



Building capability and quality in VET teaching: frameworks, standards and insights – support document

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Acknowledgments

Thanks to members of: industry peak body organisations (TAFE Directors Australia (TDA), VET Development Centre (VDC), Victorian TAFE Association (VTA), Independent Tertiary Education Council [ITECA]), VET regulator agencies (Australian Skills Quality Authority, Western Australian Training and Accreditation Council [WA TAC]), Australian Council of Deans of Education, Vocational Education Group, Education Industry Reference Committee, union stakeholders (Australian Education Union), Victorian TAFE Association's TAFE Leaders Network, RTO executives and educators, and the government officials from the various jurisdictions who provided information in consultations and in written form for this study. Thanks also to government officers from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, members of the Teaching Excellence Working Group of the Senior Skills Officials Network and state and territory jurisdictions, and PWC Skills for Australia, for their support in helping to arrange access to these stakeholder groups.

About this report

In this support document we provide more detailed findings relating to the key aspects of our research, which have been summarised in our main report *Building capability and quality in VET teaching: challenges and opportunities*.

This support document includes the following sections:

- the technical notes on searches and results of the environmental scan of education capability frameworks and standards
- the high-level contents of education frameworks and standards, including key domains and capabilities, categories of roles, and practical uses of the frameworks at organisational level
- the suitability of education capability frameworks and standards for Australia
- stakeholder insights about each of the following topics:
 - issues and concerns about the quality of VET teaching
 - strategies and support mechanisms for improving quality in VET teaching
 - responsibility for the quality of VET teaching
 - registration and accreditation for VET teachers
 - the risks and benefits of increasing entry requirements
 - the role of industry in recruitment and selection
 - the use of peer observations to improve teacher practice
 - the merits and challenges of implementing frameworks and standards
 - barriers and facilitators to attracting and developing a capable workforce
- the individuals who have provided us with insights¹ on our topics of interest include:
 - CEOs of: VET Development Centre (VDC), TAFE Directors Australia (TDA), Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA), and the then President of the Victorian TAFE Association (VTA)
 - educators, senior educators, educational managers and senior executives from RTOs from different jurisdictions, and members of the Victorian TAFE Association’s TAFE Leaders Network
 - members of the Education Industry Reference Committee of the Australian Industry Skills Commission
 - members and officers of the Australian Education Union (AEU) in Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Tasmania
 - officers from two responding regulators (Australian Skills Quality Authority and the Western Australian Training and Accreditation Council)
 - members of the Australian Council of Deans of Education, Vocational Education Group (ACDEVEG)

¹ The views expressed in the main represent those of the individuals providing information rather than their organisations. ACDEVEG responses are based on its formal position on the different topics.

Environmental scan: technical notes

We used two main search engines, GOOGLE (advanced search) and VOCEDplus (expert search) to identify frameworks that aim to categorise the types of measures and standards used to evaluate the behaviours and capabilities of teachers, including in the VET, higher education and school sectors, in Australia and overseas. We searched for those written in English. Unsurprisingly, these online searches, which used progressively finer search terms, revealed a multiplicity of frameworks and standards. Here we provide a very brief overview of the results of the scan.

Identifying capability frameworks and standards: technical approach

- In our first GOOGLE advanced search, we used the broader search term ‘allintext’ to search all the text on the web page. We then narrowed the search down to focus on the exact phrase ‘capability framework’, as well as the term ‘teaching’. This search returned around 100 results. In reading through each of the 100 results to ensure we had items that were of relevance to our study, we identified the following frameworks:
 - Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
 - Capability Development Framework (Australia, Griffith University)
 - Capability Framework for Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D learners (Australia)
 - Early Childhood Australia Leadership Capability Framework
 - Educational Leadership Capability Framework (Teaching Council, NZ)
 - ESF Teaching Capability Framework (Hong Kong)
 - Jisc Digital Capabilities Framework (international)
 - Mentoring Capability Framework (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, Australia)
 - Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training – England 2014, 2018
 - Professional Standards for Vocational Education and Training Practitioners (Queensland College of Teachers, 2015)²
 - TEN Capability Framework (Navitas, education provider, international)
 - The JMA Analytics Model of VET Capability Development (Mitchell & Ward 2010)³
 - The VET Practitioner Capability Framework.
- In our second GOOGLE advanced search, we searched for frameworks that, although they might not be called capability frameworks, were the frameworks that also contained measures for evaluating teaching quality. We used the broad search term ‘allintext’ and then narrowed it down to focus on terms including ‘frameworks’ OR ‘standards’ and combined this with the exact phrase ‘teaching quality’. The number of search results multiplied significantly. On closer examination (for relevance

2 Professional Standards for Vocational Education and Training Practitioners, Queensland College for Teachers, viewed September, 2019, <https://www.qct.edu.au/pdf/QCT_AustProfStandards.pdf>.

3 Mitchell J & Ward J, 2010 The JMA Analytics Model of VET Capability Development: a report on the National Survey of Vocational Education and Training (VET) Practitioner Skills, viewed September, 2019>, <<https://www.jma.com.au/JMAAnalytics.aspx>>.

to our study), we were able to identify the following frameworks, some of which had also been identified in our first search. These included:

- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- Australian University Teaching and Criteria and Standards
 - Career Framework for University Teaching (Australia)
 - Teaching Excellence Framework (UK)
 - Teaching Quality Framework (TQF) Initiative (University of Colorado, Boulder, USA)
 - Teaching Quality Standard (Alberta Teachers' Association, Canada)
 - Teaching Standards Framework (Macquarie University)
 - UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
 - University of Tasmania Teaching Performance Expectations (TPE) Framework.
- In our third GOOGLE (advanced) search, we again used the broad search term 'allintext' and then narrowed our search to focus on another new set of terms. These terms comprised 'teaching' OR 'competence' OR 'competency' and the exact phrase 'standards'. On reading the search results for relevance to our study, we were able to identify the following frameworks, some of which had also been identified in the previous two searches.
 - Australian Professional Standards for Teaching
 - Arkansas Teaching Standards
 - Graduate Teacher Performance Assessment (GTPA)
 - National Board for Professional Teaching Five Core Propositions and Standards (USA).

In our fourth GOOGLE (advanced) search, we again used the broad search term 'allintext' and then narrowed our search to focus on another new set of terms. These terms comprised 'teaching' OR 'competence' OR 'competency' and the exact phrase 'framework'. On reading the search results for relevance to our study, we were able to identify the following frameworks:

- Australian University Teaching and Criteria and Standards
- Cambridge English Teaching Framework
- Describing Teacher Competences For Language Education (Towards a common European framework for language teachers)
- Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu)
- Educational Leadership Capability Framework (New Zealand)
- Foundation Skills Professional Standards Framework
- Frameworks for Language Teachers (Europe)
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland Teacher Competences
- Mentor Competency Framework [Australia]
- National Education Association (NEA) Leadership Competencies (USA)
- Teacher Leadership Skills Framework
- Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) (England)

- The Framework for Teaching, The Danielson Group
- The Skills Base™ Competency Framework
- UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

Relevant discussion papers and reports

We also used targeted online searches to identify relevant papers and research, those discussing or reporting on the development, implementation, and evaluation and review of capability frameworks and standards. These papers and reports dealt with:

- the importance of high teacher qualifications for raising the quality of VET teaching
- issues of professionalism and responsibility
- policy and practice in developing teacher competence standards
- issues of capability building, sustainability and resilience
- the content of standards and frameworks and measures
- practical considerations in the validation of frameworks and measures
- comparative studies of similarities and differences in overseas systems
- investigations into initial teacher training outcomes
- proposals for frameworks for different parts of the VET sector
- standards for learning, standards for teaching and standards for leading
- evaluations and reviews of the implementation of capability framework and standards implementation
- investigations into teacher effectiveness systems and their impact on career development.

A comprehensive list of publications that deal with our topic appears in appendix A.

Frameworks and standards

Here we describe the key features and practical uses of frameworks and standards, with descriptions paraphrased from the frameworks and guides themselves. Most of the descriptions present a very high-level condensed version of key attributes of the frameworks, levels and categories of teachers, and brief comments on practical uses.

VET sector frameworks

IBSA VET Practitioner Capability Framework

This framework, developed by Innovation and Business Skills Australia in 2013, represents one of the early capability frameworks in the VET sector. It has been a key reference for many of the capability frameworks established in the public and private VET systems. The domains, capability and skills areas comprise:

- *teaching* (learning theories, design, facilitation and evaluation)
- *assessment* (assessment theories, products, processes and validation)
- *industry and community collaboration* (engagement, networks, vocational competencies and workforce development)
- *systems and compliance* (system standards, system stakeholders, products and processes)
- *skill areas* (teamwork and collaboration, leadership, ethics, cultural competence, innovation and evidence-based practice and research).

