

Contract Notification

CN No.	2018-10	Date:	22 February 2018
To:	Chief Executive Officer or equivalent		
Purpose:	Advice on Contract requirements		
Scope:	All 2018-19 VET Funding Contracts		
Subject:	Requirements in the 2018-19 VET Funding Contracts to assure quality of online learning		

For all Training Provider staff

Purpose

- This Contract Notification is to:
 - Notify training providers of the Department's prescribed online service standards as required in Clause 1.4 (d) of Schedule 1 of the 2018-19 VET Funding Contracts.
 - Notify training providers of the publication of the 2018 Online Delivery Restriction List.
 - Advise training providers that a factsheet is available in the 'Documents' section of SVTS providing guidance and information about the range of requirements in the 2018-19 VET Funding Contracts related to online learning.

Background

- Through the *Skills First* program, the Victorian Government is committed to providing high quality training that aligns with industry and community demands and workforce needs. *Skills First* sets a high benchmark for training quality, and is aimed at supporting the courses that are most likely to lead to improved employment outcomes.
- The VET Funding Review recommended that standards for online learning be incorporated within provider contracts, with the aim of improving quality.
- In response, from 2017 the Department has included a range of specific requirements in the VET Funding Contracts aimed at assuring the quality of online delivery of training and assessment within Victoria's training and TAFE system.
- To help inform and develop these requirements, the Department engaged key online delivery providers and canvassed best practice guidelines.

Main Points

Online service standards

- Clause 1.4 (d) of Schedule 1 of the 2018-19 VET Funding Contract states that a training provider must publish in a prominent place on its website its online service standards as prescribed by the Department from time to time. Online service standards are required if any training and/or assessment is delivered online.
- The Department has published the required items to be included in these online services standards in the 'Documents' section of SVTS (refer to the document titled 'Prescribed online service standards').

- The Department requires online service standards to include, at minimum, the information outlined in this publication, however the Department has not prescribed specific benchmarks for compliance, recognising that this may vary depending on the course or type of training provider.
- The Department has provided examples and additional information as an illustration of compliance. The examples are not intended as mandatory services and instead are provided as examples. Providers must develop their own online service standards based on actual practice.

Online Delivery Restriction List

- The Department is not liable to pay Funds for any training or assessment in course or qualifications on the Online Delivery Restriction List, or Apprenticeships, delivered wholly online.
- The Department made available as part of the 2018 Provider Selection Process the Online Delivery Restriction List and has now published this list in the 'Documents' section of SVTS (refer to the document titled 'Online Delivery Restriction List').
- This list is a subset of the *Skills First* Funded Courses List. It has been developed on the basis that some courses are not suited to being delivered wholly online, due to the need for practical skills to be demonstrated, learned and practiced in an appropriate setting and the level of risk associated with the competencies not being fully attained if this does not occur.

Factsheet

- In addition to the online service standards and Online Delivery Restriction List, training providers are also advised that a factsheet is available in the 'Documents' section of SVTS providing information about the range of requirements in the 2018-19 VET Funding Contracts related to online learning (refer to the document titled 'Factsheet: Online Learning').

Critical information

- This Contract Notification is effective immediately.

Resources

- Refer to the following publications in the 'Documents' section of SVTS:
 - 'Prescribed online service standards'
 - 'Online Delivery Restriction List'
 - 'Factsheet: Online Learning'

Greg Norton

Executive Director
Training Market Quality

Online Delivery Restriction List

The Online Delivery Restriction List is the section of the Funded Courses Report that identifies specific courses and qualifications that have restrictions in relation to online delivery.

The Department will not fund courses offered wholly online (100%) if the qualification is listed on the Online Delivery Restriction List or any other qualification delivered as an Apprenticeship.

