teaching in vocational education and training (VET) and how it might be improved. It also involved an environmental scan of VET capability frameworks and standards to determine key domains, roles and capabilities of VET teachers, and three case studies of pilot teacher professional development (PD) initiatives currently underway to improve the quality of teaching. The report also makes reference to key related findings in the literature.

This report uses the term ‘teacher’ to encompass all terms often used interchangeably to refer to those who deliver and/or assess training in VET including but not limited to ‘VET teacher’, ‘practitioner’, ‘trainer’, ‘educator’ ‘assessor’ and ‘lecturer’.

Improving the quality of VET teaching

The majority of stakeholders consulted for this study agree that teaching quality in VET is variable: some teachers are experts in training delivery; others have well-regarded industry expertise, while the teaching skills and/or industry expertise of others need improvement. It was reported that, while teachers are doing their best, they are challenged as ‘dual professionals’ to maintain their industry currency and to continuously improve their teaching and assessment expertise. Stakeholders also reported that teachers face significant constraints to teaching such as heavy workloads, which can include administration, compliance and other tasks; an observation supported in the literature (see for example, Guy 2020).

That the responsibility for improving quality is a shared one is also generally agreed. Registered training organisations (RTOs), governments, regulators, industry and VET practitioners (including teachers) all have a role to play, with RTOs taking a leadership role for their own institutions, and governments helping to fund it in some areas such as professional development (PD). Highly casual and precarious employment arrangements, however, are seen by stakeholders as adversely affecting the ability of the sector to recruit, develop and maintain good teachers. This finding is supported in the literature (for example Wheelahan and Moodie 2011; Australian Productivity Commission, 2011; Guthrie and Jones, 2018; Harris, 2020). There is broad agreement among stakeholders about the best approaches to improving teaching quality. Themes explored during the interviews relate to the role and efficacy of professional capability frameworks and standards for VET teachers and supporting strategies aimed at raising teaching quality. These include ways to attract industry practitioners into teaching roles, the registration and accreditation for teachers, requirements for entry into the profession and the development of the VET workforce through continuing professional development (CPD). The results of the interviews with stakeholders, and a range of proposed ways forward, are summarised below.

Introducing professional capability frameworks or standards

There is strong support among stakeholders for professional capability frameworks in VET that outline the behaviours, values, skills and knowledge of VET teachers and leaders at various stages during their careers, with such frameworks providing benchmarks against which individuals can self-evaluate. These self-evaluations can be (and are already) used in performance reviews to align the PD needs of individuals with their organisation’s strategic requirements.

Although professional standards (as distinct from capability frameworks) for teachers are considered to be worthwhile for monitoring performance and for developmental purposes (especially in the schooling sector), the majority of respondents consider them less useful in a complex and diverse context such as the VET sector.

Nonetheless, in some locally developed frameworks, there continues to be some reliance on using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as guidelines rather than prescriptions. The VET Practitioner Capability Framework, developed by Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA), is widely used by RTOs across the national VET sector but is now somewhat dated.

The measures of performance generally used to evaluate teacher capability identify the extent to which the objectives set in teacher performance and PD plans are met. They can also include student assessment results and feedback from course evaluations, although these are often used for self-reflection and continuous improvement by teachers. Performance management systems focused on staff development rather than performance evaluation are often seen as being more effective (Smith and Hawke, 2008).

Opinion is divided on the merits of having a nationally prescribed capability framework or set of professional standards for VET teachers, with supporters believing it could help to achieve national consistency, while non-supporters (the majority) consider that RTOs should develop their own by drawing on existing frameworks. Some RTOs and state-based TAFE systems have successfully done this, and a small group of educators have established a network for those who favour a national capability framework. We suggest that developing a set of core capabilities able to be locally adapted is an option that could be considered.

Registration and accreditation

Opinions are also divided on the issue of registration and accreditation for VET teachers. As previous studies have found (for example, Guthrie 2010; Wheelahan & Moodie 2011), limited support exists among stakeholders for introducing mandatory registration and/or accreditation of VET teachers, with non-supporters questioning its value, noting that compliance is already required with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (RTO Standards)¹, and with industry regulator standards in place for some vocational occupations. Supporters of mandatory registration believe its introduction would enhance the professionalism and status of VET teachers and help to attract more industry professionals into teaching roles.

The peak body for the private RTO sector, the Independent Tertiary Education Council of Australia (ITECA), has already implemented a 'Professional College of VET Practitioners', with voluntary accreditation for membership. However, other peak bodies are divided on this issue. Both supporters and non-supporters of mandatory registration raised the issue of which body would oversee such a registration system, its role and the costs of registration and renewal frequency.

After an extensive review of the quality of teaching in VET, Wheelahan & Moodie (2011) proposed forming a VET professional association that was subsequently investigated by Guthrie & Clayton (2012). While there was some support for the idea at the time, to date, no professional association for VET teachers has been formed.

¹ Version 2.2 revised by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) in 2019.

In Tasmania, VET teachers in the public system must be registered² to work at TasTAFE, but staff respondents did not support this, considering it an additional regulatory burden to the existing RTO Standards. Respondents consider that teacher registration does not drive quality, but that other factors do, for which incentives are needed. There is general ambivalence about the value of a teacher registration and accreditation system at this point.

Raising the level of qualifications for entry to VET teaching

There is a low level of support among stakeholders for changing or adding to the entry requirements to VET teaching due to the deleterious effects of the recent mandated Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) upgrade on the VET teaching workforce, with some respondents reporting that it may have contributed to teachers exiting the system. This was largely due to the additional requirements and costs of regular qualification upgrades that are considered to be an impost on providers, especially on small RTOs and those relying on volunteer teachers and teachers from equity groups.

The impost was also felt keenly by teachers; particularly those employed in casual and other non-permanent roles (Guthrie & Every 2013), who make up about half (46.5%) of the VET teaching workforce (Knight, White & Granfield 2020).

Despite this, many stakeholders agreed that the Certificate IV in TAE would in time need to be adapted to suit the diverse teaching roles in the sector and include knowledge of key pedagogical theories, principles of learning and assessment and teaching practice. The dual requirements of industry currency and quality teaching skills presents challenges for teachers, which will need to be addressed appropriately for the sector to thrive and meet rapidly changing workforce needs.

A representative from the adult literacy sector raised issues about the sector's lack of access to highly trained specialists to assist students with language, literacy and numeracy (LL&N) difficulties. Although it was felt that all VET teachers should have an understanding of LL&N issues, it was considered far more beneficial for students to learn such skills from teachers who understand how to 'unpack the learning around the complex process of reading, writing, communication and numeracy'.

The key barrier to amending current entry requirements for teachers generally relates to the challenge of attracting sufficient industry experts to the role of teacher, a challenge magnified in regional and rural areas, Indigenous communities and among volunteers.

Respondents from the stakeholder groups who want to increase the entry-level qualification for teachers suggest this should be raised to at least Diploma level. It was also suggested that VET teachers who teach the Certificate IV in TAE should themselves be qualified at one level above that, and that some leadership roles require even higher levels of qualification, such as for the teaching of high-level and specialist courses. This is already a requirement in the RTO Standards for teachers delivering the Certificate IV in TAE who must hold at least one Diploma level qualification from the TAE package or a higher-level qualification in adult education (ASQA 2019, p.70).

Attracting and developing a capable workforce

Approaches to attracting industry professionals to the VET teaching workforce suggested by stakeholders included recruitment campaigns that promote reasonable pay (for some), good working conditions, the ability to give back to industry, work-life balance, and opportunities for CPD. The use of government-

² TasTAFE teachers must be registered with the Teachers' Registration Board Tasmania. However, there is no requirement for private sector teachers to be registered.

funded scholarships, traineeships or internships, as well as collaborations with employers to identify staff with the potential interest and persistence to flourish as VET teachers, were also proposed.

There is a view that the VET sector might consider attracting tradespersons who had lost their jobs in the COVID-19 environment, although there are concerns that such industry experts (especially from higher-paying trades) might exit their training role and return to industry post-COVID-19. One VET teacher commented that more industry experts might want to become teachers if some of the administrative tasks were removed.

Ensuring the adequate resourcing of CPD opportunities to enable teachers to maintain their industry currency, update existing skills, learn new skills, and keep up with modernised and technology-enhanced teaching approaches is considered by stakeholders to be critical. Sizeable numbers regret the loss to the system of previous national, state and territory-based programs for CPD and made suggestions for similar programs to be re-established. Some existing approaches are highly regarded, for example, the VET Development Centre in Victoria and the Chisholm Institute's Educator Passport pilot (see appendix 5), in which individual PD is aligned with business and individual needs.

Mentoring and supporting teachers throughout their careers

Stakeholders are generally united on the need to implement systematic approaches to supporting teachers throughout their careers including induction, mentoring and opportunities for CPD. Their suggestions include a graduated approach to induction and career progression, which could involve internships, cadetships or traineeships. This supports Wheelahan and Moodie's (2011) recommendations for a nested model of teaching qualifications accompanied by appropriate CPD and mentoring to support new entrants as they transition from new to accomplished teacher and to educational leader if they choose to. In such programs, new teachers would transition through various stages to acquire the Certificate IV in TAE, and progressively add new skills, knowledge and experience or qualifications as they teach. Schubert (2016) also found that mentoring and peer observation were highly regarded as PD strategies. Acquiring higher level VET teaching qualifications at AQF6 level and above are also seen as valuable. The Northern Territory Government's Certificate IV in TAE40116 Traineeship Pilot (also described in appendix 5) is an example of a staged approach to initial teacher training, with accompanying CPD and support.

Having access to knowledgeable, experienced and accomplished peers or higher-qualified colleagues to give both beginning and continuing teachers advice and feedback, or to engage with them in reflective practice, was considered extremely valuable. There is also strong support for having peers observe the practice of colleagues, provided it is done in a spirit of collegiality and trust. This practice is already occurring in the Teaching under Supervision³ arrangements, in teaching practicums of VET teaching courses, and routinely in some institutions. However, using the results of peer observation for formal reviews of performance or for disciplinary purposes by line managers attracts little support.

3 The Australian Skills Quality Authority's (ASQA) Standards for Registration of RTOs 2015 require teachers and assessors without the required credentials to work under the supervision of an appropriately qualified and experienced teacher, provided they hold one of the required skill sets, have current relevant industry skills and vocational competencies to the level being delivered and/or assessed (ASQA 2019).