Categories: Capabilities are categorised under domains for three career stages: first-level practitioners; second-level practitioners; and third-level practitioners.

Practical uses: Provides a starting point for learning and professional development (PD), including job design and description, staff recruitment and selection, preparing for and undertaking performance reviews, development of RTO priorities for building capacity through PD, establishing professional and career-development plans.

Charles Darwin University's VET Educator Capability Framework

This framework builds on the hierarchical approach and expresses the development of knowledge and practice in terms of capabilities for different roles. The domains used to organise the framework and the areas they cover are:

learning, teaching and assessment (diverse learner needs, contemporary educational and assessment methodologies, comprehensive and systematic program review processes)

- *industry and community engagement* (sustainable partnerships, Indigenous engagement and support, integration of work and learning, vocational development of educators, development of contemporary educational products)
- *continuing professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning* (educational and vocational competency, ongoing continuous professional development, modelling of personal, professional and ongoing development)

- *entrepreneurship and innovation* (new business opportunities, quality products and services, business case development and project management)
- *leadership* (educational leadership in various contexts, contemporary approaches to learning and teaching, culture of business innovation and entrepreneurship)
- *quality assurance and continuous improvement* (participation in recruitment, selection, recording, review, graduation and alumni events, maintenance of appropriate and compliant records, continuous improvement, appropriate and effective technology).

Categories: The four levels of proficiency used are industry expert e educator; advanced educator; educational manager; and educational leader.

Practical uses: Identifying elements of performance for preparing for and undertaking performance reviews, establishing PD goals, collecting evidence of performance and achievements. One of the key differences between this framework and the others is that it makes specific mention of engagement with community leaders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and of issues of sustainability.

Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework

This framework identifies some overarching capabilities that can be applied to the teaching workforce as a whole, with specific functions for other roles (including leadership roles) captured in the expression of the capabilities themselves. The framework aims to guide professional development for teachers to assist them to achieve four overarching organisational principles: student success, engagement, workforce planning and opportunities.

The capability statements are categorised under seven key areas, although they are not classified separately for different roles of career stages. These statements relate to: professional practice; review; support; assess; design; engage; and facilitate (see appendix B).

Categories: The framework itself does not identify levels, but at the institute educators are identified as casual, contract, or ongoing.

Practical uses: The framework is integrated with the college system for workforce planning and development, using capabilities that are commonly accepted as good teaching practice.

TAFE New South Wales Professional Standards for Teachers

TAFE New South Wales has recently taken the domains and standards of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (cited below) as a guide for its New South Wales TAFE Professional Standards for Teachers. In this framework the graduate stage is referred to as the 'transitioning' stage. These standards apply to all TAFE NSW staff involved in the delivery of education, including teachers and head teachers, assessors, product designers and developers, and educational support staff. Designed to provide support and guidance on best practice, they can be used to guide and recruit staff and plan for professional development.

Categories: transitioning, proficient, highly accomplished, lead.

Practical uses: Defines the knowledge and skills required for quality teaching, identifies benchmarks for teacher reflection on practice and planning for improvement and further professional learning. Have been used for systems of mandatory registration and accreditation.

New South Wales Smart and Skilled Teaching and Leadership policy

Although itself not a capability framework, the policy draws on IBSA's VET Practitioner Capability Framework. The policy states the contractual obligations of the providers who deliver training for the Smart and Skilled program. They are required to demonstrate to government that they have developed and implemented a continuing professional development policy to reflect their business needs and CPD of key staff and management. Staff covered by the policy are trainers, assessors, administration officers and individuals in management roles.

The areas of prescribed professional development are teaching and training, assessment, systems and compliance (that is, Smart and Skilled contract compliance and continuous improvement), and industry collaboration. As such, it is focused both on development and accountability.

Practical uses: Sets out contractual obligations of providers who receive funding under the Smart and Skilled program to provide evidence of their having implemented continuing professional development policy according to their business needs. Areas that are prescribed are: teaching, training and assessment, compliance, and industry collaboration.

Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training – England

These standards (described in more detail in appendix C) are divided into three key domains and associated areas. These are:

- *professional values and attributes* (for teachers to develop their own judgment of what works and does not work in teaching and training)
- *professional knowledge and understanding* (develop deep and critically informed knowledge and understanding in theory and practice)
- *professional skills* (develop expertise and skills to ensure the best outcomes for learners).

Categories: stage 1: the developing teacher/trainer; stage 2: the professional teacher/trainer; stage 3: the advanced teacher/trainer. Associated with these are a set of transition stages.

Practical uses: Benchmarks can be used by teachers to reflect on areas for professional development and to inform content of initial teacher training courses and continuous professional development programs.

USA Career and Technical Education [VET] Standards (teachers of 11 to 18-year-olds)

These standards comprise five core propositions and 10 standard statements. They include arrangements for voluntary certification and assessments of teachers for certification. These are detailed in full in appendix D.

- *core propositions*: teachers are committed to students and their learning; teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students; teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; teachers are members of learning communities
- *standard statements*: knowledge of students; responding to diversity; knowledge of content; learning environments and instructional practices; assessment; post-secondary readiness (preparing students for employment and further study opportunities); program design and management; leadership in the profession; and reflective practice.

- Categories: new teachers, accomplished teachers. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards would like to ‘define and strengthen a coherent continuum to ensure that every teacher in America is on a path to accomplished teaching’ (National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, 2016, p42). The continuum career stages would be: pre-service teacher, novice teacher, professional teacher, board certified teacher, teacher leader/school leader.
- Practical uses: Set benchmark for accomplished teaching and reflect contemporary consensus of what such teachers should be to able do and to know. Set standards for voluntary accreditation to begin with and in the long run set the norm for the teaching profession.

Danielson’s Framework for Teaching

There are four domains in this framework, each associated with a number of distinct components. These are:

- *planning and preparation* (demonstrating knowledge of content and knowledge of students, selecting instructional outcomes, demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction and designing student achievement)
- *classroom environment* (creating an environment of respect and rapport, establishing a culture for learning, managing classroom procedures and student behaviour, organising space)
- *instruction* (communicating with students, using questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, using assessment in instruction, demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness) and
- *professional responsibilities* (reflecting on teaching, maintaining accurate records, communicating with families, participating in a professional community, growing and developing professionally, demonstrating and professing professionalism, and compliance with school and district regulation).

Categories: tenured and non-tenured teachers

Practical uses: Gives structure for evaluating the achievement of goals and objectives on student achievement and professional growth for purposes of continuous improvement; a guide for professional conversations among teachers and teacher self-reflection. Use as bases for mentoring and coaching, evaluation, professional development⁴.

TAFESA VET Educator Capability Framework

This is mostly based on the IBSA framework, with an additional domain (digital technologies). The domains and associated skill and knowledge areas comprise:

- *assessment* (theories, products, processes and validation)
- *teaching* (learning theories, design, facilitation and evaluation)
- *industry and community* (engagement, networks, vocational competence and workforce development)
- *quality* (standards, stakeholders, products, processes)
- *digital technologies* (functional skills, critical use, creative production, participation, development, wellbeing).

⁴ The Danielson Framework has also been picked up in our own environmental scan of frameworks and standards. The 2011 framework has been used to inform Kentucky’s Teacher Professional Growth and Effectiveness Framework.

Similar to the IBSA framework, it has six skill areas: teamwork and collaboration; leadership; ethics; cultural competence; innovation; and evidence-based practice and research.

Categories: five progression levels – new lecturer; lecturer; accomplished lecturer; senior lecturer; and principal lecturer.

Practical uses: Provides guidance for professional development programs and activities to enhance the capability of VET teachers. The aim is also to map the framework into the enterprise bargaining process.

TasTAFE Educator Capability Framework

This framework comprises a set of six capability domains and a range of benchmark statements and quality descriptors aligned to these domains. The domains and capabilities that underpin them are:

student experience (learner engagement, behaviour management, mental health awareness, disability awareness, diversity and inclusion and data analysis)

- *design and facilitation* (design and development of assessment packages, conducting the assessment, validation, workplace assessment, recognition of prior learning, continuous improvement, technology-based assessment, collaboration and feedback from employers and students)
- *digital literacy* (professional digital behaviours, practices and identity, digital communication and collaboration, information and media literacy skills, organisational software, digital tools and applications, student management system and learner management system)
- *industry and community collaboration* (return to industry, vocational competence, vocational currency, stakeholder engagement and product development)
- *leadership and learning pathways* (teacher development program, educational leadership, skill development, Diploma of Vocational Education and Training, higher education qualifications, access to university MOUs [Memoranda of Understanding] and research projects, mentoring program, industry and national networks, and reflective practice).

