

SIMPLIFICATION OF TRAINING PACKAGES



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GSA will be involved in substantial development work surrounding the simplification of Training Packages over the next two years. This will see significant changes in the way Training Packages are presented and used by industry and RTOs.

BACKGROUND

The streamlining of and production of non-endorsed Companion Volumes, as recommended in the *VET Products for the 21st Century* report (June 2009), marks a major shift in the design and development of Training Package components.

The main purpose is to separate performance standards from guidance and supporting information, as well as to simplify, shorten and segment the contents of current Training Packages. The goal is to ensure that they are easier to use, offer a greater focus on assessment, knowledge and foundation skills, and provide more support for RTOs through ‘Companion Volumes’ that offer detailed advice on their use and implementation.

A design model for streamlined training package material has been developed and distributed to ISCs, as well as example units and assessment materials. Whilst there are still some major issues that need to be addressed relating to the development and implementation of the ‘new look’ Training Package materials, the NQC has allowed a transition period of two years, giving ISCs the opportunity to update all Training Packages into the new design over that time.

TVET will be conducting a comprehensive communication program in 2011, and GSA will endeavour to notify industry stakeholders of these events. We will also be conducting our own ‘awareness campaign’ so that industry is well prepared for the imminent changes.

1.0 Sustainability (Green Skills) Update

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed a new Green Skills Agreement in December 2009 that will enable individuals and businesses to contribute to a sustainable, low-carbon economy in their workplaces and communities. This agreement commits state and territory governments to working with training organisations and business to ensure skills for sustainability are an integral part of all vocational education and training (VET) and are relevant to the needs of industry.

GSA undertook the process of embedding ‘green skills’ into every training package over the last 3 months of 2010. This involved an analysis of each package to determine those units of competence that may require additional information in order to ensure that environmental/sustainability aspects were addressed.

The units were then reviewed in detail and, where applicable, statements added to ensure compliance with the environmental and sustainability principles. Wording was added to either the ‘required knowledge and skills’ component, or to the range statement, so that the overall intent of the unit remained intact. In some instances sustainability aspects were implicit, or already existing, and those units were therefore untouched.

2.0 Flexibility in Packaging Rules

At its final meeting in 2009, the National Quality Council (NQC) approved changes to qualification packaging rules that allow for greater flexibility in the choice of elective and imported units within qualifications. These new arrangements required that one third or more of the total units within each qualification were made up of elective units, and that one sixth of those total elective units were included from other qualifications in a Training Package, another endorsed Training Package, or Accredited Course.

GSA responded to the required changes by addressing every qualification across each Training Package to ensure that the new packaging flexibility rules were in place. Some qualifications were found to be non-compliant, and a Case for Exception was submitted to the NQC prior to the 13th August 2010. Not all of these were accepted, and a small number of those qualifications are still outstanding. GSA is currently seeking advice from industry on how they wish to proceed. This will either involve the submission of another Case for Exception prior to the end of March 2010; or the revision of those non-compliant qualifications, which must be finalised before the end of June 2010.

3.0 Resource Development

The need for resources to support delivery and assessment of qualifications within the Public Sector has been identified as a priority in the GSA Business Plan.

GSA has decided to take an innovative and sustainable approach to the development of resources by introducing an online resource-building guide - a GSA specific 'search engine' that will provide guidance to RTOs and Industry on developing contextualised, relevant and targeted learning and assessment resources for their industry or sector, specific clients and/or individual learners. The key difference in the resources developed for this facility is that they are not specifically linked to a particular qualification or unit of competence. Rather, they will assist developers in creating learning and assessment tools and activities that are individualised to suit the learner and/or the workplace environment under which they operate.

The online resource-building guide will be similar to the 'Resource Generator' that was produced (and is still available on www.resourcegenerator.gov.au) by ANTA. Whilst the concept is the same, there will be a fresh perspective on the content and a new range of instruments available to assist RTOs and industry stakeholders in developing a wide range of resources, from initial Training and Assessment Plans to case studies, questionnaires, scenarios, and assessment activities that can be directly linked to the workplace or learner environment.

The first phase of this project will be predominantly focussed on the creation of the software. When completed, this search engine will offer a number of online tools that guide users through the process of developing meaningful learning activities, as well as the tools to assess and record competency in a contextualised environment. It is anticipated that this phase will take six to twelve months to complete.

A number of resources are already available our Training Packages. GSA has conducted an audit of those resources and compiled a list of materials that support delivery in the generalist qualifications across all of our packages.

The list comprises:

- those qualifications/units that have incomplete resources
- those units that could be developed that would assist in completing a suite of resources for a qualification
- those core units that need to be developed in order to complete a qualification.

It must be noted that whilst there are a reasonable number of resources available, the majority are in need of revision, with both the content and references updated to better reflect current practice.

Whilst some resources for the core units may be developed in the first phase of this project, a suite of specialist resources will be further developed once the search engine has been established, trialled and successfully implemented. There is potential in the long-term for learning resources that are linked to other industries and or Training Packages to be built in to the search engine as well, providing even greater flexibility and applicability to the user.