

NQC ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO AQTF STANDARDS

AQTF 2010

On 3 December 2009 the National Quality Council (NQC) endorsed key reforms to the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Essential Standards for Registration. These important changes strengthen the AQTF and ensure regulators have the tools they need to protect the interests of all students undertaking Vocational Education and Training in Australia. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) met on 7 December and supported the Council's reforms. The changes are:

- **Strengthened Essential Standards** for existing RTOs
- **New Standards** for RTOs registering for the first time

CHANGES TO ESSENTIAL STANDARDS FOR REGISTRATION

- The Conditions of Registration have been moved to the front of the Standards to reinforce their importance.
- Conditions of Registration will be audited at initial registration. They will also be audited at each renewal of registration in accordance with risk management guidelines.
- Consumer protection has been increased by strengthening the financial management requirements in the Condition of Registration. These changes will ensure all providers adopt sustainable business practices, reducing the risk of leaving students out of pocket.
- Governance requirements have been strengthened to require senior officers and directors or substantial shareholders to satisfy fit and proper person requirements. Senior management will also have to demonstrate that decision making is informed by the experiences of its trainers and assessors.
- All RTOs will have to have a student management database that has the capacity to provide the registering body with AVETMISS compliant data. Registering bodies will also become the repository for student records.
- The Standards have been renamed to the AQTF 2010 *Essential Standards for Continuing Registration* to distinguish them from the new *Essential Standards for Initial Registration*.

NEW ESSENTIAL STANDARDS FOR INITIAL REGISTRATION

Acknowledging the need to differentiate between providers that have a proven track record and those that are new to the training industry, the NQC has endorsed a new set of AQTF Standards for new training organisations. Based on the strengthened Standards for Continuing Registration, the new Standards:

- reflect all the changes to the *Essential Standards for Continuing Registration*;
- require new RTOs to advise regulators of their intended scope of operations possibly in the form of a business plan; and
- require potential RTOs to provide a financial audit report with their application for initial registration.

NEXT STEPS

Implementation will be completed by March 2010 including a broader review of the guidelines that support the Standards:

- *Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration*
- *National Guideline for Risk Management*
- *National Guideline for Managing Non-Compliance*

The outcome will be a strengthened quality assurance framework to be known as AQTF 2010.

For more information about the AQTF 2010 Essential Standards:

http://www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au/aqtf_2010