

Skills SA

Quality and Compliance Framework

2023-2024

For Training Providers
and Project Proponents



**Government
of South Australia**

Department for Education

Purpose

The Quality and Compliance Framework guides how Skills SA assures appropriate and effective outcomes from South Australian government investment in the vocational education and training market.

Every South Australian should have access to the best education and training throughout their life.

The South Australian Government is developing a long term, ambitious, South Australian Skills Plan.

Engagement to date has laid the foundation for the South Australian Skills Plan to help tackle current and future skills needs.

Skilled People – Skills System – Successful Economy

We can and must do better to create a training system that works for our economy – and for all South Australians.

To deliver on this commitment the community must have confidence in:

- the quality of publicly subsidised training; and
- the integrity of providers delivering those services.

The Quality and Compliance Framework is the key guiding document outlining how Skills SA provides this assurance.

What we mean by Compliance and Quality

To provide a clear framework for guiding effective assurance strategies, compliance and quality have been articulated as follows:

Compliance – meeting the legal, regulatory and contractual obligations necessary for the delivery of government-subsidised VET in South Australia. Compliance is bimodal (a provider is either compliant or non-compliant), however the severity of non-compliances can range from minor to significant.

To meet compliance requirements providers seeking to access SA government training subsidies must:

- meet the national Standards for Registered Training Organisations (2015) prior to being offered a contract;
- maintain compliance with the Standards throughout the course of their contract;
- meet their contractual obligations to the Minister, including stipulations that are unique to government funded providers in South Australia;
- use government funds as intended;
- where relevant, fulfil obligations as Nominated Training Organisations in accordance with the South Australian Skills Act (2008).

Quality – encompasses all aspects of providers service delivery that influence the extent to which a student has a positive learning experience in which successful skill development is achieved to a standard accepted by the relevant industry. Provider quality exists on a continuum from low to high; compliance is a necessary pre-condition to quality.

To be considered high quality providers should exceed minimum required Standards for Registered Training Organisations (2015) and actively contribute to a high performing skills system in South Australia in the following ways:

- Individuals are assisted to make appropriate skills development choices;
- Students are supported to successfully achieve learning outcomes;
- Students' experience of their learning journey is positive;
- Training and assessment is designed around the needs of students, employers and industry;
- Connections with industry and employers are used to maintain the currency and relevance of the training offer to SA skills needs and employment opportunities.

Objectives

Our goal is that:

Government-funded training providers are both compliant and high quality.

We will achieve this by pursuing the following objectives:

- Prevent** non-compliant or low-quality providers are prevented from supplying government-subsidised training
- Improve** providers are supported to continuously improve to better meet Skills SA compliance and quality objectives
- Remediate** action is taken to rectify identified compliance or quality problems by government funded providers

Principles

There are seven guiding principles that inform how we pursue our quality and compliance objectives:

Equitable and Objective

Decisions are made fairly and equitably and are based on an objective assessment of the evidence while taking into account any specific relevant context.

Risk- and Evidence-based

Providers are monitored using a risk-based approach that takes into account multiple sources of data and information and considers a range of indicators before an assessment is made.

Proportionate Response

Providers are given reasonable opportunity to address compliance or quality problems; any subsequent action taken by Skills SA is proportionate to the nature and level of the issue.

Mutual Obligation

Providers are expected to make all reasonable efforts to remain compliant at all times, to pursue high quality outcomes for their learners, and to raise emerging issues promptly with us. Skills SA should provide appropriate and timely information, resources, education, and advice that supports and enables providers to fulfil these expectations.

Continuous Improvement

We value feedback and use it to improve. We expect funded providers do the same. We invest in the professional development of the VET workforce and the strategic development of the market. We expect providers support their workforce to remain current and build their skills as educators.

Value Excellence

We value excellence and prioritise providers that have a demonstrated, evidence-based track record of excellence.

Strategic Partnerships

Skills SA works in partnership with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and other State Training Authorities, including sharing relevant provider information, to promote and pursue quality and compliance outcomes.

Framework Pillars

Our Quality & Compliance actions are framed around 4 pillars that are designed to support our objectives.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement activities primarily contribute to the prevent and improve objectives. Our engagement approach incorporates both pro-active and re-active elements and engagement will occur at multiple levels (e.g. administrative, educator, strategic).

We aim to communicate obligations and expectations clearly and early to enable providers to have a good understanding of what is required before committing to being a publicly funded provider. We provide clear market signals about directions, opportunities and expectations and realistic lead times for providers to engage.

We regularly communicate with publicly funded providers to keep them informed about upcoming changes, including new opportunities, that may impact them. We provide periodic opportunities through workshops and forums for providers to upskill, including educator capability building opportunities or where we've identified an area of common confusion for providers (e.g., providers making similar errors). We also collect provider feedback through our engagement activities and use it to help guide our ongoing improvement efforts.

MONITORING

Monitoring activities primarily contribute to the prevent and improve objectives.

Monitoring activities occur throughout the life of a provider's relationship with us. Using regular monitoring, and checks that occur as part of managing and administering the contract, we watch for signs of potential or emerging problems with the aim of intervening early to prevent non-compliance or to address concerns regarding quality.

We also support providers via self-assessment tools that can assist to identify and address areas for improvement.

We continue to look for opportunities to use data and information and build actionable intelligence, including with our strategic partners, for the early identification of potential issues, so that these can be addressed early.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment activities contribute to all three objectives – prevent, improve and remediate.

All providers are assessed upfront against compliance and quality indicators before being offered a contract to deliver government funded services. The contract length and conditions are influenced by the type and level of risks identified, as well as the provider's potential to support high quality outcomes in response to our state's skills needs.

During the life of the contract, at any time providers may be asked to demonstrate their continuing quality and compliance, and we will undertake a schedule of planned provider audits for this purpose. We will provide feedback on assessment outcomes to support provider continuous improvement, or to address any identified issues. We also assess on the basis of internal or external triggers (e.g., emerging from monitoring activities, or in response to complaints) alerting us to potential problems.

We will also undertake an assessment before the conclusion of a contract. Provider performance to date, as well as continuing compliance, will be used to make decisions regarding contract extension offers.

Performance and compliance will also inform competitive evidence-based grant and tender assessments.

RESPONSE

Response activities primarily contribute to the improve and remediate objectives.

Response activities occur only if we identify a potential area of concern relating to either compliance or quality. Our response activities exist in a hierarchy and we aim to utilise the lowest level of response that is appropriate (given the specific context) and then escalate our response if necessary.

We are guided in this by considering what will be the best outcome for the primary users of VET (i.e., learners and employers).