Moving forward

Feedback from stakeholders reinforces the need for strategic approaches to teacher support and development in VET. Time has proven there is no ‘silver bullet’ to address the ongoing challenges to teaching quality in Australia and that initiatives aimed at addressing them need to be guided, comprehensive, cohesive and sustained if they are to make a substantial difference for teachers and for teaching quality across the sector more broadly. While improved regulation is an important part of the solution, regulation alone will not fully address quality concerns. The research reveals an argument for the consideration of broad strategic initiatives, which could include:

- A set of agreed ‘core’ professional capabilities for VET teachers that can be adapted and expanded to meet local or particular needs. The quality of teaching is of national significance and needs to be addressed at the national level through shared support by State, Territory and Commonwealth governments, as well as at RTO and individual teacher level.
- A regular VET workforce data collection to support strategic initiatives.
- The addition of smaller micro-credentials or skill sets in the VET teaching suite of qualifications that can be scaled-up to a full qualification for those already holding Certificate IV and Diploma courses, especially for those above AQF 6 (Guthrie & Jones 2018).



Scope of the study

The overarching purpose of this project is to provide broad advice on how teaching in the vocational education and training (VET) sector in Australia can be improved using professional capability frameworks and standards, coupled with other strategic initiatives.

This research began before the COVID-19 pandemic hit is released in its wake. If anything, the pandemic has taught us the importance VET studies will play in a post-COVID world, which will require strong programs and capable VET teachers to help skill or reskill the Australian workforce. The Chinese word for crisis, *Weiji*, has two elements: the first refers to ‘dangerous’ or ‘precarious’ (COVID-19) and the second refers to ‘a point where things happen or change’. The challenge is to build on and incentivise a ‘new norm’ of teacher quality that COVID-19 has provided, rather than returning to ‘business as usual’.

The report examines the extensive literature on teacher quality and development and a range of capability frameworks and standards for teachers in Australia and overseas to identify the key features of quality teaching in VET and summarises the views of VET stakeholder groups on the desirability of their use in the sector. The groups included industry peak bodies, regulators, representatives of the Australian Education Union (AEU), VET leaders and practitioners, members of the Education Industry Reference Committee, and the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group (ACDEVEG)⁴.

We also canvassed stakeholder views on a range of issues relating to teaching quality. These views in the main represent those of the individuals providing information rather than their organisations. A list of individuals interviewed is provided in Appendix 1. The methodology adopted for this study is outlined in appendix 2.

To complement the project, we also examined the effectiveness of three recently implemented pilot approaches to teacher professional development (PD), which are provided in appendix 5 and discussed briefly in the body of the report.

Background

Satisfaction with teaching quality is a key precursor to satisfaction with VET overall and is a common element in continuous improvement across the Australian VET sector. In addition, there is some evidence (mostly from general school education) that links various components of student achievement with the quality of their teachers (Goe & Stickler 2008, Hattie, 2003, 2015). Corbel et al. (2014) and Smith (2019) report that the level of qualification held by VET teachers also has an influence on student achievement.

Currently, all Australian states and territories experience local variations in the quality of VET teaching and are making ongoing efforts to identify effective strategies for improvement, including participation in VET quality reviews and comparisons with various approaches adopted across the nation. One of the most recent national reviews, Strengthening Skills Expert Review of Australia’s Vocational Education and Training System by the Honourable Steven Joyce (Joyce 2019), recommended a six-point plan to improve the system, which includes strengthening quality assurance processes after hearing that teaching quality is variable across the system.

4 The insights provided by the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group (ACDEVEG) represent the formal position of the group. ACDEVEG advises the ACDE Board and represents ACDE on Vocational Education and Training (VET) matters. It helps to build and strengthen high-quality educational practices in VET teacher-education programs for VET practitioners.

Some respondents to the review suggested that greater skills in teaching and instructional design are required and some VET teachers do not have the relevant industry experience required to meet the legislated Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (RTO Standards)⁵. Joyce (2019) and a range of others (e.g. Smith 2019; Guthrie and Jones 2018; Guthrie and Every 2013) attribute the variability in VET in part to poor delivery and assessment of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE). The quality of assessment has also been a persistent issue.

There are a number of other factors impacting on the quality of teaching cited in the literature. These include: VET's perceived low status in the broader education sector (sandwiched between schools and higher education) and its poor reputation (Harris 2015; Smith 2019), the capability of teachers (Harris, 2015; Smith, 2019; Hodge, 2014) and the level and type of PD they undertake (Guthrie, 2010, Wheelahan and Moodie, 2011), the adequacy of the Certificate IV in TAE for entry-level teachers and the VET teaching profession in general (Guthrie 2010; Wheelahan and Moodie 2011; Clayton and Guthrie 2013; Smith and Yasukawa 2017; Smith 2019), the nature of employment of teachers (full-time or casual), competency-based training (Guthrie & Hodge, 2019, Hodge, 2014, Wheelahan, 2010), the complex nature of training packages (Joyce, 2019) and difficulties attracting industry professionals into teaching roles (Australian Productivity Commission, 2011).

In addition, the long and steady decline in funding for VET, particularly by states and territories (Hurley and van Dyke 2019), with its flow-on impact on available funds for teacher development at jurisdictional and provider levels, has also adversely affected the quality of teaching (Guthrie and Jones 2018; Smith 2019). This is likely to be in contrast to funding available for teacher development in schools, given the level of teacher qualifications in schools (at Degree level and above) and the attention paid to the content of university schoolteacher-training programs by governments (Smith 2019).

Many of these barriers remain of concern today, evident in the stakeholder feedback received during this study. To develop effective strategies to address them we need to better understand:

- the current quality of VET teaching
- the agreed attributes of teaching quality
- the effectiveness of approaches by RTOs and Australian governments to improve the quality of VET teaching,⁶ and
- the critical enablers of quality teaching, such as:
 - the widespread acceptance and application of models for consistently assessing teaching quality in VET
 - the collection of evaluative evidence on effective strategies for improving VET teaching, and
 - workforce planning for the sector, based on a practical understanding of what makes VET teaching an attractive (or unattractive) career option for teachers holding the required qualifications and industry currency.

5 Developed by the Australian Skills Standards Authority (ASQA) and amended in version 2.2 (ASQA 2019).

6 VET does not have a national approach to teacher PD, teaching standards, teacher registration programs as can be seen in the school system and VET systems in other countries do (Smith and Yasukawa, 2017). However, there were national programs in the past and there was a national network of individuals concerned with the delivery of PD for VET teachers (Smith 2019).



Domestic and international approaches to improving VET teaching quality

Context

What is meant by the term ‘quality’ and what does it mean when applied to VET teaching?

There are various definitions of quality, depending on the sector to which it is applied, but generally it refers to the degree to which successful outcomes are achieved against a set of desired benchmarks. Quality in VET teaching is essential for ensuring that students, employers, government, industry, stakeholders, and the broader community, can be confident that the system can deliver workers to industry – and citizens to society – with the skills, knowledge and understanding to the levels of competence required. Employers need to be able to trust the integrity of the qualifications of their staff as they can help guarantee - at least in part - that their staff hold the competencies required for the job.

However, what is considered quality in VET teaching may vary for different stakeholder groups depending on their goals when engaging with the sector (Griffin 2017). Griffin (2017) defines five major stakeholder groups: learners, industry/employers, providers, government and regulators, to which Guthrie and Clayton (2018) add politicians, policymakers and planners and regional development and community bodies. They also expand the definition of industry/employers to include peak employer and employee representative bodies and other professional bodies and associations with more specific occupational foci, as well as local employers.

It is therefore useful to consider what quality means from different stakeholder perspectives and the level at which quality is viewed (Griffin, 2017). For example, an employer might describe quality in teaching in terms of how ready a VET graduate is for work. A student may judge teaching quality in terms of their learning experience and or quickly they got a job, and an RTO might judge quality in terms of how well it achieved its stated goals and objectives (Ibid.). One definition of good quality teaching in VET, provided by Lucas and Claxton (2013, p.8), describes quality in terms of the desired outcomes for students:

1. “Skilful in a chosen area (routine expertise)”,
2. “Able to deal with the non-routine and unexpected (resourcefulness)”,
3. “Functional in different literacies - verbal, written, numerical, graphical and digital”,
4. “Craftspeople - with an aspiration for excellence and pride in a job well done”,
5. “Able to deal with clients, suppliers and customers appropriately”, and
6. “Capable of being an effective lifelong learner”.

The nature of the Australian VET teaching workforce

Before considering issues related to VET teacher quality and capability, it is important to understand the nature of VET’s teaching workforce. There have been ongoing calls over an extended period to gather more accurate VET workforce data (Dickie et al. 2004; Mlotkowski and Guthrie 2008; Australian Productivity Commission 2011; Guthrie and Jones 2018). Knight, White and Granfield (2020) present the most recent insights into the VET teaching workforce, which include data on the qualifications held by teachers.

Table 1 describes the relative numbers of teachers by RTO type, the proportion of teachers in each RTO type's workforce and the nature of their employment. It shows that the proportion of teaching and learning staff is highest in the TAFE and private provider sectors, as expected given these are the two largest. Interestingly, TAFE has the highest proportion of its total workforce devoted to 'training and assessment' (Ibid.).

In terms of employment status, permanency for teachers is relatively low in TAFE at around 39% when compared with private and community education providers (at 47 to 48%) and is very much higher in enterprise and school-based RTOs. Casual employment levels are high for TAFE (51%) and relatively high for universities, community education and private providers (between 31 and 42%). Part-time staff numbers are also high for TAFE, university, community education and private providers (ranging from around 51 to 69%).

Table 1 Key features of the Australian VET teaching workforce by provider type, employee numbers and their nature of employment⁷

RTO type	Teaching & assessment employees (no.)	Proportion total RTO workforce (%)	Employment status				
			Permanent (%)	Contract/temporary (%)	Casual or sessional (%)	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)
TAFE	26 688	58.5	38.7	10.2	51.1	38.4	61.6
University	2 353	27.0	31.5	25.8	42.7	45.8	54.2
Community Education	2 315	26.1	47.0	14.8	38.2	30.7	69.3
Private	23 113	32.0	47.9	21.2	30.9	48.6	51.4
Enterprise	2 819	14.8	88.0	6.5	5.5	88.2	11.8
School RTOs	8 446	11.7	93.0	6.2	0.8	81.7	18.3
Exempt	5 645	29.3	86.9	10.2	2.9	86.4	13.6
TOTAL	71 379	29.0	53.5	13.9	32.6	52.6	47.4

Note: Average is rounded to nearest whole number. Total % does not always add to 100.0 due to rounding of components. The proportion of the VET workforce that are trainers and assessors in a category is the aggregate total of trainers and assessors divided by the aggregate total of all employees, based on a survey administered in February 2019. The calculation assumes equal weighting across RTOs in the category. Number of trainers and assessors is headcount. Enterprise providers and School RTOs in the survey were explicitly asked to supply information only about the RTO part of their organisation. Under the National VET Data Policy (version 1) RTOs were exempt from collecting and reporting data to the National VET Provider Collection if they had a National security, border protection and policing exemption or a Delivery of emergency or safety community services exemption.