Certificate II in Arboriculture	Certificate III in Telecommunications Digital Reception Technology	Certificate III in Trenchless Technology
Certificate III in Arboriculture	Certificate III in Telecommunications Rigging Installation	Certificate III in Driving Operations
Certificate III in Concreting	Certificate III in Telecommunications Network Build and Operate	Certificate III in Mobile Crane Operations
Certificate III in Demolition	Certificate III in Telecommunications Rigging Installation	Certificate III in Tram or Light Rail Infrastructure
Certificate III in Dogging	Certificate III in Telecommunications Technology	Certificate IV in Mobile Crane Operations
Certificate III in Rigging	Certificate II in Engineering - Production Technology	Certificate IV in Driving Operations
Certificate III in Scaffolding	Certificate III in Engineering - Production Systems	Certificate II in Gas Supply Industry Operations
Certificate III in Live Production and Services	Certificate III in Dry Cleaning Operations	Certificate III in Gas Supply Industry Operations
Certificate IV in Live Production and Technical Services	Certificate III in Process Plant Operations	Certificate IV in Gas Supply Industry Operations
Certificate IV in Music Industry	Certificate IV in Process Plant Technology	Certificate III in ESI - Power Systems - Transmission Overhead
Diploma of Live Production and Technical Services	Certificate II in Civil Construction	Certificate III in ESI - Power Systems - Distribution Overhead
Advanced Diploma of Live Production and Management Services	Certificate III in Surface Extraction Operations	
Certificate II in Timber Truss and Frame Design and Manufacture	Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations	
Certificate III in ESI - Power Systems - Rail Traction	Certificate III in ESI - Power Systems - Distribution Cable Jointing	
Certificate II in Telecommunications Network Build and Operate	Certificate III in Civil Construction	
Certificate II in Telecommunications Technology	Certificate III in Civil Foundations	

PRESCRIBED REQUIREMENTS FOR ONLINE SERVICE STANDARDS	
<p>The following are the minimum prescribed items that training providers must include in their online service standards when delivering training and/or assessment online. These online service standards must be published in a prominent place on the training provider's website.</p>	
PRESCRIBED ITEM TO BE ADDRESSED	RATIONALE
<p>1. Student support, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of how and when Teacher/trainer/assessors, administration staff, information technology staff, and any other key staff can be contacted by students and response times for queries. • Support services available and how they can be accessed by students studying online. 	<p>Students are supported throughout their study and have clear information about how to access this support.</p>
<p>2. Student entry requirements and induction, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of digital literacy. • Details of platform/s to access learning materials and resources. • Minimum hardware and software requirements. 	<p>Students are only enrolled in courses that are suitable and appropriate.</p> <p>Students are aware of the minimum requirements to be able to participate in the course.</p>
<p>3. Learning materials, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various formats to optimise the learning experience. • How the high level principles of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines are met. 	<p>Learning materials cover all aspects of a unit of competency and all necessary information to enable competency to be achieved.</p> <p>Learning materials are accessible to a wide variety of learners.</p>
<p>4. Student engagement, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of collaborative learning opportunities with peers and others. • Provision of ongoing feedback – the Training Provider's approach to collecting feedback and frequency. • Monitoring of student activity or non-participation. 	<p>Students are engaged in learning and monitored to ensure they continually progress through their program.</p>
<p>5. Mode and method of assessments utilised, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms of assessment used. • Tools and technology used to facilitate assessment of practical skills. 	<p>Students are assessed against all aspects of a unit of competency and practical skills are assessed using contemporary technology.</p>
<p>6. Details of trainer and assessor skill and experience in online delivery, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant qualifications and professional development. 	<p>Trainers and assessors are skilled in online facilitation and have current qualifications or have completed professional development to enable them to deliver an engaging learning experience.</p>

EXAMPLE ONLY – PROVIDED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES

EACH TRAINING PROVIDER'S ONLINE SERVICE STANDARDS MUST REFLECT ACTUAL PRACTICE

XYZ TRAINING – ONLINE SERVICE STANDARDS

XYZ Training offers a range of courses that can be delivered party or wholly online. XZY Training is committed to providing a quality learning experience for students studying online and these online service standards explain our commitment to students in key areas.