Categories: The framework has three categories of educator: beginner; proficient; and advanced.

Practical uses: The capability statements in the framework are used by teachers and their managers to facilitate professional conversations during which goals and objectives are set, development plans are made, and annual performance reviewed.

North Metropolitan TAFE VET Practitioner Capability Framework and Academic Capability Framework (ACF) (Perth)

These frameworks utilise domains and capability statements from the IBSA VET Practitioner Capability Framework. The key domains and associated areas and skills and behaviours are:

teaching (learning theories, design, facilitation and evaluation)

- *industry and community* (engagement, networks, vocational competence and workforce development)
- *assessment* (assessment theories, products, processes and validation)
- *systems and compliance* (systems standards, system stakeholders, products and processes)
- *skills and behaviours* (teamwork and communication, leadership and strategic direction, values and ethics, cultural competence, innovation, and evidence-based practice and research).

Categories: The capability statements are divided into four educator categories: lecturer; advanced skills lecturer 1; advanced skills lecturer 2; and principal lecturer.

Practical uses: Used to support and improve performance planning and development, career planning, recruitment and selection and workforce planning. It does this by indicating what good performance looks like for both academic staff and managers.

TAFE Queensland Educator Capability Framework

This framework identifies eight domains of professional practice, composed of skill areas related to the domain, which spell out the desired capabilities of high performance. These comprise:

professionalism and core values (teamwork, accountability, commerciality, innovation, applied research and inquiry, work effectively with priority learners and inclusive practice)

- *learning and teaching* (adult learning theory and principles, learning design, facilitation of learning, evaluation and reflection)
- *assessment* (assessment principles, assessment design, evidence-gathering processes, continuous improvement of assessment, recognition of prior learning and technology-based assessment)
- *innovative product and practices* (learning and assessment resources, copyright and intellectual property, validation of resources and delivery models)
- *technology for learning* (digital literacy skills, connect and resource bank, engagement and facilitation through technology)
- *learner, industry and community engagement* (industry and educational networks, training needs analysis, enterprise learning and engagement with industry and community)
- *quality and compliance* (quality framework and standards, quality processes, quality products, VET and higher education environment and vocational competency and currency)
- *educational leadership* (team leadership, program leadership, mentoring and coaching, and knowledge management) The framework is aligned to the TAFE Queensland Strategic Plan, the TAFE Queensland Workforce Strategy and the TAFE Queensland Learning and Teaching Framework.

Categories: The capability statements are divided according to four career stages: transitioning; proficient; highly accomplished; and leading.

Practical uses: It can be used by educators in self-profiling and reflection to benchmark their skills and knowledge against the capabilities in the framework and negotiate opportunities for professional development. It can also be used by managers to identify the current and future skills and knowledge required by their teams for professional learning purposes.

Schooling sector

The AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), the standards have been utilised by a number of organisations and jurisdictions for their school sectors. In some jurisdictions they have also been used to guide recruitment and workforce development or the development of capability frameworks, and in others they have formed the basis of their registration of VET practitioners. The standards are divided into three overarching domains, with seven standards aligned to the domains:

- *professional knowledge*: Standard 1 – know students and how they learn; Standard 2 – know the content and how to teach it
- *professional practice*: Standard 3 – Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning; Standard 4 – Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments; Standard 5 – Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
- *professional engagement*: Standard 6 – Engage in professional learning; Standard 7 – Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community.

These standards and career stages have also informed, or been adopted by, the New South Wales Education Standards Authority, the Queensland College of Teaching, TAFE Queensland and the New South Wales Smart and Skilled program. TasTAFE has been using the standards for the registration of their VET practitioners.

Levels: This framework presents standards according to stages of career and professional development and comprises the categories of graduate; proficient; highly accomplished; and lead.

Practical uses: Define the key elements of quality teaching and are used as standards for the mandatory registration and accreditation of teachers.

Role-focused frameworks

The review also identified capability frameworks (including from overseas) that have been developed to focus on roles specifically established to help support and raise the quality of teaching and, ultimately, the learning experiences of students, including, for example:

- *Aotearoa New Zealand Educational Leadership Capability Framework*: this focuses on leadership capabilities to support the government’s strategic directions relating to school leadership.
- *Mentoring Capability Framework*: implemented by the Department of Education and Training in Victoria, this framework is focused on the role of mentors to ‘support the ongoing effective and ongoing mentoring of new teachers in Victorian Schools, including the support of provisionally registered teachers’.

Both of these frameworks are focused on the capabilities required of leaders in school education, with the New Zealand framework also applying to early childhood education.

Practical uses: The New Zealand framework has been established to support strategic priorities for educational leadership. The Victorian framework aims to support new teachers by providing guidance on how mentorship can be applied to help new teachers develop their skills and knowledge.

Higher education sector

Griffith University’s Learning and Teaching Capabilities Framework

This uses a single framework to recognise the various roles undertaken in the university sector. It applies to all staff, according to the capabilities required of different roles both within and outside the university. The key domains comprise values, capabilities, and continuing professional learning. They are organised around the following set of clusters:

- *understanding the learning context* (knowing about how students learn, your curriculum, the university’s learning and teaching strategic priorities and the wider context)

- *contributing to teams, communities and networks for learning* (contributing to a teaching team and creating a culture for learning)
- *implementing policies and procedures* (knowing your role and responsibilities, implementing policy, procedures and processes, and developing effective and respectful relationships)
- *designing for learning* (designing learning outcomes, designing assessment for learning, designing learning and teaching across teaching sessions and designing learning environments)
- *developing processes and resources for learning* (inclusive and respectful communication, alignment to university strategic priorities, collect and reflect upon student feedback and learning experiences, and curating, adapting, creating and sharing engaging, contemporary and relevant learning, teaching and assessment resources, including online resources)
- *optimising digital technologies* (selecting digital technologies, using digital technologies ethically and responsibly, and using digital technologies to enhance student learning and teaching practice)
- *facilitating and teaching for learning* (establishing a supportive environment and climate for learning, facilitating learning and teaching contexts, using active learning strategies, using feedback for learning, and monitoring curriculum implementation)
- *managing assessment for learning* (communicating assessment expectations, assessing and moderating student work and learning from assessment practices)
- *academic advising for learning* (fostering student learning, development and wellbeing, and making decisions that support student learning, development and wellbeing)
- *practising reflection, evaluation and scholarly inquiry* (applying scholarly model of critical reflection, evaluation, and conducting scholarly learning and teaching inquiries).

Categories: The different roles comprise educator, course convenor, and program director.

Practical uses: The framework can be used by the educators in these different roles to self-evaluate against capability statements, in terms of their strengths and weaknesses, and to identify areas for improvement.

Suitability of capability frameworks and standards for Australia

Stakeholder respondents were asked to consider the sample of the capability frameworks and standards discussed earlier in this report and to indicate their suitability for the Australian VET sector in general, and, in the case of RTO respondents, their institutions in particular. Responding stakeholders provided the following assessments.

- *Charles Darwin University's VET Education Capability Framework*: respondents generally supported the notion of having different capability statements for various roles and levels, although some questioned the inclusion of management roles (say, educational leader) in a capability framework for educators, because this role did not always signify excellence in teaching. Others wondered whether an individual had the ability to choose to become an educational leader in one of the domains. There were also those who accepted the levels but did not want an increase of qualifications requirements, and those who liked the framework's relevance to industry and community engagement. A suggestion was also made for the inclusion of a master teacher role. There were those who did not support linking capabilities to timeframes because it suggested that all individuals progressed at the same rate across domains; for example, they may be at level 1 in entrepreneurship and innovation but at level 2 in teaching and learning. Others would prefer more targeted teaching areas, such as digital skills and literacy, and innovation, and a concentration on the elements of teaching, learning, and assessment resource development.
- *IBSA VET Practitioner Capability Framework*: of all the frameworks, this one tended to act as a reference point for the development of RTO-specific capability frameworks. However, it attracted some criticism, in that it was too general and did not recognise differing roles, including leadership and management roles or beginning and transitioning teachers, trainees, and trainers from industry, nor did it recognise the fact that progression through the domains would be different and that not all domains and skill areas would be relevant to every role. Some would have liked it to include a focus on digital skills; others, a focus on knowledge of adult learning theories.
- *Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework*: this framework was considered to cover all VET educator areas, with some considering it to be excellent and others evaluating it as being too generic, or too complicated to interpret and not suited to industry. It also gave equal weight to each of the functions under each of the areas. Where some appreciated its focus on inclusiveness (including its focus on students at risk), others considered that it was not explicit enough about other marginalised groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, or students with different learning preferences.
- *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITS standards)*: these standards have also been used as reference points for the development of other educator frameworks, with some respondents using it to build the levels in their own frameworks, especially in terms of levels of proficiency. Others were less keen and would have preferred the inclusion of a commencing- or transitioning-into-VET level for new VET teachers, an increased focus on digital skills, and innovative approaches to learning and teaching. However, there were also those who felt that the levels did not sufficiently address the roles of educators in VET, including in engaging collaboratively with industry and the community, and maintaining industry currency. There was also a lack of attention on broader organisational responsibilities, procedures and policies, which are often undertaken by those in management and administration roles; that is, those with the capacity to help facilitate the resources and arrangements for improving the quality of VET teaching. There were others who felt that adopting a