The significance of these proportions is that part-time and casual teachers often do not have access to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities at the same levels as leadership, managerial and permanent teaching staff. In part, this appears to be a funding issue, but it is also due to casual teachers being seen by these providers as more 'peripheral' than 'core' teaching staff (Harris et al. 2001) and therefore their CPD is not supported. Equally, part-time or casual VET teachers may not regard teaching as their primary work or identify with the teaching workforce, which has implications for their attitudes towards CPD (Tyler and Dymock 2017; Clayton and Guthrie 2010). This raises questions about who, precisely, is responsible for supporting and funding their ongoing development.

⁷ Drawn from Knight et al. 2020, tables 2, 4 & 5.

Knight et al. (2020) also report on the highest level of teaching qualifications held by private provider versus TAFE teachers. While similar proportions of the private and TAFE teaching staff hold the Certificate IV in TAE (mid-high 70%), private provider staff appear to have a slightly higher proportion with a Diploma-level qualification (10.6 compared with 7.2%). On the other hand, TAFE tends to have a higher proportion of staff with ‘any other higher-level qualification in Adult Education’ (11.1 compared with 4.4%).

The key message to take from this data is that the great majority of TAFE and private provider teachers hold a Certificate IV teaching qualification which raises questions about the adequacy of this level of qualification in ensuring quality teaching in VET and supporting teachers to achieve it without access to ongoing development opportunities, including higher level qualifications.

Strategies to improve teacher quality

The 2011 Australian Productivity Commission’s report on the VET workforce investigated the issues affecting workforce planning and the development and structure of the workforce in the short, medium and longer term. The Commission noted that the VET teaching workforce was comprised of dual professionals (vocational experts and teachers), which necessitated their maintaining industry experience, qualifications and accreditations, as well as a relevant teaching qualification. Hence, VET teachers generally, but not invariably, require both teaching and occupational expertise.⁸

Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) responded to the Productivity Commission’s report by commissioning a discussion paper. This paper, prepared by Precision Consultancy (2011), proposed the development of a national workforce capability framework for VET practitioners. In 2013 the VET Practitioner Capability Framework was published by IBSA, accompanied by an implementation guide describing the broad capabilities required for a range of job roles in the VET sector. In the year the Productivity Commission’s report was released, Wheelahan and Moodie (2011) suggested approaches for improving the quality of VET teaching, producing a set of practical recommendations to be implemented in a staged process. Staged approaches to teacher development have a strong historical precedent (Fleming 1978; Wheelahan and Moodie 2011; Harris 2020) with early staged approaches to initial training and ongoing PD also described in Hall et al. (1991).

However, high levels of casualisation present challenges to supporting beginning, part-time and casual teaching staff as they can have limited access to provider-supported CPD opportunities (Australian Productivity Commission 2011; Guthrie and Every 2013), particularly if they are part of a staged approach. These teachers may also be reluctant to take on PD at their own expense and in their own time. Tuck and Smith (2017) identify these factors as significant barriers to CPD for VET teachers.

More recently, Rasmussen (2016) developed a set of strategies covering areas similar to those identified by Wheelahan and Moodie (2011), which included VET teacher qualifications, professional teaching standards and/or registration, and CPD for maintaining teacher currency and competency. Rasmussen’s research led her to recommend that RTOs implement their own systems for ensuring their teachers maintain industry currency and experience. According to Toze and Tierney (2010), RTOs use a broad range of approaches to support teachers to update their industry expertise, which is a requirement in the RTO Standards (ASQA 2019).

⁸ For example, ‘occupational currency’ in a specific vocational discipline is not required of teachers offering Certificate IV in TAE and those training in, or supporting, the language, literacy and numeracy (LL&N) needs of VET learners. It would be deemed that maintaining and improving the quality of their teaching knowledge and practice in these areas also serves to maintain their ‘occupational currency’ as these specialist teachers.

The challenge for RTOs in meeting the standards is ensuring that teachers remain current with ongoing and sometimes rapid changes in regulatory requirements, technologies and work practices in industry and the workplace (Tyler & Dymock 2017) and even enhance their vocational competence. However, even employers, as Clayton et al. (2013) point out, consider it almost impossible for VET teachers to keep abreast of every change in their industry. Clayton et al. (2013) also found that the views of ASQA auditors about how industry currency might be maintained by teachers did not always align with those of industry or RTOs.

RTOs must also demonstrate to ASQA that their teachers have ‘current knowledge and skills in vocational training and learning that informs their training and assessment’ (ASQA, 2019. p.61). Harris (2015, p.14) highlights the importance to quality in the sector of VET teachers having a solid understanding of the ‘psychology and sociology of learning and curriculum design’ and how to assess ‘without defaulting to ticks and flicks on standard checklists’. His report focused on the development of pedagogical skills in VET, which are not covered by the RTO Standards, emphasising the need for VET teachers to develop both the knowledge and understanding of the content they have to teach, and the teaching skills required to do this well.

Harris (2015), Guthrie and Jones (2018), and Smith (2019) question the adequacy of the Certificate IV in TAE as a baseline qualification for developing this level of teaching expertise. They make a strong case for continuing formal and informal PD for teachers following their achievement of the Certificate IV. Clayton (2009) highlights the importance of this to new VET teachers who often find it difficult to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Work by the University of Melbourne’s L H Martin Centre found the best approaches to developing VET teacher expertise are, in order of highest ranking of 342 survey responses: ongoing and structured PD (309), mentoring (308), industry experience (294), teaching experience (289) and peer to peer support (287). Less highly rated but still significant approaches include: formal teaching qualifications and teacher observation (both 239), other formal qualifications (235) and communities of practice (227) (Schubert 2016). The least effective approaches were considered to be conferences and membership by teachers of educational associations.

Well-designed CPD, mentoring and other structured forms of PD are especially effective when they develop teacher capability in local contexts where it has immediate relevance and application. The ability for teachers (especially industry experts) to receive a thorough induction and ongoing mentoring and coaching support to form their professional identity as a VET teacher is especially valued (Schubert, 2016). In addition, effective PD programs for teachers should be,

. . . on-going, include training, practice and feedback and provide adequate time and follow-up support. Successful programs involve teachers in learning activities that are similar to those they will use with their students, and encourage the development of teachers’ learning communities (OECD, 2009).

The value of constructive feedback to teachers and their reflections on how their teaching impacts on student learning are the most critical aspects of teaching (Hattie, 2015). Callan et al. (2007), Clayton et al. (2008) and Guthrie and Clayton (2010) also emphasise the importance of institutional cultures, management and leadership and team-based approaches to the effectiveness of CPD and to teaching quality across the sector. Formal qualifications also play an important role in the process (Smith 2019) as discussed below.

Exploring the need for higher qualifications for VET teachers

Determining whether VET teachers need higher qualifications and other capabilities requires an understanding of what it is that makes a good VET teacher (Smith and Yasukawa 2017). This was one of the key questions asked of students, teachers and managers by Smith and Yasukawa in their study investigating whether a more highly qualified VET teacher workforce had the potential to address issues of quality teaching.

In their responses to the question, students and teachers agreed that a good teacher: is well organised and prepared for teaching; has a passion for their teaching topic; is objective, fair and motivating; is able to give clear explanations; can identify and address student needs; is flexible; has expertise in the topic area; and can motivate students to learn.

For managers, a good VET teacher is someone who can: ‘be trusted with project work’; progress to senior positions; complete paperwork properly; understand the ‘broader implications of his or her work’; and understand compliance systems and comply with them (Ibid.). These findings (especially in relation to teacher ability to provide clear explanations to students) can also be applied to questions about whether VET teachers should have higher qualifications, a topic of enduring interest in the sector (Corbel et al. 2014; Smith 2019).

In examining whether teachers with higher qualifications are more effective teachers, Smith (2019) reported that teachers with degrees in their discipline or in VET pedagogy were substantially more confident in their teaching and in their explanations of the various elements of courses, and teachers with degrees in VET pedagogy were better able to express ‘nuances’ in their teaching and showed more empathy for students. Teachers with higher qualifications were also reported by managers as having received better student evaluations. It is interesting to note that teachers delivering the Certificate IV in TAE are required under the RTO Standards to hold at least one Diploma level qualification from the TAE package or a higher-level qualification in adult education (ASQA 2019, p. 70).

Although these findings could be used to make a case for raising the basic qualification required for VET teachers, there seems to be little interest in doing this among stakeholders consulted for this project, even though issues with using one qualification to cover a diversity of roles have been identified (Ithaca Group 2013; IBSA 2013). This issue is explored in greater detail later in the report.

Studies on teacher evaluation processes and performance measures

In recent times, teaching capabilities have been added to concepts of teaching competence to help evaluate and raise the quality of teaching and learning across educational sectors. According to Lester (2014, p.2), the concept of capability went ‘beyond [the concept of] competence and towards [the concept] of excellence’. While capability was directed more towards ongoing development, the concept of competence was based on a point-in-time assessment (Ibid.). In his opinion, capability frameworks are best placed to focus on the generic aspects of teaching and used after teachers have completed their initial training – once they had met the professional qualification standards.

Professional standards and frameworks are concerned with making sure practitioners within an industry are competent and ‘fit to practise’ (Ibid. p.1). According to Lester, calls for teacher standards in education, and their accreditation and registration, are usually accompanied by the belief that their implementation is likely to improve the professional status of teachers, including VET teachers.

Although mandatory requirements for the registration of VET teachers are rare in Australia,⁹ the requirements for RTOs to ensure their teachers are suitably qualified are legislated and set out in the RTO Standards (ASQA, 2019). School teachers are, however, subject to mandatory registration requirements, and this includes those teachers in schools who teach VET subjects and courses. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011), and standards for teacher registration, are key reference points for the standards currently being implemented in some jurisdictions (for both schools and the VET sector).

While many studies relating to teacher performance measurement are concerned with the evaluation of teachers in schools rather than in VET, they provide some fundamental insights into systems of professional standards, capability frameworks and the features of quality teaching. Findings from an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) study on teacher evaluation approaches in a number of countries¹⁰ indicated that it is important to identify the dual purposes of evaluation – referred to as the ‘improvement and accountability functions’ – and to ensure that these are not compromised by combining both purposes in one evaluation process (OECD, 2009).