STUDENT SUPPORT

XYZ Training will provide the following support to students studying any aspect of their course online:

Trainers/assessors

- Will be available for queries about learning and assessment by phone, email and online chat between 2:00pm and 4:00pm Monday to Friday for the duration of the course/module.
- Will reply to queries within 24 hours and assessment will be returned within 7 days.
- There will be a maximum of xx students to each trainer/assessor for each course

Administrative Support

- Will be available for queries by phone and email between 9:00am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday.
- Will reply to queries within 48 hours

IT support helpdesk for technical queries

- Will be available via phone, email and online chat between 10:00am and 4:00pm Monday to Friday and between 10:00am and 2:00pm on Saturday and Sunday.
- Will reply to queries within 48 hours

Support services

- Counselling service available by appointment between 9:00am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday, in person or via video conference.
- Library on campus is available to online students and is open between 8:00am and 6:00pm Monday to Friday and between 9:00am and 1:00pm on Saturday and Sunday. Online library is available anytime at www.library.edu.au.

STUDENT ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND INDUCTION

XYZ Training conducts a comprehensive Pre-Training Review for all prospective students to determine whether a course is suitable and appropriate for their individual needs. As part of the Pre-Training Review, we will include assessment of your level of digital literacy, by:

- Asking you to undertake a self-assessment quiz
- Discussing the quiz outcomes and making recommendations about whether the course is suitable for you, and identifying additional support where required.

XYZ Training uses a learning management system (LMS) for online course delivery.

The following are the minimum information technology requirements to enable optimal access to the LMS:

- A device with a minimum of 8GB memory and 1.5Ghz processor.
- Microsoft Windows 8 and above or Mac OS version 10 and above.

Web-based content is available on hand held devices including mobile phones and tablets.

An introductory module and FAQs on the LMS can be found at www.learn.edu.au.

LEARNING MATERIALS

XYZ Training ensures that learning materials used in online training are interactive and are presented in a variety of formats, including:

- Guided content
- Graphics
- Video
- Audio

EXAMPLE ONLY – PROVIDED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES

EACH TRAINING PROVIDER'S ONLINE SERVICE STANDARDS MUST REFLECT ACTUAL PRACTICE

- Interaction through discussion forums and webinars

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

XYZ Training provides an online learning experience that is engaging and interactive. We will monitor your participation and ensure that you continue to progress through your course.

Collaborative learning opportunities will be provided so that you can interact with peers, through

- discussion forums
- webinars.

Ongoing feedback will be provided as you study through:

- interaction with trainers/assessors in informal discussion forums
- in response to individual queries and in relation to tasks you complete

We will contact students who have not logged on within 2 months of the course commencement date.

Students who have not logged on within 2 months of the course commencement date that do not reengage after 5 attempts at contact will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course.

MODE AND METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

A minimum of two forms of assessment will be used for each unit of competency.

Forms of assessment will include:

- knowledge questions
- projects
- case studies
- demonstration of practical skills.

Where students are asked to demonstrate competency in practical skills, video technology will be used.

TRAINERS AND ASSESSORS

All trainers and assessors delivering online courses at XYZ Training are experienced in online delivery and have undertaken professional development in online delivery, which includes:

- formal qualifications in online training
- Participation in staff reference group of online trainers and assessors, who meet and share ideas for improvement.

QUALITY IN ONLINE DELIVERY

Guide to Requirements in 2018-19 VET Funding Contracts

Background

Online delivery of training and assessment can offer a range of benefits to learners, in particular flexibility for those who are combining work and study, or accessibility for those who cannot attend a campus due to time or distance.