set of standards such as these would lead to compliance-driven and mechanistic approaches to training; others felt that standards would strengthen the focus on systems, compliance and quality assurance. The reference to parents would need to be removed. The elements of AITSL Standards 6 and 7, which referred to professional learning and professional engagement with colleagues, parents and carers, could be adapted to suit the VET sector.

- Suggestions were also made for an improvement in the standards focusing on equity groups, including students with learning difficulties and mental health issues. Improvements in the standards relating to educator digital literacy were also flagged, these being important for building and enhancing students' digital literacy, safety and ethical behaviour, including eliminating cyber-bullying. Such a focus on digital literacy could also be used to update an institution's teaching philosophies. The lack of a specific focus on adult learning principles, engaging students in active and experiential learning, industry relevance, and engagement with research was also noted.
- *USA Career and Technical Education⁵ Standards* (for teachers of students ages 11 to 18+): some aspects of these standards were considered relevant, but respondents did not feel that they could be adopted in, or translated to, the Australian VET sector, mainly because VET teachers already had to prove currency under the ASQA Standards for RTOs and also because this system would require significant resourcing. The relevant aspects of the US framework covered: teacher commitment to students and their learning; knowledge of content and how to teach it; managing and monitoring student learning; and membership of learning communities. Having teachers undertake assessments (online) was generally not supported, especially as it would be culturally and individually challenging to undertake and costly to implement. Portfolios of evidence of teacher real-time practice and effectiveness (captured on video and in student work samples) were felt to require substantial resourcing. However, the notion of such evidence being scored by other educators attracted some interest.
- *Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training (England)*: the organisation and the language of these standards was seen to be clear and easy to follow; however, not all agreed that they could be adapted to the VET sector in Australia. Furthermore, the adoption of parts of the standards would require a significant amount of work. The separation of values, knowledge and skills was felt to make sense, although descriptors were considered more useful for high-level VET studies and for university-trained VET teachers. It was agreed that certain aspects important to the building of a capability framework were absent in these standards, including the need for teachers to be able to develop learning and assessment resources and undertake responsibilities in relation to organisational processes and policies. These included mentoring and leadership, innovation, industry collaboration, the effective use of technology in assessments and the development of digital skills in learners. The standards were useful as a reference document for the development of professional standards but not as a capability framework.

⁵ Career and technical education programs cover what in Australia is known as VET for these age groups; the standards were developed by the US National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Issues and concerns about the quality of VET teaching

In this study we consulted with various stakeholder representatives, including from key industry peak industry bodies, educational managers, VET teachers, TAFE executives and leaders, including members from the Victorian TAFE Association's TAFE Leadership Network, Australian Education Union (from four jurisdictions), and the Education Industry Reference Committee (EIRC) of the Australian Industry Skills Committee. We consulted with officers from two responding regulators (Australian Skills Quality Authority and Western Australian Training and Accreditation Council [WA TAC]). We also received a written submission from the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group, which sets out their formal position on the various consultation questions. These consultations revealed a range of opinions on the quality of VET teaching, with high levels of agreement.

Industry peak bodies

Reluctant to blame teachers for the quality of the training delivery in the sector, representatives of these bodies were somewhat critical of the system for failing to provide the means by which teachers develop the skills, attributes and new technologies required for the successful delivery of training in the current environment. Comments made by these representatives included the following:

The biggest issue is workforce shortage in niche areas. The issue is not about quality but getting access to trainers and assessors with real workforce experience. (ITECA)

The issue is not the teacher. We [seem to] have an idea that pedagogy is important [but this is not reflected in] policy and funding. (TDA)

There is variable quality of VET teaching. It is the employer's responsibility to build a culture of continuous improvement and reflective practice. (VTA)

Free TAFE is bringing more young people into the VET sector, so teachers need the skills to interact with youth as well as with adults. (VDC)

Difficulties in attracting teachers for both niche and industry growth areas and the loss of experienced teachers, sometimes because of the constantly changing and increased compliance requirements, were identified for both public and private sectors.

In terms of ensuring high-quality teaching in VET, one suggestion was raising the level of qualification for entry into the profession to a diploma qualification and ensuring that all teachers had access to professional development opportunities to maintain their industry currency and engagement.

Education Industry Reference Committee

There is general agreement among responding members of the EIRC about the range of issues that impact on the quality of VET teaching, although some are clear that the concerns do not apply to everyone, and that some teachers try to do their best but are constrained by issues beyond their control. They question whether the current level and type of qualification required to enter the profession is of a sufficiently high standard for learning about the actual practice of teaching, learning and assessment, and generally agree that it needs a major revamp. They raise issues about the recruitment of teachers and whether current practice attracts teachers who have the commitment and passion for the profession, as well as the willingness to undertake the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) and to engage in

continued learning throughout their careers. Concern is also expressed about the limited use of language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) specialists, who could provide adequate professional expertise to students having LLN difficulties.

Some EIRC respondents echo the concerns of other groups: that the efforts of RTOs to meet compliance requirements during an audit place added stressors on teachers, stressors not directly related to their teaching obligations. When RTOs are judged non-compliant, then rectification tasks require more work from teachers. Such compliance failures are also perceived by some to reduce a teacher's feeling of self-efficacy and self-confidence, making them more tentative in their interactions with students, which, in turn, may negatively affect the quality of their teaching performance.

Access to adequate funds and resources for relevant and effective professional development for VET practitioners in all their various educator and educator management roles is considered critical in developing VET teaching quality. The non-replacement of former national programs for professional development⁶, programs perceived as having successfully engaged teachers in professional learning and networking with peers (from across both the public and private sector) on topics of importance to teaching and learning, was also raised as impacting on the quality of VET teaching. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when people were working from home and parents were helping students via home schooling, it was also felt that teachers could have benefited from professional development on the use of digital technologies for delivering online learning to students.

An issue was raised about the competitive market forces that had driven the profit-making focus of providers, thereby detracting from the purpose of VET teaching, which is for students to be trained well.

RTOs: educators, senior educators and leaders

Representatives from RTOs agreed that the teaching quality in the sector was variable: some teachers were experts in training delivery, while others needed to improve their teaching skills. A small group of individuals were quite negative in their assessment of the quality of VET teacher skills.

Some respondents also noted the impact of an ageing workforce on teaching, in that older teachers may not have kept up with contemporary teaching approaches. In addition, the increasing diversity of student cohorts, especially those with low literacy and numeracy levels (including international students) and students with mental health and behavioural issues, had created extra challenges for teachers. The loss of national professional development programs, such as Reframing the Future, was also felt to have created a void in the professional development space.

Other key areas of concern included:

- the low level of entry qualifications (mainly the Certificate IV TAE), with its inadequate focus on: skills in teaching and facilitation; the design of courses and curriculum (online, remote and face-to-face); knowledge of adult learning principles and applied learning approaches; and working with diverse student cohorts. Although there were some who wanted to lift the level of qualification required, not everyone was in favour of dropping the Certificate IV TAE as the basic entry-level qualification, nor were they in favour of adding more to the list of requirements for entry into employment

⁶ Programs such as Reframing the Future and projects under the National VET E-Learning Strategy and Flexible Learning Advisory Group were referred to as having foregrounded the importance of professional development for teachers, providers and the whole sector.