A 2017 study of the frameworks and standards for measuring the performance of teachers in Australia and in 14 other international systems¹¹ highlighted the practical issues for consideration when setting up such frameworks and standards and developing measures of performance (Clinton et al. 2017). The study also emphasised the importance of considering the impact of other factors on performance, including the instructional context, curriculum and assessment systems, class sizes, facilities and materials. Students, as Hattie (2015, p.87) writes, are often the greatest source of variance in learning due to their different motivations, purposes for learning and preferences in how they study and learn. There is, therefore, a need to gather evidence from multiple sources to ensure accuracy and fairness when measuring teacher performance (OECD, 2009).

In Australia, the challenge in implementing capability frameworks or formal professional standards for VET teachers (including registration and/or accreditation systems) is taking account of the legislated RTO Standards. While these determine the standards RTOs must meet, including the qualifications required by teachers delivering nationally recognised VET qualifications, they do not specify teaching capabilities or the need for the registration of teachers, if that is seen as desirable. Other factors to consider are the complexity of the VET sector, the diversity of roles within it, and the different patterns of employment of teachers. Another important factor, and the underlying problem for VET systems generally according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is ‘a very weak professional knowledge base involving TVET¹² pedagogy and delivery’ (Marope et al., 2015, p.115).

All of these factors make the development and application of professional standards problematic (Ithaca Group 2013) and the implementation of CPD for upgrading teacher skills more complex (Tyler & Dymock 2017). This is why, as Guthrie & Jones (2018) argue, a range of comprehensive and high-quality CPD opportunities must be accessible to both RTOs and individual teachers, and that the workplace cultures in RTOs must enable quality staff development through CPD and collaboration among teachers with adequate funding (see also Clayton et al. 2008). Simons et al. (2009) found that PD in VET is not even-

9 TasTAFE VET teachers need to be registered with the Tasmanian Teachers’ Registration Board. This is in part due to TasTAFE having been a polytechnic in the past, and having students in Years 10, 11 and 12.

10 These are used in England, Canada (Ontario), Singapore, Chile and Portugal.

11 New Zealand, England, Scotland, Germany, Austria, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, USA (including, California, Virginia, Washington, Washington, DC), Canada (Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta).

12 Technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

handed and that existing arrangements tend to best serve staff in management positions. They also noted that:

Careers in the VET sector are notable for their diversity. They are shaped by both individual and organisational concerns, as well as by the nature and structure of the different occupations that make up the sector's workforce (Ibid., p.8).

Commonalities in the architecture and content of frameworks and standards

The literature indicates that professional capability frameworks and standards are organised around a range of domains and various associated elements and measures, with the latter often expressed in statements of capability (in capability frameworks) or standards of competence (in professional standards). In their assessment of frameworks and standards, Clinton et al. (2017, p.130) identified the following dimensions of effective teaching, along with their associated measurable outcomes (in italics):

- teaching: *subject matter knowledge; instructional practice skill; pedagogical knowledge; preparation and planning; evaluation, assessment and feedback; and learning strategies,*
- teacher as a person: *communication, mind frames, psycho-social resources and attitude, cultural competency, and numeracy and literacy ready,*
- behaviour as a teacher: *adherence to a set of standards, professionalism, leadership, accreditation and credentialing,* and
- continuous learning: *skill and specialisation, career progression, subject specialisation.*

The OECD (2009) noted that Danielson's Framework for Teaching¹³ (2007, 2014) has influenced the systems used in the United Kingdom, Chile and the Kentucky (USA) Education Department. This framework covers the broad range of capabilities, attitudes and behaviours identified in the preceding dot points. It includes explicit reference to creating a respectful classroom environment, understanding student needs and being flexible and responsive.

A number of capability frameworks have been developed in Australia to reflect the skills and capabilities of VET teachers, mostly by larger TAFE institutes and state-wide TAFE systems such as TAFE Queensland (Smith, 2019). These are discussed in further detail in the following chapter, with the most commonly used framework being the 'VET Practitioner Capability Framework' developed by IBSA.

Measuring performance

The use of multiple sources of evidence to measure teacher performance is promoted as the key to the effective evaluation of teacher practice (Clinton et al. 2017; OECD 2009). Measures may include:

- observation of classroom practice (discussed later),
- assessment of teaching performance portfolios,
- interviews with teachers (including performance and development interviews), and
- teacher ratings by peers and students.

¹³ The Danielson Framework is also included in the environmental scan of frameworks and standards used in this report.

Other relevant sources of evidence (mostly observed in international systems) include:

- records of teaching performance (on standardised forms), and
- results of teacher testing used for other purposes (for example, tests that, in some countries, assess teacher knowledge and skill for entry into the profession, or access to permanent employment).

Measures such as student assessment results and course evaluation feedback can be part of the quality process, and many of the frameworks reviewed refer explicitly to using these as a basis for teacher self-reflection. These measures form part of the quality assurance system in general and are of major importance to RTOs when preparing for compliance audits by external regulators.

However, the OECD's research indicates that the use of student results for teacher evaluation is not a commonly adopted practice internationally mainly due to uncertainties associated with attributing student progress to teacher impact when there are multiple other factors impacting on the results, including students' socio-economic background (OECD 2009, p.11). The research also cautions about the need to separate the performance measures used for development and practice improvement from those for accountability purposes. Indeed, Smith and Hawke (2008, p.8) note that for RTOs, 'Performance management systems tend to be focused on staff development rather than on performance evaluation'.

Our consultations with key stakeholder groups allude to similar issues when approaches to improving teacher practice were discussed. Teachers may be reluctant to speak about their weaknesses in a process focused on accountability because of the perceived repercussions on career and wages. How RTOs use objective measures (such as student assessment or employment post-training) to help review the quality of teacher performance and develop the quality of VET teaching requires more intense investigation, since student factors unrelated to the quality of teaching are necessarily implicated.



Analysing the content of selected capability frameworks and standards

Selecting the frameworks

Based on recommendations from each Australian jurisdiction and our environmental scan of current frameworks and standards, we selected a small sample used in Australia and overseas for more detailed analysis. Some jurisdictions did not suggest frameworks for further investigation and in these instances, we identified public RTOs within those jurisdictions that had developed and were using capability frameworks for their staff.

A hierarchy of skills and knowledge

Some frameworks and standards have a graduated set of capabilities based on a ‘hierarchy of skills and knowledge’ (IBSA 2013, p.9), including at different career stages and levels of expertise and experience, while others simply identify the capabilities¹⁴. The frameworks examined for the various education sectors include:

VET sector frameworks¹⁵:

- IBSA VET Practitioner Capability Framework,
- Charles Darwin University’s VET Educator Capability Framework,
- Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework,
- TAFE New South Wales Professional Standards for Teachers,
- TAFESA VET Educator Capability Framework,
- TasTAFE Educator Capability Framework,
- North Metropolitan TAFE VET Practitioner Capability Framework and Academic Capability Framework, (ACF)(Perth)
- TAFE Queensland Educator Capability Framework, and
- Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training – England.

Schooling sector standards:

- The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Australian Professional Standards for Teachers,
- USA Career and Technical Education [VET] Standards (teachers of 11 to 18-year-olds), and
- The Danielson Framework for Teaching.

14 One of the earliest published ‘capability frameworks’ is presented in Hall, W, Hayton, G, Mageean, P & Scarfe, J. (1990). ‘National review of TAFE teacher preparation and development: stages 1A and 1B, skills and competencies’, TAFE National Centre for Research and Development, Adelaide.

15 It should also be noted that other capability frameworks have been developed in Australia but are unpublished: for example, one developed by the Queensland College of Teachers and another developed at the University of Melbourne for Victoria’s Department of Education and Training and briefly described in a keynote presentation at the 2016 AVETRA conference. The presentation, by Assoc. Prof Ruth Schubert, can be accessed here: <<https://avetra.org.au/pages/conference-archives-2016.html>>.

Higher education sector framework:

- Griffith Learning and Teaching Capabilities Framework, Griffith University.

It is worth noting that the current Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Agreement 2018 also describes the expected key duties and attributes of teachers and managers in that system, as do other TAFE industrial awards (e.g. the TAFE Queensland Educators Certified Agreement 2019, Western Australian TAFE Lecturers' Agreement 2019, Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2018 and Schedule 2 of South Australia's TAFE [Educational Staff] Interim Award).

Professional teaching capabilities

A comparison of the teacher capability frameworks and standards (appendix 3) shows that, irrespective of the organising framework used, the coverage of the key features of the teaching process is similar even though a range of terminology is used to describe each of the capabilities or standards, and various levels of detail are provided.

All of the frameworks deal in some way with the professional knowledge and practice of teaching and assessment (including planning, designing, preparing and delivering the activities required for student learning activities, resources and assessments) and cover professional values and commitment, irrespective of the sector in which the teaching occurs. All but one of the selected frameworks deal with professional engagement and collaboration (including with industry, communities and other teachers).

Capabilities such as digital literacy skills, entrepreneurship and innovation, found in some of the more recently developed frameworks reflect the increasing need for teachers to apply current technologies and innovative approaches to their teaching delivery and assessment, and to be proactive in practice-based research and seeking new student markets. This is evident in IBSA's 'VET Practitioner Capability Framework' (2013), which breaks down capabilities into four domains:

1. Teaching (theory, design, facilitation, evaluation); assessment (theory, products, processes, validation),
2. Industry collaboration (engagement, networks, vocational competence, workforce development),
3. Systems and compliance (system standards, system stakeholders, products, processes), and
4. Skill areas (leadership, ethics, cultural competence, innovation, teamwork, and collaboration, evidence-based practice and research).

The capabilities listed in the 13 frameworks are not exhaustive, and in table 2 below we provide an overview of stakeholder suggestions on aspects that such frameworks should include, some of which are already covered in the frameworks (for example, digital skills).

Table 2 Items of capability identified by stakeholder groups

Knowledge of pedagogy and subject content	<p>Knowledge of pedagogy, subject content and discipline area, including teaching practice that is research- and industry-informed</p> <p>Ability to plan, design and evaluate programs (including self-evaluation)</p> <p>Ability to design assessment tools and materials, conduct assessments (and engage students in assessment)</p> <p>Knowing how to teach, including classroom management</p> <p>Ability to communicate effectively with students, and deliver engaging presentations</p> <p>Professionalism and ethical behaviour</p> <p>Keeping up with changes in qualification requirements</p> <p>Applying principles of reasonable adjustment in assessment</p>
Professional and ethical values	Professionalism and ethical behaviour
Understanding individual student needs	Understanding and customising training to suit student needs, learning preferences and styles
Knowledge of cultural diversity and social inclusion	<p>Knowledge and understanding of different cultures</p> <p>Understanding and catering for the learning needs of diverse equity groups, including Indigenous cultures</p> <p>Knowledge of support services available, and identifying and managing services to meet student needs</p>
Dual professional issues	Understanding both the strengths and challenges of having a dual professional work role
Knowledge and application of basic and/or advanced digital skills and technologies	<p>Ability to use basic digital skills and platforms for training</p> <p>Understanding of and or skill in using advanced digital technologies, and higher-level technologies used in industry</p>
Involvement in higher-level corporate responsibilities	Opportunities to be involved in higher-level decision-making about VET policy and processes, including teaching, learning and assessment strategies

Source: Information from suggestions made by stakeholders in interviews for this study.