Whilst the Department recognises these potential benefits for learners, recent research and reviews have also identified the importance of assuring quality in online delivery. For example, the *Review of Quality Assurance in Victoria's VET System* found that a high reliance on electronic delivery was one of a number of quality risk indicators that could be used to identify poor quality training, and the *VET Funding Review* recommended developing standards for online learning delivery as a quality assurance measure.

The 2018-19 VET Funding Contracts include a range of measures to assure quality in government funded online delivery. These requirements aim to ensure that the online learning experience training providers offer will be of an equivalent level of quality to other modes of delivery, and meet *Skills First* objectives.

ONLINE SERVICE STANDARDS

Where training and/or assessment is delivered online, training providers must publish online service standards in a prominent place on their websites. The online service standards are an important tool to assist students to make an informed choice of which delivery mode and training provider will suit their individual needs and best help them to achieve the outcomes they seek from training.

The Department has notified training providers about what is required in the online service standards in Contract Notification CN-2018 10.

The Department has prescribed the items to include in these online service standards, but has not prescribed specific benchmarks for each item, recognising these may vary depending on the provider and/or cohort.

It is important that training providers create their own online service standards based on their actual practice. The example provided in the prescribed online service standards is for illustrative purposes only.

Contract reference: Clause 1.4 (d) of Schedule 1

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Training providers must adopt and implement a professional development program specific to the delivery of on online training and/or assessment.

The Department has not mandated the form or content of this professional development, and it does not endorse particular professional development offerings, as it needs to be relevant to each training provider's context and each individual *Skills First* teacher's needs.

Training providers must ensure that all *Skills First* teachers undertake appropriate professional development if they are involved in online delivery, whether that delivery is wholly or partly online.

This is to ensure that all *Skills First* teachers have the necessary skills and knowledge to engage and support learners in an online environment. This includes the ability to:

- use contemporary technologies
- facilitate and communicate effectively in an online environment
- provide effective and timely feedback
- ensure students are motivated and continue to progress throughout their course.

Contract reference: Clause 7.20 of Schedule 1

PLANNING FOR QUALITY ONLINE TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT

Training providers must ensure their planning for online training and assessment is tailored appropriately to the delivery mode.

Training providers must ensure that learners have the capacity to participate fully in online learning. This should be assessed as part of a comprehensive Pre-Training Review and determined by assessing prospective student's digital literacy, access to necessary technology, and providing support to overcome any barriers.

Training and Assessment Strategies must also address the unique requirements of online learning and ensure there is engagement between learners, teachers and support staff. A course delivered online should be intentionally designed for the online environment, not simply an electronic replication of classroom-based resources.

Training and Assessment Strategies must also include the validation method for online assessment tools, given the importance of the training provider ensuring that the student's work is their own and it is assessed authentically.

Contract reference: 5.1 (f) of Schedule 1, 5.9 of Schedule 1.

LEARNING MATERIALS

Training providers must ensure that all learning materials used for online delivery of training and assessment comply with the principles of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG).

To note, the Department does not require full compliance with all requirements of the WCAG. Training providers are required to comply with the high-level principles of the WCAG, that is, their online learning materials are presented in a manner that is:

- perceivable
- operable
- understandable
- robust

The Department's prescribed online service standards provide further information about what is expected in relation to meeting this requirement.

Contract reference: 1.5 of Schedule 1

ONLINE DELIVERY RESTRICTION LIST

The Department has published the Online Delivery Restriction List. This list is a subset of the *Skills First* Funded Courses List.

Courses on this List and qualifications delivered as an Apprenticeship cannot be delivered wholly online, or marketed or promoted by training providers as such.

This List has been developed on that basis that some courses are not suited to being delivered wholly online, due to the need for practical skills to be demonstrated, learned and practiced in an appropriate setting and the level of risk associated with the competencies not being fully attained if this does not occur.

Contract reference: 1.1(g) of Schedule 1, Clause 13.17 of Schedule 1 (non-TAFE Contracts), Clause 13.14 of Schedule 1 (TAFE and Dual Sector Contracts)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Submit an enquiry via SVTS