- requirements for upgrading the Certificate IV TAE (the designing assessment tools unit) were perceived to have been difficult for students
- the lack of a well-funded, coordinated and systematic approach to workforce development to enable RTOs to access adequate funds and resources for the provision of opportunities for their teachers to engage in continuous professional learning. This is considered key to maintaining industry currency and vocational competence and to developing skills in teaching and assessment
- resources and capacity being shifted away from face-to-face teaching and learning to accommodate online learning and blended or self-directed approaches, noting also that if the latter are not done well, the quality of VET learning outcomes is affected. Although this is especially pertinent in the current pandemic environment, the issue must also be considered post-COVID-19
- lack of teacher digital skills for the delivery, preparation of teaching materials and for presentations (including the use of interactive resources), and a lack of more advanced digital skills for teachers from industries using advanced technologies
- questionable uses of RPL and processes for awarding teaching qualifications to individuals whose performance in the classroom was found to be inadequate
- the requirement for RTOs to recognise qualifications awarded by other RTOs, even when the receiving RTO considers the skills of the student to be of poor quality
- the increased focus on ensuring compliance with regulatory standards, resulting in increased attention on assessment, documentation and audit, to the detriment of teaching and learning.

A further issue concerned the need to assist industry experts who become VET teachers to make the transition to the role of dual professional. Although there were some educators who wanted the dual professional to think of him or herself as a teacher first and foremost, this issue was not specifically raised by many; rather, they wanted to help the industry expert to make the transition from industry expert to dual professional by establishing systematic processes and support mechanisms (including stepped approaches to VET teacher qualification attainment and career progression), backed up by strong mentoring and coaching arrangements to help them become qualified and proficient teachers.

Union representatives

The representatives from the Australian Education Union (from four jurisdictions) who provided information to the study were generally united in what they saw as the key areas concerning their membership, including excessive teacher workloads. These excessive workloads were considered to be exacerbated by the introduction of contestable funding models, which enabled students to enter programs regardless of their suitability for them. When students lack the necessary basic skills and knowledge, teachers are forced to spend more of their time in supporting them. Reduced course durations, issues experienced in online learning, a focus on multiple and continuous assessments, and addressing compliance requirements (including time-consuming administrative tasks) reduce the time teachers have to devote to teaching and learning. Requirements for upgrading the TAE and its associated challenges, such as finding the time to do it and who will pay for it, were also raised as issues.

Associated with heavy workloads are the reduction in face-to-face hours as a cost-saving measure and the increased need for teachers to help students in the teacher's own time. The fact that 70% of teachers in the system are employed on a casual basis necessitates permanent staff dealing with the curriculum and marking and resulting, thereby also increasing the workload. Insecure employment reduces the ability of the sector to attract teachers in skill shortage areas, especially as individuals are generally loath to give up a secure job for an insecure one. The issue of a highly casualised workforce also has implications for

the workloads of permanent staff, in that they are expected to deal with administrative duties, including assisting with enrolment processes, preparing materials for teaching teams, and collecting and entering data on the student management system.

Workloads are also impacted by the time required for teachers to liaise with employers of apprentices and trainees and negotiate and monitor workplace learning for students who are not on contracts of training and those undertaking prevocational programs. Another concern relates to pay levels, since individuals do not leave a high-paying job for one that does not pay as much.

As a group, union representatives expressed concerns about the inadequate preparation of VET teachers, with some wanting to raise the level of minimum qualifications for entry into employment, suggesting that the AQF diploma should be the minimum for VET teachers and the graduate certificate for higher education teachers, while others preferred to keep the certificate IV as the entry-level qualification.

The discussions with union representatives in Victoria indicated that one of the consequences of the introduction of free TAFE is that some institutions are attempting to condense Certificate IV TAE requirements, with the aim of getting people through the course quickly and out to the classroom to teach.

Other issues concerned the inconsistent application of RTO standards, which in any case were considered to be too low. The introduction of short online courses, the removal of the focus on full qualifications and the cancellation of some qualifications, exacerbated by the poor performance of some RTOs, were perceived to reduce VET teacher confidence in the quality of the training delivered by the VET sector.

Regulators

Regulators responded according to their role in quality-assuring the system and encouraging compliance with standards, including trainer and assessor requirements, which cover the provision of adequate professional development.

The insights from the regulators were based on their practical auditing experiences, as well as on findings from investigations and reviews into quality issues related to training and assessment. From this vantage point, they could identify various compliance issues, but also noted that compliance with the RTO standards was not necessarily an indicator of teaching quality. Nonetheless, compliance with the standards could assist teachers to provide a quality experience for students. Respondents were also at pains to point out that many issues raised are not universal and that their suggestions for improvement may already be occurring across the system.

Findings from audits and investigations identified issues (in some providers) with:

- adequate documentation of evidence of compliance with the standards
- lack of consistency in the interpretation of training package requirements
- teachers finding training packages to be unclear and not current. In some jurisdictions, units required for certain qualifications conflict with some occupational regulatory requirements.

Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group

According to ACDEVEG, the issues and concerns about the quality of teaching in VET stem from a range of issues, including:

- the low qualification level of the teaching workforce compared with other sectors
- a decreasing proportion of fully qualified VET teachers, as older, fully qualified, teachers retire and smaller numbers complete higher-level qualifications
- a lack of focus on pedagogy in the Certificate IV TAE
- increased attention to compliance requirements rather than on quality teaching and student learning, both in the certificate IV and in professional development activities
- the high level of casualisation among the VET teaching workforce, with the associated issues of inadequate induction, supervision and training, high labour turnover and lack of support structures to address these issues.

Despite these caveats, ACDEVEG held the view that VET teachers do a very good job under the circumstances, particularly in delivery.

Strategies and support mechanisms for improving quality in VET teaching

Industry peak bodies

The establishment of a national association that would cut across sectoral and jurisdictional lines and act as a registering body for VET teachers was suggested by one peak body CEO as a way to improve the quality of VET teaching. Also required was a capability framework that would define the skills required for VET teaching roles, the ethics associated with the role, and potential career pathways. Such a framework could also assist the sector with quality and consistency by providing templates for position descriptions, performance appraisal and recruitment processes, and advice on continuous professional development requirements.

Peer support and mentoring would be another supporting mechanism. There would also be a role for RTOs to be involved in teacher training, as they too would share the responsibility for professional development.

The establishment of professional learning communities (PLCs) was also suggested, which would enable teachers to have peer conversations about teaching practice, specifically to reflect on what works well in terms of meeting student needs.

Removing the focus on compliance and increasing the focus on improving teacher skills in the design of curriculum and assessment and in the application of adult learning approaches were also suggested as quality-improvement strategies. The implementation of the competency-based training (CBT) model has been criticised because of its focus on demonstrated performance outcomes against current competencies rather than on the knowledge acquired through learning. This was compared with CBT approaches adopted in other countries, where the learning outcomes come first, and the competencies follow.

Education Industry Reference Committee

The suitability of the entry-level qualification (Certificate IV TAE) was of concern to members of the EIRC, who had varying suggestions about how VET teaching quality issues could be addressed. Some believed that there should be adjustments to the TAE, in terms of the content covered and rigour. In relation to helping students with language, literacy and numeracy skills, there is a perceived need for specialist trainers who know how to deliver the learning associated with the complex tasks of reading, writing and communication and who understand adult learning, adult literacy and numeracy, and education.

Another suggestion for improving the quality of VET teaching was the introduction of differentiated career pathways, enabling individuals to make a choice. Teachers might choose to follow a leadership pathway or to become an expert in various teaching and learning fields and functions (including in assessment, online learning, curriculum design). If this were adopted, the availability of such pathways would need to be widely promoted, for example, by means of a framework that could inform teachers of what they might aspire to.

All respondents agreed about the need for teachers to access targeted and quality professional development throughout their careers, but were divided about whether professional development

requirements needed to be more stringent, in terms of the number of weeks of industry currency required. There was also a view that PD should not be predefined and could include issues relevant to:

- the RTO type (for example, enterprise and community RTOs)
- all trainers and assessors (encompassing moderation and validation)
- needs identified at the local level (for example, digital skills). The focus on improving the digital skills of trainers to deliver in digitally enhanced ways was key and becoming increasingly important as technologies changed for teaching, as well as for industry.

One of the proposed ways for RTOs to improve the quality of VET teaching is to support teachers through mentoring and coaching, but in view of the considerable number of sessional workers in TAFE institutes and other RTOs, whose jobs are not secure, it was recognised that incentives may be needed to encourage engagement with professional development activities.

It was also suggested that ministers focus on teaching quality and consider VET integral to the education system overall. Another suggestion was to change the name of the training package for training and assessment to VET Teaching Qualification. If we want to change the image of the profession, it was thought we should start by focusing on teaching and learning.