Developmental approaches to building capability

The majority of the capability frameworks and professional standards reviewed identify progressively more complex areas of capability, knowledge and behaviours expected of teachers at various stages of their career¹⁶. Some specifically identify a stage for early career teachers, in terms of beginning or transitioning teachers, graduates or new teachers, while for others there is no differentiation. In most cases, the frameworks also deal with the formal qualifications required for entry into the teaching profession.

The TAFE industrial awards highlighted above (and discussed below) also outline expected duties and attributes of staff at various career stages and seniority levels, including those of managers and leaders. Standards, like the Professional Standards for teachers and trainers in England, have a set of developmental stages as well as a set of transitioning stages to recognise the fact that teachers will progress through career stages at different speeds. In appendix 4 we set out for each of the frameworks the various categories applying to the different career stages of teachers.

¹⁶ As do the TAFE industrial awards cited in the text above.

Teacher capabilities and enterprise agreements

An example of how capabilities can be integrated into enterprise agreements is evident in the Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Agreement (2018), which sets out the classification descriptors, classification context level and the typical functions expected of each category level¹⁷. In addition to listing conditions of employment, it sets out the capabilities expected of staff at each category level and spells out what is expected of beginning teachers, those who are primarily involved in direct teaching and those in supervisory and leadership roles with progressively higher levels of seniority and accountability.¹⁸

The agreement specifies not only the level but also the type of qualifications required at each level and for promotional positions, upon which subsequent pay rises and progression depend. The lowest level of teacher classification in the agreement (Casual L1 and L1.1 and 1.2) is aligned with the Certificate IV in TAE (AQF 4 level) qualification and attracts the lowest pay rate. Teachers who want to progress to level 2 (Casual L2, and L2.1 to 2.3) will require a qualification upgrade, comprising at least an AQF 5 (Diploma-level) qualification. A minimum of an Advanced Diploma- or Associate Degree level qualification at AQF level 6 or above is required for classification level 3 (Casual L3 and L3.1 to 3.4) (VTA, 2018: 22). All educational manager positions (EM 1 to 3) require at least an AQF 6 qualification or above. These higher-level qualifications have varying levels of expected teaching experience and must include studies in adult learning methodology, teaching in a vocational education environment, applied research linked to the Boyer framework of scholarship (Boyer 1979),¹⁹ and 200 hours of supervised practicum (Ibid.). This can be made up of 50 hours of direct supervision (observed and evaluated by a qualified teacher or educator) and a further 150 hours of other professional practice.

However, according to one of the TAFE leaders consulted, these additional qualifications for promotion are considered to be too difficult to acquire and the reward too low for the time, effort and expense involved, since many VET teachers are casual or part-time, or are unable or unwilling to commit to extensive further studies. There is also no certainty that individuals will remain at a certain standard or be willing to take on the additional responsibilities that could be reasonably expected of someone with upgraded skills and qualifications. As a result, and in their individual view, the agreement has inadvertently reduced the morale of those teachers who hold other postgraduate qualifications (including master's degrees), which the agreement does not recognise for promotion or pay increment purposes, even though these teachers may have skills and knowledge that are equivalent.

This is only one view, however, and there can be financial rewards for teachers to undertake a higher qualification, but the requirement to upgrade from the Certificate IV to a Diploma qualification to cross a salary bar was also a feature of the previous Victorian TAFE award when some senior staff argued at the time that they obtained no additional value from staff who attained a higher qualification and their work essentially remained the same.

While Smith (2019) has argued persuasively that there is clear evidence relating the qualification held by teachers to their confidence and teaching capability, there is also a view that this relationship is

17 Other TAFE industrial awards in Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and at Charles Darwin University provide role descriptors for staff roles and duties at various levels as noted in the text above. However, in the Victorian Agreement the required qualifications and 'duties' for staff at various classification levels are most closely tied.

18 In addition to enabling access to the text of the award, the Victorian TAFE Association has also developed a range of documents to support the agreement including a teacher's guide and other useful tools and resources. These can be accessed here: <<https://www.vta.vic.edu.au/docman-sortable-list/886-tafe-teachers-guide/file>>.

19 The Boyer Framework for Scholarship can be used to identify the type of research to be conducted, the purposes for which it is being done and the measures of performance that will be used. The four types of 'scholarship' that make up the Boyer Framework are discovery, integration, application and teaching (Boyer, 1979). The teacher guide to assist with the self-assessment of their classification level suggests the purpose and measures of performance for each.

more nuanced, with those willing to take on and attain higher level teaching qualifications also having intrinsic attributes that contribute to their level of capability as a teacher. This is affirmed by Hattie (2015) who writes that, while teaching methods are important to good experiences and outcomes for students, the attributes of the teaching within these methods are likely to be more so.

What can we learn about capability frameworks and standards?

This analysis has told us that there are a range of teacher capability frameworks and standards across educational sectors in Australia and internationally that generally agree on the capabilities professional VET teachers need to deliver quality outcomes for students. While some are already in use in Australia as diagnostic tools and guides to advise teachers and their managers on capability development needed at the individual, teaching team or institutional level, there is not a nationally agreed definition of professional teaching in VET and what quality teaching looks like.

The issue for consideration is whether this matters and if there is merit in developing a set of 'core' capabilities that is adaptable and flexible enough to meet the local or particular needs of teachers, students and employers. Currently, the IBSA VET Practitioner Capability Framework and the Australian Professional Standards for Teaching have been and are performing this role, however, for VET at least, an update may be appropriate in a rapidly evolving context.



Supporting strategies to improve the quality of VET teaching – stakeholder views

In this section we examine the views of stakeholders on the application of capability frameworks and standards and a range of supporting strategies; recruitment and selection, registration and accreditation for VET teachers, the appropriate entry-level qualification for VET teachers, resourcing and funding available for PD and other approaches to building a capable teaching workforce.

Responsibility for improving the quality of VET teaching

Most stakeholders agreed that responsibility for improving the quality of VET teaching must be shared by governments, RTOs and the individuals themselves, and that the chief executive officers (CEOs) of RTOs should take the lead in driving the process for their institutions. One view given was that governments (including regulators) should have most responsibility for helping to improve quality because, if left to individuals and RTOs, comprehensive, co-ordinated and high-quality strategies may not be established.

Some consider that VET teachers should focus more on their teaching role rather than deal with policy, compliance and operational processes; however, it is understood that this may not be possible for many RTOs, where staff undertake multiple and diverse work roles. It is acknowledged that, while teachers do their best, they are at times constrained by factors beyond their control, such as undertaking tasks unrelated to their role, but which may be important to the institution and to the sector and the barriers to quality in teaching mentioned earlier.

Capability frameworks and standards

During our consultations we found that stakeholders value capability frameworks and professional standards as diagnostic tools for teachers to use to self-evaluate their knowledge, skills, behaviours and practice in preparation for professional conversations with their managers to establish PD plans. These can be (and are already) used to align the PD needs of individual teachers with their organisation's strategic requirements.

Although professional standards (as distinct from capability frameworks) are considered to be worthwhile for monitoring teacher performance and for developmental purposes (especially in the schooling sector), the majority of respondents consider them less useful in a complex and diverse context such as the VET sector. Nonetheless, there continues to be some reliance on using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as guidelines rather than prescriptions.

However, we also found limited support for a prescriptive national capability framework or set of professional standards for VET teachers²⁰, although there is strong support for them conceptually. Opinion is divided with supporters believing it could help to achieve national consistency, while non-supporters (the majority) consider that RTOs should develop their own by drawing on existing frameworks. As exemplified in the words of one educational manager, 'We have a capability framework [and] don't need a national one' (RTO, WA).

²⁰ Although a voluntary network of VET practitioners supporting the development of such a framework has been established.

The perceived benefits of a nationally agreed set of capabilities include improving consistency in the capabilities expected of all teachers nationally and avoiding the need for RTOs to develop their own frameworks (an onerous burden on small RTOs). An approach based on a set of core capabilities with additions and local adaptations may provide a way forward.

Stakeholders agreed that teacher capability or standards statements can be used to inform the development of measures at the state-wide or local levels, including in the state-wide industrial agreements that characterise the public provider TAFE, or through individual provider-based enterprise agreements. The RTOs consulted do not seem to have strict objective measures of performance attached to the frameworks which must be met by all teachers; rather, the practice is to establish a performance review cycle to be followed according to different roles, responsibilities and discipline areas.

Such processes require teachers and their business unit managers to jointly develop the objectives and position descriptions that form the basis of the performance review process. These objectives are based both on the current needs of the business unit or teaching team (linked to organisational strategic priorities) and the developmental needs of the individual teacher. The capability or standards statements can be used as triggers for self-reflection in order to identify teacher strengths and any gaps in knowledge and practice prior to performance development meetings.

A cautionary note was sounded by one stakeholder group who support the use of capability frameworks if they are aspirational and advance, rather than merely replicate the existing skills and knowledge of teachers. Otherwise, they can be a waste of time and an 'unnecessary imposition'. They also need to place sufficient attention to evaluating teacher capabilities in their own discipline or industry areas, by comparison with higher education programs.

Recruitment and selection

Our consultations reveal that, to improve the quality of VET teaching, the appropriate people must be employed: those with an interest in, and even a 'passion' for, VET teaching. They need to acquire the required entry-level qualification if they do not already hold it, and be willing to engage in continuing professional learning, maintain vocational currency and continually develop and improve their teaching capabilities. These attributes include the ability to engage with and communicate effectively with student cohorts from diverse cultural and other backgrounds and with different preferences of learning mode.

Respondents interviewed acknowledged that one of the key strengths of the VET system is that training is conducted by dual professionals, those with both teaching and industry expertise. However, some would like industry experts to self-identify primarily as teachers. Others argue that having substantial and recent industry experience is essential for an individual to be a quality VET teacher. The challenge is getting the balance right, by building on that expertise while developing both the teaching skills and essential non-teaching capabilities and maintaining industry currency. The issue of identity for VET teachers is important. Personal perceptions of self and one's work role affect the extent to which new and even continuing teachers engage with the teaching role and in appropriate CPD (Guthrie, McNaughton and Gamlin 2011).

