For all RTO staff

Purpose

- This Contract Notification varies VET Funding Contracts to implement a number of changes to policy settings to ensure the proper and responsible administration of the Victorian Training Guarantee program budget.

Main Points

- In accordance with Clauses 1.3(h) and 4.2(a) of the VET Funding Contracts, this Contract Notification varies and replaces relevant clauses in the VET Funding Contracts and related Guidelines to reflect new arrangements. Variations are detailed in the Variation Document at Attachment 1.

- All terms in Attachment 1 have the meaning given in the VET Funding Contracts and related Guidelines as the context requires.

- In the event of any inconsistency between a clause or provision in this Contract Notification and the Variation Document and a clause or a provision in any of the VET Funding Contracts as the context requires, the clause or provision in the Variation Document will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.

Changes to eligibility for the Victorian Training Guarantee: introduction of a lifetime limit of two (2) commencements at the same qualification level – the ‘2 at level’ limit.

- For all enrolments on or after 16 June 2014, individuals accessing the Victorian Training Guarantee will only be eligible to commence a maximum of two courses/qualifications at the same Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level in their lifetime. Individuals will also only be eligible to commence a maximum of two accredited courses with the title ‘Course in…’ in their lifetime (excluding courses on the Foundation Skills List).

- The ‘2 at level’ limit applies in addition to all other existing eligibility criteria, including the upskilling requirement, and the existing limits on the number of courses a student can commence in a calendar year (2), and the number of courses a student can undertake concurrently (2).

- To determine eligibility, an RTO will need to take into consideration an individual’s entire educational history, with the following exceptions:
  
  o Training undertaken in courses/qualifications on the Foundation Skills List (and their predecessors) do not count toward the ‘2 at level’ limit i.e. Foundation Skills remain accessible to all students up to the existing two per year and two at a time limits.
Where a student changes course code as a result of transitioning from a superseded qualification into the current version of the qualification then that should not be counted towards the ‘2 at level’ limit.

If the student is recommencing training in the same qualification at the same or a different provider then this should not be counted towards the ‘2 at level’ limit.

This variation does not mean an individual can complete a second qualification at the same level as one they have already completed. It means an individual can only begin two qualifications at the same level before needing to move to another level, regardless of whether they completed the qualification or not.

In exceptional circumstances only, there will be limited opportunity for individuals (not RTOs) to apply to the Department for an exemption to the lifetime limit of two commencements at the same level. Individuals should submit a short written statement outlining their circumstance and why they believe they need to commence a further course at the same level. Statements should be addressed to:

Executive Director
Training Market Operations
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
GPO 4367
MELBOURNE  VIC  3001

Variation to Guidelines about Determining Student Eligibility and Supporting Evidence

The Department has issued new Guidelines about Determining Student Eligibility and Supporting Evidence (the Guidelines) to reflect the above changes. The Guidelines have been varied to update the Evidence of Eligibility and Student Declaration form to include:

- student information on history of training undertaken to enable RTOs to assess the 2 commencements per year, 2 courses at one time, and 2 commencements at the same level rules (see Questions 2, 3 and 4 of the form)
- student declaration that they are not enrolled in school

Changes to the Guidelines also include the inclusion of the Automotive Supply Chain Training Initiative, removal of two expired courses from the Foundation Skills List and other minor editorial corrections.

The updated Guidelines are published in the Documents section of SVTS.

Changes to course subsidies

In accordance with Clause 7.2 (c) of VET Funding Contracts, this Contract Notification provides RTOs with 10 Business Days notice of a change to Funds. Adjustments to subsidies for training and for RPL are being made to ensure the proper and responsible administration of the Victorian Training Guarantee program budget under Clause 7.2(c)(ii) of the VET Funding Contracts.

New course subsidies are effective for all enrolments with a course commencement date on or after 1 July 2014.

For courses with low or no tuition fees

Where students are paying no or very low fees in non-apprenticeship courses, the Government is making adjustments to subsidies to ensure that students are making a fair contribution to the cost of training. A list of courses for which subsidies have been adjusted is in the Documents section of SVTS. The new subsidies will shortly be reflected on the Funded Courses Report.

For training activity reported as government subsidised Recognition of Prior Learning

The Government is streamlining funding for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) by introducing five course subsidies for RPL. Every course on the Funded Courses Report will be assigned one of the five subsidies. The RPL Subsidy will be listed in the Funded Courses Report and continue to be adjusted by the relevant RPL Adjustment. The Funded Courses Report will be updated to include the RPL Subsidy shortly.
In the interim, a document “RPL Subsidies July 2014” detailing the new RPL Subsidy for each course has been published in the Documents section of SVTS.

Clause 12.6 and 12.7 of Schedule 1 of the VET Funding Contracts have been varied to reflect these new arrangements.

As per existing arrangements, only RTOs on the RPL Approved Provider List will be funded for government subsidised RPL.

Reporting requirements – timeliness and accuracy

- The Department is revising its business rule in relation to Reject Code 21 as set out in the Guide to SVTS. Effective from 1 July 2014, Reject 21 will occur when a claim has not been successfully generated within 90 days of the module’s start date. An updated Guide to SVTS will be issued shortly.

- RTOs are reminded of the contractual requirement to submit accurate reports every month that reflect training delivered to date, in accordance with Clause 11.1(a) of Schedule 1 of the VET Funding Contracts.

Actions required

- RTOs are advised to immediately update their eligibility testing and enrolment processes in accordance with the updated Guidelines about Determining Student Eligibility and Supporting Evidence.

- All enquiries concerning the variations specified within the VET Funding Contracts should be lodged on SVTS under the category ‘VET Funding Contracts – June 2014 variations’.

Critical Dates

- This Contract Notification is effective immediately. Implementation dates are as set out above.

Attachments

- Attachment 1: Variation Document

Resources

- For further information, please refer to the following in the Documents section of SVTS:
  - Updated Guidelines about Determining Student Eligibility and Supporting Evidence.
  - List of Changed Subsidies – July 2014
  - RPL Subsidies July 2014

Peter Graham
A/Executive Director
Training Market Operations