RTOs: educators, senior educators and leaders

While RTO stakeholders made similar suggestions for improving quality to other groups, they proposed a range of other strategies designed to equip teachers with the appropriate skills and knowledge for delivering quality teaching. These included:

- making changes to the Certificate IV TAE to ensure more holistic⁷ approaches to teacher preparation, including the development of needs analysis of skills to customise teaching to diverse needs of students
- ensuring better investment in continuing professional development and industry currency, including for educational managers (or their equivalents)
- making funds available for the purchase of quality tools and equipment for training, as well as for instructional design resources
- adopting an internship or apprenticeship model of training for commencing educators, with a gradual, staged approach to undertaking the various functions of a trainer and assessor, with a reduced workload for the first six months, rigorous mentoring and an induction program that would require participation in learner-engagement observations
- implementing career development pathways to enable teachers to progress to different and more senior roles, including leadership positions. This would include establishing ceiling levels for various teacher pay structures. This includes keeping the Certificate IV TAE as the base level qualification. The further learning that teachers would then be expected to undertake would be identified, including the additional qualifications to be completed, depending on the various stages in their career, including the transition to leadership positions
- reconceptualising national approaches to teacher professional development, similar to the Reframing the Future program.

⁷ Despite the suggestion that the Certificate IV TAE was judged by many to be the right level of qualification for entry into VET teaching, there was little appetite for making any changes to the content of the qualification in the near future.

The following are a small selection of comments associated with these suggestions:

Teachers need to be shown what quality looks like and how we get there ... we need to create a more aspirational sector ... capability frameworks are aspirational. (RTO, CEO)

Although a focus on compliance is important, we also need to build capacity, build professional identity, test ideas and share good ideas. (RTO, Northern Territory)

Union representatives

Respondents from the Australian Education Union emphasised the need to address workload issues. In view of the perception that VET teachers are becoming increasingly isolated from colleagues because of reduced opportunities for teamwork, it was suggested that communities of practice be established to enable information sharing and peer guidance on curriculum, and assessment moderation and validation.

These respondents also highlighted the important issue of raising the status and professionalism of VET teachers through suitable higher education qualifications. There was an acknowledgment that a drive for higher education qualifications would not be successful unless teachers had access to adequate support to undertake the additional studies. One solution proposed was to provide incentives to teachers before, during and after the TAE to obtain a higher level of qualification.

In Victoria there are plans to implement a pilot training program for TAFE teachers in 2020; the Hawthorne Method pilot, which would combine intense periods of upfront learning, followed by a combination of teaching and learning.

Regulators

According to the responding regulators, the key avenue to quality teaching is enabling teachers to improve or further their practice through ongoing professional development, including professional conversations with peers via communities of practice or other networks. A view was expressed that the move to regulate for outputs had led to a stripping-out of support and resourcing for teachers to engage in such activities for improving their practice.

It was also recognised that obtaining the qualification was only the first step. What was required was continuous engagement with other teachers, focused on, for example:

- effective ways for designing, validating and moderating assessments
- engaging appropriately with students, taking account of their preferences for learning, whether online or face-to-face.

Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group

ACDEVEG's suggestions for addressing some of the VET teaching quality concerns is to ensure that VET teachers receive their training from quality providers (both in VET and in higher education) and that programs for teacher training cover pedagogy and quality training delivery, including higher qualifications for teachers of the Certificate IV TAE.

VET needs to have an intellectually agile workforce; teachers need to be able to grasp changes in their industry or discipline areas, their student demographics and the policy content. They need to be afforded the opportunities to develop the kind of intellectual resources needed to engage with such policy and contextual changes.

Responsibility for the quality of VET teaching

Across stakeholder groups there appears to be consensus on the question of shared responsibility for improving the quality of VET teaching.

Industry peak bodies

As a group, all peak bodies, RTOs and practitioners agreed that they had a collective role to play in driving quality in the sector, with assistance from governments, as exemplified by the following quotes:

Governments must encourage best practice and put in place educative material regarding compliance. Quality enhancements should be up to the RTOs, peak bodies and practitioners. (ITECA)

VET teachers are professionals and should be responsible for their own continuous improvement. Government should invest in TAFE and have a formal capability development framework. RTOs should make time available for teachers [to engage in professional learning] to improve the quality of their practice. (VTA)

The national effort for improving VET teaching quality should be coordinated and overseen by a national body such as the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).⁸ Governments should provide the required direction and resources, while individuals should be responsible for making themselves employable. The business [RTOs] should drive teaching quality in their organisations, while industry can demand that the VET system produces workers with the needed skills. (VDC)

Professional development centres from which providers could purchase PD should be established by providers or by governments. (TDA)

Education Industry Reference Committee

There was general agreement that there was a shared responsibility for improving the quality of VET teaching. The responsibility is to be held by governments, RTOs and the individuals themselves. A dissenting view held that the responsibility should fall on the shoulders of the regulators and government, because if it were left to individuals and RTOs themselves, they might not implement comprehensive strategies for quality improvement. Critical in this joint approach is leadership by provider CEOs. All states and territories also share in the responsibility for improving the quality of VET teaching, as do regulators.

Some considered that industry shares responsibility by making their firms available to teachers who need a workplace to maintain their industry currency; however, industry would need to receive value for their contribution. Given that governments already make substantial investments in workforce development, respondents felt that industry should also contribute.

It was felt that enterprises are also responsible for the quality of their trainers, which is achieved by recruiting the right people and offering them support to develop their VET teaching skills.

⁸ COAG has been superseded by the National Cabinet, a body comprising the prime minister and all the state and territory premiers and chief ministers.

One view held that individuals should be told on initial recruitment that it is their responsibility to engage in continuous professional development, so they would be aware of the obligations of VET teachers from the outset.

RTOs: educators, senior educators and leaders

Some RTO respondents were generally of the view that, although the RTOs should be the main drivers, the responsibility for improving VET teaching quality should be held jointly by RTOs, the educators themselves and governments.

A shared responsibility also meant that governments should not only be setting suitable RTO standards but also quality teaching standards. Educational managers, quality managers and executives in RTOs would be responsible for driving the quality agenda, including quality assurance and compliance, and professional learning for improving teaching practice.

Others held the view that, although the RTO should be responsible for the quality of teaching, the nature of professional development would depend on the individual needs of teachers and the requirements of industry and the regulator. Professional associations could also be involved in providing professional development.

An NT-based RTO considered that RTOs should have professional learning groups and communities of practice to share knowledge and information, an approach considered preferable to simply acquiring more qualifications.

Some RTO respondents aspired to having a centrally funded national organisation, such as the Victorian VET Development Centre, dedicated to driving quality, with a specific role for TAFE.

The RTO has responsibility for a framework to provide opportunities, keep records, providing valuable professional development, making it easy for teachers to attend PD, but we can't do it for them. Individual teachers need to attend. (RTO, NSW)

RTOs should be responsible for improving quality and [it's] the individuals' responsibility to lead their own capability. (RTO, Northern Territory)

Some placed the responsibility for quality firmly at the feet of VET teachers, who would maintain their own professional development, but respondents also agreed that this needed to be closely monitored. Meanwhile, the RTO's responsibility was considered to be the recruitment of the right people and creating an environment conducive to quality teaching.

Union representatives

Australian Education Union respondents agreed that improving VET teaching quality was a system-wide responsibility, with industry (including unions), governments, educators and the community all having a role to play. It was felt that the community needed to be assured that they would receive a steady stream of trusted, reliable and capable professionals. Although industry would be involved, it would not be the key driver of quality.

The union role would be to protect members by helping them to maintain their professional status, by encouraging them to be innovative in their practice, self-confident, and forward-thinking in times of change. But most of all, respondents believed that teachers need enough time to develop and embed the required attributes and skills into their practice, to develop their skills and confidence in learning, and to use and embed up-to-date technology into their teaching delivery.

The role of the RTO would be to ensure that teachers are given ample opportunities to improve their practice, either through formal professional development, or informal networks and communities of practice. This required them to have in place strong support structures and services to enable this to occur (including mentoring and coaching arrangements). It also involves providing a safe environment for teachers to be able to offer help to others.

There is also a role for individual teachers to seek out new ideas and participate in professional learning opportunities where possible. A suggestion was made for this professional learning to be captured in enterprise agreements, where this does not already occur.

Regulators

Responding regulators were of the view that multiple players in the VET system had a shared responsibility for improving the quality of VET teaching, including federal and state departments of education and training, RTOs, individual teachers, industry and learners (in their feedback for teacher self-reflection). The regulator's role would still be to encourage compliance, remove poor providers from the system and provide advice to RTOs on compliance. The regulators would continue to provide access to videos on assessment-related issues and on understanding audits, all of which would be helpful in improving quality in VET teaching.

Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group

ACDEVEG believes that the responsibility for improving the quality of VET teaching belongs to all stakeholders, including:

- employers of VET teachers
- employer bodies, such as TAFE Directors Australia and the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia
- individual VET teachers
- providers of professional development
- levels of government involved in VET (including the national regulator, ASQA)
- providers of teacher education and training (including higher education providers).

ACDEVEG is of the view that ASQA should take a role similar to the inspectorial approach to quality assurance taken in the United Kingdom by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED).

ACDEVEG also believes that the removal of the Commonwealth Government's national VET staff development activities and programs (such as the former National Staff Development Committee and the Reframing the Future program) has had a negative impact on the quality of professional development available to VET teachers.

According to ACDEVEG, it is also important that the sector seek industry input, not only in relation to the competencies that students need to achieve, but also to what it needs from VET teaching.

Higher education institutions bear considerable responsibility for developing quality VET teachers through their teacher-training programs. This responsibility will be increased if numbers in these qualifications grow. While such institutions already have close relationships with the sector, improvement is always possible. ACDEVEG itself plays an important role here.

Registration and accreditation for VET teachers

Stakeholders were asked for their opinions on introducing registration and accreditation processes for VET teachers (including mandatory or voluntary systems). They were also asked to consider the legislated standards for trainers and assessors currently in operation.

Opinion was divided on whether the sector needed to introduce mandatory registration and accreditation procedures. Irrespective of whether it was mandatory or voluntary, the majority tended to support a staged approach.

Industry peak bodies

Consultations with industry peak bodies revealed a range of sometimes conflicting opinions on the introduction of registration and accreditation for VET teachers, with some favouring mandatory registration and others against it. There were those who were in favour of professionalising the sector through teacher registration (peak bodies representing teachers in the public sector in one jurisdiction), because it would require continuous professional development for accumulating points for maintaining registration. It was suggested that registration would also help trade teachers to build their professional identity and capability teachers.

The peak body representing the private sector (which has already implemented a voluntary accreditation system via the Professional College of VET Practitioners) was generally supportive of voluntary rather than mandatory registration or accreditation. Details of this system are provided in appendix E.

Those who did not support mandatory registration or accreditation believed that VET teachers already complied with certain requirements under the RTO Standards for Registration 2015. In addition, teachers in certain occupations (for example, electricians) were also required to comply with the respective Australian Standards. Mandatory registration for VET teachers would then add another set of bureaucratic red tape and may be a barrier to recruitment from industry.

Some respondents expressed the view that, before a registration scheme is contemplated for VET teachers, a rationale should be developed for its introduction. The practical outcomes – raised in relation to quality improvement among school teachers, who must already comply with registration requirements – were also questioned:

Before you look at a registration scheme you need to ask what is its market value and why introduce it? You need also to provide examples of the market failures that require it. (ITECA)

If [registration] is to be used as a barrier to entry, then the pay scale [for these VET teachers] is not worth the while of their getting all these qualifications. (TDA)

When accreditation was presented as a means for teacher guidance and professional development rather than as a formal requirement for more qualifications, it attracted more support.

A staged approach to registration was also suggested, whereby recruits would start in the profession with provisional registration. At this point they would complete the Certificate IV TAE units, which would introduce them to the skills required for teaching, although they would not be expected to conduct any assessments. They would then apply for registration under an indentured traineeship. As they progressed

through their careers, they would be expected to continue to develop their skills and upgrade qualifications as required.

Although the concept of a national professional association was supported by industry peak bodies there was a view that there may not be widespread support for the concept. Nevertheless a registration scheme for VET teachers in TAFE in Victoria was felt to be a possibility, especially as the Victorian Institute of Teachers, which registered early childhood educators, provided a precedent.

Education Industry Reference Committee

The main message from the majority of respondents on this topic is that, although registration might be useful in some ways, they were not convinced that on its own it would be a quality driver; nor were they convinced that the VET system needed it. Moreover, it was considered to be unsuitable for the needs of trainers in industry, who taught on a casual basis. Given the diversity of provider groups, such a process could not take a one-size-fits-all approach. One respondent considered registration to be useful in providing a register of qualified teachers, their qualifications and the professional development completed.

Although it was acknowledged by some that registration could be used to lift the status of the profession in the eyes of government, industry, education and the community, the high numbers of casual workers in the VET system would make it difficult to implement. Issues of cost of fees, frequency of registration renewal, and coverage of different roles would be difficult to address.

Mandatory registration would be particularly difficult to implement for enterprise and other RTOs that employed many volunteer trainers and assessors. This related to the burden and cost of expecting these volunteers and trainers to 'jump through another set of bureaucratic hoops', keeping in mind that they too had other occupational licensing and accreditation requirements to fulfil. According to the CEO of one enterprise not-for-profit RTO (who employed around 100 volunteers to train surf-life savers, firefighters and marine sea rescuers), the introduction of mandatory registration would have the same effect on RTOs as had occurred when teachers were required to upgrade their Certificate IV TAE qualification. During the upgrade, the RTO in question had experienced high levels of attrition from volunteer trainers and assessors, who left without completing the course, even though the RTO had paid the course fees for all 100 of its workforce.

The general lack of appetite for mandatory registration is also due to the cost it would impose on a highly casualised workforce, who, it was felt, would not be able to afford the registration fees or the cost of any continuing professional development requirements, which often accompany a registration regimen. In view of the skill shortage for trade teachers to teach trade students, the cost of acquiring the required qualification to become registered, the cost of an annual registration fee to maintain the registration, and the cost attending professional development events were felt to dissuade any industry person from becoming a VET trainer.

Questions about which body or authority would oversee registration processes and would develop a suitable framework which would cover other parts of the system, were also raised. A suggestion was made for the government to collaborate with industry to construct a quality framework, perhaps a 'Framework for Improving Teaching Quality'.

Support for having a national capability framework of some description was not widespread, but the IBSA framework and the AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers were identified by some to be good resources for guiding the development of local RTO frameworks.

Those who believed that the concept of registration might have value identified some critical challenges to its practical implementation. For example, one RTO currently required trainers to teach flooring trades. This RTO had been unable to find anyone able or prepared to do the Certificate IV TAE. Mandatory registration would only add another barrier to attracting suitable industry experts.

There was strong support for the powerful role of professional development rather than registration for lifting the quality and skills of VET teaching. However, there needed to be sufficient resources to fund the activities and the providers who deliver these.

RTOs: educators, senior educators and leaders

RTOs were not united in introducing mandatory registration, with those agreeing with it believing it had the potential to professionalise the sector and raise standards; those not in agreement feared the consequences for VET teachers of having to meet an extra set of requirements, including the costs of maintaining registration. Introducing a system of mandatory registration would have consequences for attracting staff, especially casual staff from industry who wanted to give back to their trades or professions by becoming VET teachers.

Among those who favoured the idea of registration because it would assist in raising the image of educators and the profession were those who also believed that the sector was not yet ready for mandatory registration. There was a suggestion for managing a graduated approach to mandatory registration.

Where RTOs agreed that registration would provide some benefits in terms of helping to raise the profile of VET and the image of VET educators, they also argued that the process should not only include trainers and assessors, but also other educational professionals involved in supporting this effort. A graduated approach to registration was also suggested, beginning with an optional registration process, with mandatory registration to follow after a certain time (for example, five years). Such a solution would allow teachers to become accustomed to the idea, with early adopters of the voluntary system becoming champions of registration. The suggestion was also made for the use of a set of professional standards to guide in the construction of a portfolio of evidence, which could have the dual function of providing evidence of currency and competency (required for RTO compliance with the standards for registration). An annual registration fee, aligned to whether it was for provisional registration or full registration, or whether the teacher was employed or not, would also be required.

Another view put forward by one senior educator, who believed the teaching skills of VET teachers were wanting, was that registration in itself (mandatory or voluntary) would not do anything to raise the quality of VET teaching quality, because what was required was a lifting of the teaching skills themselves.

In Tasmania, all TasTAFE VET teachers are required to be registered with the teachers' registration board in that state. According to the CEO of TasTAFE, the argument that registration is likely to improve VET teacher image appears to be without merit. The bureaucracy associated with a registration process over and above teachers meeting the ASQA requirements has created barriers and inhibited agile recruitment of qualified industry teachers. Although the Tasmania Teachers Registration Board process for character checks is considered worthwhile, it is felt that there are other simpler and equally effective means that are used by other TAFE institutes. A further reason for the perceived lack of success of mandatory registration is that it applies only to the public sector: Tasmanian private providers are exempt. If registration had improved the image of VET teachers, then it would have been mandated for all providers. As the CEO of TasTAFE noted:

The solution to quality in the VET sector is not registration. What we need is to define what quality looks like and set out a path to incentivise provider behaviour to achieve quality outcomes. Increasing red tape in a sector already highly regulated does not raise quality.