One strategy for attracting industry experts to join the VET teaching workforce is to engage closely with industry to identify potential VET teachers, and subsequently to provide these candidates with support enabling them to acquire the required units and skills for entry into the profession and eventually complete the full Certificate IV in TAE qualification. As mentioned earlier, the initial cost of undertaking this qualification can be a distinct barrier for some potential teachers, especially those that are casual or part-time, and unless there is RTO support.

Despite the industry-driven nature of VET, there is no desire among stakeholders for industry involvement in the selection of teachers, which is considered to be the RTO's role. There is, however, some support for industry to act in an advisory capacity or be part of selection panels where relevant expertise and knowledge is held.

VET teacher registration

There is a limited appetite among stakeholders for implementing mandatory registration of VET teachers, except among a small group. The majority of stakeholders consider the benefits questionable and the cost for teachers in a heavily casualised workforce high, which could potentially result in teachers exiting the profession and industry experts being dissuaded from joining. This feedback accords with findings of Guthrie (2010) and Wheelahan and Moodie (2011) after they examined issues related to the quality of VET teaching and PD for teachers.

Which agency would oversee such a registration process is the key concern for many stakeholders, along with what the regulator's expectations might entail. A view was expressed that, if the system were to concentrate on implementing yet another set of bureaucratic requirements, even more resources would be withdrawn from those areas concerned with materially improving the quality of VET teaching. Those who support mandatory registration see that it has benefits in terms of raising the status of VET teaching, given that other professions require registration. Registration could also be an effective way of maintaining records of the PD activities undertaken, although this is required for regulatory processes at provider level under ASQA's guidelines (ASQA 2019).

VET teacher registration is already in place for TasTAFE teachers, who are required to be registered with the Tasmanian Teachers Registration Board (TTRB). However, VET teachers and executives in Tasmania cautioned against adopting a system of mandatory registration. According to the CEO of TasTAFE, the argument that registration is likely to improve the image of VET teachers appears to be without merit. The bureaucracy associated with an additional registration process, on top of teachers meeting ASQA requirements, has created barriers and inhibited the agile recruitment of qualified industry teachers. Although the TTRB process for character checks is considered worthwhile, it is felt that there are other simpler and equally effective means that are used by other TAFE institutes. As the CEO of TasTAFE noted:

The solution to quality in the VET sector is not registration. What we need is to define what quality looks like and set out a path to incentivise provider behaviour to achieve quality outcomes. Increasing red tape in a sector already highly regulated does not raise quality.

A number of the TasTAFE respondents valued teacher registration for the schooling sector but in view of the standards already existing for VET, they felt that it would add an extra burden. Another reason for the perceived lack of success of mandatory registration is that it applies only to the public sector, since Tasmanian private providers are exempt.

However, a voluntary system of accreditation is in place for the national private training sector – the ITECA College of Vocational Education and Training Professionals. Teachers, assessors and managers can apply for membership of the college and, depending on their roles, be given status as Certified Educational Professional or Certified Educational Manager (CEP and CEM respectively).

Entry-level and other VET teaching qualifications

Support for raising the bar on entry-level qualifications above the present Certificate IV in TAE is not widespread among stakeholders. However, there is common agreement that the Certificate IV in TAE

needs to be reviewed (but not immediately) so that it more successfully accommodates the diversity of roles in the sector, including for teachers in enterprise RTOs, workplaces and community organisations. It was also widely agreed that the current qualification does not prepare teachers to deliver effectively to their students and has a chequered history (Clayton 2009; Guthrie and Jones 2018; Smith 2019).

Some stakeholders highlighted the importance of increasing the rigour of the qualification or introducing other requirements that raise the professional knowledge and standing of the VET teacher.

Unfortunately, the upfront cost of completing or upgrading to the latest qualification is considered a barrier, especially for part-time or casual teachers and those from equity groups.²¹ The poor and sometimes questionable delivery of the Certificate IV in TAE by some RTOs has contributed in part to variability in teaching quality and made the recognition of it as the sole qualification for VET teachers a significant policy and regulatory failure (Guthrie and Jones 2018).

Despite the limitations of the Certificate IV in TAE qualification, there is widespread (but not universal) agreement that it remain the basic qualification for entry into VET teaching. However, it is acknowledged that some VET teachers require specialist qualifications (such as for those offering LL&N support) or higher-level credentials because of the level and complexity of the qualifications they deliver, such as those delivering the Certificate IV in TAE who need to have at least a relevant Diploma (ASQA 2019).

A staged approach to teacher development

Stakeholders strongly support a staged approach to teacher development because it enables novice teachers to learn their teaching craft as they move along their pathway to becoming an accomplished teacher and/or progress into leadership or supervisory positions. As previously mentioned, a staged approach provides novice teachers with support to progress to higher levels of teaching expertise, and to related career pathways or specialisations. The Northern Territory Government's pilot program 'Traineeship in the Certificate IV in TAE' (see appendix 5) shows that a stepped approach can be successful.²²

Other examples of staged approaches mentioned by stakeholders (and which have strong historical precedents) include the following:

- *Option 1: Up-front training for beginning teachers* – this would teach the fundamentals of teaching in the six months prior to commencing the full qualification. The program would include a short and intensive full-time course, covering the basic techniques for conducting a class. It would have the skill set for teaching under supervision²³ embedded within it, enabling beginning teachers to acquire the required knowledge and skill. They would be involved in task-based learning activities (including observations of other teachers) and be paired with a mentor, ensuring they are supported by an accomplished teacher to learn the teaching skills. At the end of six months, the beginning teachers would receive release time to undertake a TAE Diploma or higher-level qualification, earning their qualification and enabling them to work independently. Note that such qualifications may also

21 This upgrading and re-qualification process for the Certificate IV has been required on two occasions to date and was considered by providers to have diverted limited PD funding away from initiatives which may have been more valuable (Guthrie & Every 2013).

22 Early challenges with timing of the training were experienced, but the majority of trainees have been able to complete their Certificate IV in TAE programs.

23 The skill set used to teach the fundamentals of VET teaching is generally the Enterprise Trainer – Presenting skill set.

‘embed’ the Certificate IV in TAE in whole or part, enabling the beginning teachers to work independently sooner.

- *Option 2: Teaching under supervision programs* – this option adopts similar concepts to Option 1 but uses internal and external mentors to support the cadet teachers, who work under supervision until they are qualified and capable of working independently. They would be given smaller teaching loads until they become fully fledged teaching professionals. It essentially concentrates on mentoring to assist beginning teachers.
- *Option 3: A ‘master’ teaching model* – in this model teachers with a natural aptitude for teaching would help to inspire and provide support to beginning teachers (both fully qualified and yet to be fully qualified). In essence, this is another form of mentoring, noting that not all experienced teachers are capable of being good mentors.

A Certificate III qualification for teachers in industry has also been mooted in some circles, an approach that would enable industry experts to eventually upgrade to full teacher status with an RTO at a later stage, but another pathway is through the various skill sets in the present TAE training package. Such arrangements could help to allay the concerns of those who see risks in unnecessarily raising entry requirements such as reducing the pool of industry experts willing to join the VET teaching profession.

This could further exacerbate current VET teacher shortages, particularly in regional and remote regions and among equity groups, including health workers and artists in Indigenous communities²⁴. Other suggestions for diversifying the Certificate IV in TAE qualification to cater for specialisations and the needs of VET practitioners in different roles included the following options:

- direct teaching and assessing,
- teaching only,
- assessing only,
- compliance and quality assurance, and
- management and leadership.

Funding and resourcing professional development

Stakeholders unanimously agree that VET teachers ought to be supported to undertake PD throughout their teaching careers. They also agree on the need for systematic approaches to teacher preparation, mentoring and CPD, including strengthening the formal requirements for teachers to engage in PD, and setting PD objectives in individual performance review development plans. There is also strong support for implementing or further expanding programs to enable VET teachers to maintain their industry currency and update both their vocational and pedagogical skills. Finding the right balance here is one of the major challenges for the sector (Guthrie, 2010).

²⁴ On the other hand, and in TAFE in particular, this may limit the salaries and hourly rates that can be offered if higher level qualifications are not held by its highly casualised teaching workforce (see table 1, page 15).

Stakeholders also universally support the need to have adequate time and funding allocated for PD activities. Suggestions were made for such funding to apply to opportunities for teachers to:

- attend conferences where they can hear and share learnings about policy and practice and to share information with colleagues on their return, and
- collaborate with colleagues in professional learning groups or communities of practice to share information and expertise on new methodologies, teaching and assessment tools and resources, and various student issues.

However, evidence from Schubert's (2016) keynote conference presentation suggests that other approaches may be more effective.

Stakeholder consensus that adequate funds and resources for PD for teachers is of utmost importance follows the decline in overall VET funding, particularly at state levels (Hurley and van Dyke 2019) and also specifically for CPD (Guthrie and Jones 2018; Smith, 2019). Our consultations reveal a strong desire for the return of national PD programs (similar to Reframing the Future and the National VET E-Learning Strategy), which bring teachers together to share learnings about VET policy, teaching and assessment and online learning; the latter being particularly relevant in the COVID-19 context.

The use of peer observations and mentoring for reflections on performance

Our study found that the use of peer observation and mentoring of teacher practice to help teachers recognise their strengths and identify areas for development is strongly supported by participants, even though there is a view that some teachers may feel threatened by the concept. Such practices are not new and are already common practice in some institutions – through teaching course practicums and programs for teachers working under supervision, informally in team-teaching environments and where teachers share common spaces. Applicants seeking promotion positions in some places also need to be observed by peers. There are, however, no references to the need for peer observation or mentoring in the RTO Standards (ASQA, 2019), but there are in a number of the TAFE teaching awards we have cited.

A culture of collegiality and trust is essential for peer observation or mentoring to be successful: teachers being observed or mentored need to feel comfortable about reflecting on their practice and addressing areas for development while maximising their strengths. The use of peer observation for the purposes of performance review is not supported. Teachers can also learn from their observations of others, in particular from accomplished teachers who are effective presenters and communicators.

One of the critical issues is the development of skills in peer observation and mentoring so that that the process is as effective as possible as well as the observing mentors having the time release necessary to provide the necessary support to their mentees (Francisco, 2007). They may also need training to undertake this role.

Attracting and building a capable workforce

Stakeholders offered the following suggestions on how to attract and build a capable VET workforce:

- Removing the burden of heavy workloads, including the requirement to address multiple administrative duties, time-consuming compliance documentation (Guy 2020), and the cost and effort of upgrading the Certificate IV in TAE qualification (Guthrie & Every 2013),
- Recognising that a strength of the VET system is that VET teachers are dual professionals (that is, both an industry expert and a teacher). This can involve establishing support strategies to help industry experts become accomplished teachers and assist experienced teachers to maintain industry

currency. Developing and maintaining close relationships with employers to identify industry experts with the potential and willingness to become VET teachers is a starting point. However, a particular challenge is attracting industry experts from high paying occupations to teaching roles, which may be lower paid,

- Promoting the positive aspects of VET teaching, including the relatively good employment conditions, work-life balance and higher level of pay for those coming from industries and occupations where wages are much lower. Offering salary-sacrificing incentives for teachers to upgrade their qualifications (such as to the Diploma of VET or higher-level qualifications) and providing them with study leave to do so may also be attractive incentives, and
- Establishing a range of career path options, including specialisations, to support teachers who wish to continue teaching, or move into supervisory, mentoring or leadership positions. This supports Simons et al. (2009) view that CPD should support all VET staff to enhance their career(s) by attaining the type and quality of work and working life they want. However, there are problems with this approach, particularly when job or role-specific training with ‘immediate and direct benefit to the current employer’ is needed and becomes ‘overly focused’ on gap training and maintaining the status quo at the expense of more innovative and flexible approaches (Ibid., p.10).

Case studies of teacher professional development

The case studies analysed for this study (and provided in appendix 5) describe examples of provider - and state and territory-based pilot PD programs for VET teachers and include:

1. The Professional Educator College Pilot (Chisholm Institute, Victoria): a government funded program conducted in six TAFE institutes in Victoria, including Chisholm as the lead institute that is aimed at developing teaching excellence. Systems are in place to support teachers to plan and undertake PD in line with the ‘Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework’ and to track their progress through an online app. As they progress, teachers are allocated PD points which count towards an ‘Educator Passport’.
2. TAE40116 Traineeship Pilot (Charles Darwin University, Northern Territory). This is also a government-funded project targeting new VET teachers in a traineeship arrangement with an RTO. Potential teachers sign up with an RTO (maximum of two per RTOs) after they complete the Enterprise Trainer – skill set. This enables them to commence teaching under supervision and complete the Certificate IV in TAE.
3. Regional Development of VET Teaching Capability Pilot (TasTAFE, Tasmania); a pilot program that is part of the Tasmanian Government’s Workforce Development Program which aims to build VET teaching capacity for industries of regional priority on the West Coast of Tasmania. Delivered through a partnership between West Coast Council and TASTAFE, this program aims to attract industry professionals into VET teaching in areas of skill need and support them to achieve the Certificate IV in TAE through a blended learning approach.

At the time of consultation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first two cases had completed their first trials, and the third had undertaken initial recruitment and program design.

The three case studies are informative because they incorporate stakeholder ideas to improve the quality of teaching. For example:

- the first two cases are based on a localised teacher capability framework which provides a roadmap for teachers and their managers to plan PD and assess progress. They also provide a common language for describing teaching practice (Denning, 2015) and a vision of what quality teaching looks like

- the second case demonstrates a staged model of learning where teachers learn on-the-job with the support of mentors, and
- the third case demonstrates approaches to attract industry professionals into VET teaching, also with ongoing mentoring support.

While some are still in the pilot stage at the time of writing, all three cases demonstrate how localised opportunities for PD at RTO level can be effective when adequate government funding is available. Notably, they also adopt an applied, work-based learning model where teachers develop knowledge and capabilities on-the-job. This enables them to apply theoretical aspects of teaching in practice and learn through self-reflection and feedback from others.



Moving forward: what can we learn about improving the quality of VET teaching?

The views of VET stakeholders reported in this study affirm a number of the factors that facilitate quality teaching in VET and contribute to raising overall quality across the sector. Their concerns are mostly centred on teacher qualifications, induction and ongoing support programs, investment in CPD and employment and the cultural conditions within RTOs. When these factors are not optimal, or not present at all, they can inhibit teaching quality and adversely affect the sector's performance. None of these factors are new. They have been issues of concern in the sector for many years (Clayton and Guthrie, 2013) and, as this study shows, remain front and foremost in stakeholders' minds.

Summarising the factors that inhibit and enable teaching quality

The main factors inhibiting the quality of teaching in VET include: the status of VET and its flow-on implications for the status of VET teachers, the funding available to support teacher development (including to back-fill teachers undertaking PD), participation by part-time and casual teachers in CPD and other learning opportunities, and difficulties attracting industry professionals into teaching roles. We also heard that heavy workloads for VET teachers reduce time for them to reflect on and evaluate the impact of their teaching on student learning. They also reduce the available time for maintaining industry currency.

Factors that enable and facilitate teaching quality include:

- A shared responsibility for improving the quality of VET teaching by governments, RTOs and teachers, with CEOs of RTOs taking the lead to drive quality improvement processes in their institutions.
- Providing centralised, well-funded CPD systems for VET teachers at state/territory and national levels. It is clear from stakeholder feedback and the case studies that centralised PD systems are highly regarded and need to accommodate diversity in industry specialisations, teaching contexts and student groups. Enabling factors of successful PD systems include:
 - staged approaches to teacher development, including qualifications,
 - allocating enough time for teachers to engage in CPD, professional inquiry, the evaluation of teaching and industry currency,
 - broad access to PD for teachers, especially those in regional areas and in casual and part-time roles who may find it difficult to access face-to-face sessions (online alternatives),
 - mentoring support by experienced VET teachers, who have appropriate training,
 - peer observation and teaching practicum activities, with appropriate PD for prospective observers and guidelines to assist observational and feedback processes,
 - communities of Practice focused on particular teaching, assessment and learner support issues and industry disciplines,
 - programs closely linked to industry specialisations to support teachers to develop teaching approaches appropriate to learner needs in an industry sector, and
 - applied, work-based models of learning.

- A strong focus and commitment to staff development by managers and leaders of RTO, and
- Funding models that allow sufficient resources for RTOs to invest in teacher CPD, including in a comprehensive range of teacher support services.

Finally, we suggest that the higher education sector be encouraged to re-enter the VET teacher development market using blended delivery approaches and a focus on smaller micro-credentials or skill sets that can be scaled-up to a teaching qualification for post-initial qualifications (Guthrie & Jones 2018). Smaller units of learning for teachers seeking higher qualifications (above the Certificate IV and Diploma courses) could make them more attractive to both RTOs and teachers and support a staged approach to teacher development. This may mean that universities initially need to work collectively, given the loss of VET teaching capacity and expertise over recent years (Guthrie & Every 2013). Alternatively, the arrangement could involve partnerships between VET and higher education institutions. We also suggest that micro-credentials or skill sets be investigated further to determine their effectiveness as a scaled pathway to a higher teaching qualification post the achievement of initial qualifications.

Like the stakeholders we interviewed, we are mixed on the issue of teacher registration, but on balance feel that it may not be warranted at this point.



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Appendix 1: List of participating stakeholders

The following stakeholders were consulted for this study:

- CEOs of: the VET Development Centre (VDC), TAFE Directors Australia (TDA), Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA), and the then President of the Victorian TAFE Association (VTA),
- Teachers, senior teachers, educational managers and senior executives from RTOs from different jurisdictions, and members of the Victorian TAFE Association's TAFE Leaders Network,
- Members of the Education Industry Reference Committee of the Australian Industry Skills Commission,
- Members and officers of the Australian Education Union (AEU) in Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Tasmania,
- Officers from two responding regulators (Australian Skills Quality Authority and the Western Australian Training and Accreditation Council), and
- Members of the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group (ACDEVEG).

Appendix 2: Methodology

To develop a better understanding of the factors impacting on the quality of teaching in VET, this study set out to address the following research questions:

1. Are there agreed attributes of VET teaching quality in Australia?
 - a. What is the extent of agreement about the current measures and their development?
 - b. How can the quality of VET teaching be measured against an agreed (capability) framework?
2. What strategies are effective to improve the quality of VET teaching?
 - a. Are these strategies sufficient to attract and develop a capable VET teaching workforce? If not, what supporting strategies are required to address the barriers to improving the quality of VET teaching?
3. Who is, or should be, responsible for implementing those strategies?

The methodology involved a literature review, an environmental scan of current teaching capability frameworks and standards in VET, schools and higher education in Australia and internationally, a series of interviews with key stakeholders to canvass their views on a range of topics relating to quality teaching and three pilot case studies of VET teacher development. The interview topics included:

- issues and concerns about the quality of VET teaching,
- strategies and support mechanisms for improving quality in VET teaching,
- responsibility for the quality of VET teaching,
- registration and accreditation for VET teachers,
- the risks and benefits of increasing entry requirements,
- the role of industry in recruitment and selection,
- the use of peer observations to improve teacher practice,
- the merits and challenges of implementing frameworks and standards, and
- barriers and facilitators to attracting and developing a capable workforce.

Data collected from the environmental scan was obtained using two search engines, GOOGLE (advanced search) and VOCEDplus (expert search) to identify, analyse and compare frameworks and standards and the capabilities they describe for teachers in a range of educational contexts.

Qualitative data were obtained through the interviews and analysed to identify general themes, trends and issues pertaining to the topics and the interventions and initiatives that might effectively address variability in the quality of teaching.

Appendix 3

Table 3 Key features of frameworks and standards: common elements drawn from the key headings of the capability frameworks examined

	Professional knowledge and practice	Engagement and collaboration	Quality processes and compliance	Creating inclusive and safe learning environment	Digital literacy	Continuous professional development	Entrepreneurship and innovation	General skills	Professional values
Australian Professional Standards for Teaching	Professional knowledge and professional practice	Professional engagement				Professional learning, vocational competency			
TAFENSW Professional Standards for Teachers	Professional knowledge and professional practice knowledge	Professional engagement							
Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA)	Teaching and assessment	Industry and community collaboration	Systems and compliance					General skills and behaviours	Ethics
Griffith University Learning and Teaching Capabilities Framework	Understand knowledge and design learning and assessment resources	Contribute to teaching teams	Policies and procedures	Creating and facilitating a culture for learning and a respectful and safe environment for student learning	Optimising digital technologies	Reflection, evaluation and scholarly inquiry			Values and respectful relationships
Danielson's Framework for Teaching	Planning, knowledge and instruction		Compliance and responsibilities	Context classroom environment		Professional learning and engaging with others, reflective practice			
TAFESA VET Educator Capability Framework	Teaching and assessment validation	Industry and community engagement	Quality and compliance		Digital technologies			General skills and behaviours	
TasTAFE Educator Capability Framework	Teaching, design and facilitate valid and reliable assessments	Industry and community engagement		Inclusive student experience conducive to learning	Digital literacy	Leadership and learning pathways			
North Metropolitan TAFE VET Practitioner Capability Framework	Teaching and assessment	Industry and community engagement, industry competence	Systems and compliance					General skills and behaviours	Values
Charles Darwin University VET Educator Capability Framework	Learn, teach, assess	Industry and community engagement	Quality assurance and continuous improvement				Entrepreneurship and innovation		
Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training in England	Knowledge and evidence-based practice	Knowledge	Evidence-based practice	Promote inclusive, safe, positive relationships		Professional learning, motivate learners			Professional values and attributes
USA Career and Technical Education (VET) Standards for Teachers (ages 11–18)	Knowledge and design, assessment	Learning communities		Diversity, and learning environments		Leadership and reflective practice			
TAFE Qld Educator Capability Framework	Learning, teaching and assessment	Engagement	Quality and compliance	Inclusive practice	Technology for learning	Leadership	Innovation		Core values
Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework	Design professional practices and assessment	Engagement and feedback	Continuous improvement	Supportive environment for different delivery modes		Continuing professional development and lifelong learning			

Note: The frameworks and standards are colour coded: ■ grey for those pertaining to VET, ■ red for universities and ■ blue for schools.

Appendix 4

Table 4 Categories or Levels of teacher roles drawn from the capability frameworks and standards examined in this study

	Initial stages	Proficient stages	Advanced stages	Leadership and management stages	
Australian Professional Standards for Teaching	Graduate	Proficient teachers	Highly accomplished teachers	Lead teachers	
TAFENSW Professional Standards for Teachers	Transitioning	Proficient teachers	Highly accomplished teachers	Lead teachers	
Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) VET Practitioner Capability Framework	First-level practitioner	Second-level practitioner	Third-level practitioner		
Griffith University Learning and Teaching Capabilities Framework	Educator	Course convenor	Program director		
Danielson's Framework for Teaching	Non-tenured teachers	Tenured teachers			
TAFESA VET Educator Capability Framework	New lecturer	Lecturer	Accomplished lecturer	Senior lecturer	Principal lecturer
TasTAFE Educator Capability Framework	Beginner	Proficient	Advanced		
North Metropolitan TAFE VET Practitioner Capability Framework	Lecturer	Advanced skill lecturer – 1	Advanced skills lecturer – 2	Principal lecturer	
Charles Darwin University VET Educator Capability Framework	Industry expert/educator	Advanced educator	Educational manager	Educational leader	
Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training in England	The developing teacher/trainer	The professional teacher/trainer	The advanced teacher/trainer		
USA Career and Technical Education (VET) Standards for Teachers (ages 11–18)	New teachers	Accomplished teachers			
TAFE Qld Educator Capability Framework	Transitioning	Proficient	Highly accomplished teachers	Leading	

Note: The frameworks and standards are colour coded: ■ grey for those pertaining to VET, ■ red for universities and ■ blue for schools.

Appendix 5: VET teacher development - three case studies

1. The Professional Educator College Pilot (Victoria)

This pilot was led by Chisholm Institute, funded by the Victorian Government and implemented in conjunction with five other TAFE Institutes: Bendigo-Kangan Institute, Federation Training, GOTAFE, South West TAFE and Sunraysia TAFE. A project manager from Chisholm led the pilot, which was implemented in the other TAFE institutes by local project officers.

The aim of the pilot was to implement the Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework, along with an Educator Passport. The Educator Passport is an online application, provided by Chisholm TAFE, which enabled its teachers to assess their PD needs, register for PD programs and track their progress. Teachers could benchmark themselves against the capabilities in the Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework. Supervisors also undertook a similar exercise in rating the teachers, but their focus was more on departmental needs. A joint discussion between teachers and their supervisors was then held to identify relevant PD areas for teachers to undertake. The online app (accessible on mobile phones) also allowed the capture of real-time data to inform ongoing planning and action.

Chisholm teachers were allocated points when they participated in PD, and these points counted towards the achievement of the Educator Passport. When they completed the required number of points, teachers were issued with a business card confirming they had achieved their 12-month passport.

Although the app was the property of Chisholm, it was made available to the other TAFE institutes in the pilot, with Chisholm providing technical assistance. The other institutes were responsible for their communication strategies, using the profiling tool, conversations between teachers and their supervisors and registering for professional development activities. Chisholm ran PD sessions, using webinars for regional TAFEs.

Practical learnings

The project manager described the implementation of the pilot and the collaboration between the five institutes as 'amazingly successful'. It had achieved the necessary support and participation required to make it a success, and government funding had enabled the employment of project officers to run the program in the different institutes. The work of these project officers was a key factor in the pilot's success.

Some challenges in demonstrating a sustainable change in uptake and practice were identified, mainly because the pilot had commenced between December and January, when many VET teachers were on leave. It was also difficult to prove in a six-month pilot that teachers' capabilities had increased or that they had embedded learnings into practice. Nevertheless, it was perceived to have been a start: 'We may not do things exactly right, but we are on track'. Uptake had been strong, and all five institutes wanted to continue with the approach.

At the time of consultation, Chisholm was negotiating a *reduced service model*, through to December 2019, with the five TAFE institutes who had taken part in the pilot, whereby the institutes would need to invest in their own facilitators. Issues of financial sustainability past this date may compel Chisholm to charge other TAFE institutes a fee to use the app, mainly to support continuous improvement, including app development, expansion of app capability, and maintenance of up-to-date resources.

Findings from the formal evaluation

The evaluation of the pilot in 2019 was conducted by independent evaluators (Deschepper Consulting & DESTE Consulting Services 2019), with information collated from a variety of sources including:

- feedback from project officers, and educators across participating institutes
- databases of participation.

The evaluation highlights the critical role played by project officers in the institutes in helping to build and maintain the visibility of teachers, as well as encourage and raise their participation. The evaluation also points to the success of the project in terms of uptake by educators and the smooth operation of the app technology. The evaluation also noted that the impact on educator practice needs to be assessed over a longer period. The evaluators were, however, encouraged by the gradual embedding of this practice into business-as-usual approaches at Chisholm.

In terms of the practical implementation of the framework, the evaluation reported that some problems that had been encountered, such as:

- Some teachers were hesitant about using their own phones for downloading the app (for personal reasons, but also for reasons of digital capacity and access, and uncertainty of the purposes and usage of the data collected, and whether participation was a voluntary or mandatory requirement). Teachers inexperienced with downloading or using apps on their mobile phones also reported some reluctance.
- In institutes with a regular performance review cycle for their teachers, project officers were challenged by having to record information in two systems.
- The participation of teachers in other PD activities needed to be recognised and integrated into the Educator Passport.
- Issues arose for teachers when scheduled PD sessions conflicted with course timetables and they were not backfilled.

Despite these practical issues (which presumably can be fixed at local levels), the evaluators concluded that the flexibility and the versatility of the Educator Passport made it a success. It had the flexibility to add and modify domains, which means that it can be modified to suit local institute requirements, and it was versatile in that the app could also be used for a range of other purposes, for example, the tracking of data to monitor implementation of government policies and initiatives.

The evaluation concluded that it is ‘a successful initiative, establishing a benchmark for expected teacher improvement, building morale, and the professionalism of the sector’ (Deschepper Consulting & DESTE Consulting Services 2019, p.23). It also had the ‘potential to address improvement in the strategic and business outcomes of the Victorian VET sector’, and at the same time attend to the PD of teachers.

What is required is commitment from the state government and local TAFE institutes to make decisions ‘that actively engage the educator in sustaining their commitment to the learner and to local enterprises’. The key focus for Chisholm in 2020 will be to update the domains of the Educator Excellence Framework on digital literacy.

2. TAE40116 Traineeship Pilot (Northern Territory)

This pilot, a Northern Territory Government initiative, trialled a new traineeship program for the Certificate IV in TAE40116 and provided training for new VET teachers, who, in order to be eligible, must have completed the TAESS00014 Enterprise Trainer – Presenting skill set, which comprises: BSBCMM401 (Make a presentation) and TAEDL301 (Provide work skill instruction). No RPL was available and the program allowed

a maximum of two government-funded trainee positions per RTO to participate in the pilot. The parties to the traineeship involved:

- training RTOs, responsible for ensuring compliance with qualification entry requirements and the development of a training plan for each trainee
- employing RTOs, with obligations to provide training following entry into an employment agreement with the trainee. The employing RTO was required to provide training and supervision in accordance with the agreement. A maximum of two trainees was allowed per employing RTO. Employer subsidies were conditional on fulfilment of employing RTO responsibilities
- the Department (Department of Trade, Business and Innovation), which was responsible for program oversight, maintaining strong relationships with key stakeholders and providing stakeholders with support
- the trainee, who was expected to show broad industry experience and knowledge in their proposed vocational teaching area; five years of industry experience was required.

The pilot was considered a success, with all eight trainees who began the program in 2019 completing the training. The program has continued, with a further 12 trainees enrolled in the program.

The biggest issue concerned the timing of pilot commencement, with all participants expected to start at the same time. RTOs only employ teachers when they have student demand for courses, but, in retrospect, a rolling start, with flexible entry and exit points, would have been more effective; this was considered for the next iteration.

The program was considered highly sustainable, both conceptually and financially, because it is based on RTO demand for teaching staff, which itself is based on student course enrolments. New employees undertake some training in specified units of competency to obtain some initial teaching skills before they commence the traineeship. After they commence, they begin training for the full qualification, which is comprised of a combination of on-the-job and off-the job training, as in any other traineeship program.

The Certificate IV in TAE was also felt to be a suitable entry-level qualification for employment in the sector as it provides an initial introduction to teaching. The other benefit for participants in undertaking the Certificate IV in TAE using this model was that they were employed on a teacher's wage.

3. Regional Development of VET Teaching Capability Pilot (Tasmania)

This pilot is part of the Tasmanian Government's Workforce Development Program, which aims to build VET teaching capacity for industries of regional priority on the West Coast of Tasmania.

The West Coast Council partnered with TasTAFE to deliver the Certificate IV in TAE40116 to individuals with the experience, vocational qualifications, interest and capacity to complete the qualification, and a willingness to stay in the area. The industry areas serviced in this pilot are: information technology; tourism and hospitality; printmaking; carpentry and joinery; community sector business and leadership management; aged care; kitchen operations; community services and engineering.

TasTAFE is delivering the training via flexible delivery methods, accompanied by mentoring and support for students. The original plan entailed having regular face-to-face workshops, skype webinars, online resources, supported study sessions, group discussion boards and workplace learning. On completion of the project, participants would continue to receive mentoring and support. They would also have opportunities for employment with TasTAFE and other RTOs in the delivery of training in industry on the west coast. A key lesson learnt early in this pilot was that plans need to be adapted to changes in the environment. In addition:

- Plans for using a blended-learning approach (including face-to-face seminars and workshops) had to be adapted to accommodate the disruption caused by the arrival of COVID-19 and the ensuing state restrictions on face-to-face gatherings. This meant that training was delivered via ZOOM seminars and online training resources
- There are indications that some students (teachers) are not entirely happy with online learning.



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