A number of the RTO respondents valued teacher registration for the schooling sector but in view of the standards already existing for VET, they felt that it would add an extra burden.

It was also felt by those who were not supportive of registration (especially if mandatory) that it would consume government resources that could be spent on professional development (considered to be far more valuable). The enterprise agreement in some states also spelled out the roles and responsibilities for teachers and the career progression structure. These were felt to be far more useful in practice than a set of registration criteria.

We need minimum requirements, but not registration and too much bureaucracy because these will get in the way of getting teachers to fulfil our role in meeting industry needs. (RTO, WA)

Union representatives

Opinion of the respondents from the Australian Education Union is divided over the need to implement a registration or accreditation scheme for VET teachers, especially a mandatory one, and views across the teacher union movement are unlikely to be unanimous. It was requested that, if registration were to be implemented, teachers be given a say in its development.

Respondents who were supportive of introducing mandatory registration or accreditation for VET teachers did so because they believed it could raise the status of the VET teaching profession. Those who were uncertain of its value raised issues about how it would be implemented, which body would have oversight or regulatory responsibility, and how RTOs would know whether their teachers were registered. It was suggested that there be a qualification-based registration process, focused on higher qualification levels, industry currency, and vocational and professional competence. Examples were given of licensed professional nurse educators who opted to maintain their nursing registration while also complying with the legislated RTO standards relating to the qualifications required by trainers and assessors.

The additional regulatory burden on RTOs and teachers was identified as a key barrier to mandatory registration, with reference made to the issues experienced with the recent requirement to upgrade the Certificate IV TAE qualification, yet again. Some teachers lacked the time to update their vocational/industry currency due to time spent upgrading their Certificate IV TAE qualification. Other barriers related to the cost of periodic qualification upgrading (which other professions are not required to do) and the ability of RTOs to recruit sufficient qualified staff.

Regulators

Regulators did not have a formal position on the issue of VET teacher registration; however, they offered some insights. First, they agreed that, given the disquiet in the sector regarding constant change, it was important to reflect on whether this would be exacerbated by the introduction of teacher registration. Following the recent requirement to upgrade to the latest version of the Certificate IV TAE qualification, the VET system had experienced the attrition of many experienced teachers, resulting in a shortage of qualified VET teachers. They also questioned the benefits of additional legislated requirements to an already overburdened workforce. In addition, the annual teacher registration fee would negatively impact on a highly casualised VET workforce.

If registration were to be implemented, then regulators agreed that a decision would need to be made about which organisation would be the registering body. In such a scenario, the role of the regulator might be to regulate the RTO, by seeking evidence of the registration of their VET teachers and the number of professional development hours they had completed.

Regulators were clear that it is important not to add additional barriers to attracting or maintaining teachers in the VET system. They were also quite emphatic that teacher registration would not immediately deal with quality teaching issues. What is required is continuing professional development to develop further the skills and knowledge of teachers to ensure they provide effective teaching and learning for students.

A mandatory requirement for registration was believed to undermine the VET system and prevent the movement of teachers between industry and the VET sector. If mandatory registration were introduced, it could reduce diversity, especially in Western Australia, where there are efforts to increase the capacity of the Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander teaching workforce, especially in the field of health. It would also compromise the work being done under the 'Working under Supervision Pathway'. In addition, there was no value seen in having a voluntary system of teacher registration.

Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group

ACDEVEG does not support mandatory accreditation or registration for VET teachers; rather, they favour a system of mandatory accreditation for VET teacher education providers and courses (both in the VET sector and in higher education). Accreditation should cover curriculum and delivery matters, as well as the qualifications of those delivering the programs. For teachers, ACDEVEG favours a system of voluntary registration similar to that used in the United Kingdom, where there are established bodies to manage such processes. Keeping in mind that no agency currently exists in Australia to manage such a system of VET teacher registration, ACDEVEG suggests the creation of a new public body with this responsibility.

The risks and benefits of raising the bar on entry requirements

Opinion was divided among all categories of respondent when asked whether there was any merit in adding to the existing formal requirements for entering the VET teaching profession. Some did not support increasing qualification requirements but thought that the basic qualification could be revisited and improved, while others supported higher entry requirements to both raise the status and professionalism of the VET teacher and broaden teacher understanding of professional knowledge and teaching practice.

Respondents also identified a range of risks in raising the bar to entry, with some suggesting a staged approach for beginning teachers, allowing them to progress through various career stages and pathways while gaining further qualifications. There were also issues with ensuring that licensed tradespeople, who obtained their licence many years ago, are current in what they are teaching.

Industry peak bodies

Those who wanted VET teachers to be registered before entering the profession and maintained thereafter identified the Certificate IV TAE and/or the Diploma of Adult Education as minimum qualifications. Teachers would then be expected to remain current with changing requirements, both in education and industry, as well as maintain their registration.

According to peak body respondents, raising the VET teacher qualification level for entry creates challenges in attracting sufficient industry experts to the VET teaching profession, especially from trades that attract higher wages. The introduction of free TAFE, which led to increased numbers of student enrolments, had exacerbated skill shortages.

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Support for adding to the formal requirements for entry to VET teaching is not widespread, although some respondents would like to see additions to the knowledge required. Respondents representing specialist areas (including language, literacy and numeracy) want to ensure that entrants have a higher level of adult learning theory and a specialisation in the delivery of LLN training.

Objections to additional requirements came particularly from members of the committee from RTOs that also need to meet the legislated requirements of industry regulators, whereby rigorous delivery and assessment standards and additional mandated evidence are required. This particularly impacts on enterprise RTOs that offer training in emergency services (for example, fire, search and rescue), which are subject to additional requirements, thereby adding to the regulatory burden. In those organisations there is a separation of development, delivery and assessment roles, such that those who identify training needs do not deliver the program, assessors do not create the assessments and the design of assessment tools is undertaken independently.

Certificate IV TAE

Respondents believed that the Certificate IV TAE needed to be revisited and restructured (but not immediately) to increase its focus on student needs and to provide TAE student teachers with the practical teaching skills they require for delivery of training. Many referred to the reduced morale of VET teachers and, in many cases, the loss of staff when teachers were recently required to upgrade their TAE qualification: they may have been unwilling or unable to complete the upgrade. The periodic requirement to upgrade the TAE qualification was also thought to diminish the attractiveness of the profession to potential recruits, especially those from industry. Industry experts who had come to the role because of a commitment to passing on their craft to learners were frustrated by having to complete the additional qualification upgrade requirement. The design and develop assessment tools unit was reported to be especially difficult for a substantial number of teachers.

Nevertheless, when asked if there should be additions to the existing entry-level qualification requirement, the majority were still keen to retain the Certificate IV TAE, but with the potential for fundamental changes down the track.

A suggestion was made to diversify the Certificate IV TAE qualification to enable it to service the needs of VET practitioners in different roles such as:

- Certificate IV in Direct Teaching and Assessing
- Certificate IV in Teaching Delivery (teaching only)
- Certificate IV TAE in Assessment (assessing only)
- Certificate IV-TAE in Compliance and Quality Assurance
- Certificate IV TAE in Management and Leadership.

Lifting qualification levels

One view regarding the raising of entry qualifications was that those teaching the Certificate IV TAE (and other qualifications) should hold a qualification that is at least one level above the qualification being taught.

A developmental and staged approach to the upgrading of qualifications was also suggested, in which entry-level teachers would start at the certificate IV level and progress to the Diploma of Vocational Education and Training and eventually to a university degree, with this progression matched to a career pathway to senior positions. The risks associated with raising entry level could be reduced by introducing pathways with various entry points, according to career stage or position level, ensuring that new entrants would be aware of the entry requirements for each career pathway.

Despite the concerns about the Certificate IV TAE, one respondent stated that, if entry requirements were to increase to degree level, 'it would lead to a collapse of the VET system'.

Many believed it was not helpful to constantly make changes to the Certificate IV TAE qualification, especially for individuals who are already well-qualified. Even those who support a staged approach to entry consider that there may be risks in raising the entry level, namely, teacher shortages, especially in trade areas. These risks could be mitigated by having the right selection processes in place to attract suitable applicants. In the COVID-19 context, in which many have lost their job, it is felt that the VET sector might be inundated by 'tradies' needing work, but who might return to their higher-paying trades post-pandemic, thus triggering another shortage of VET teachers. As an aside, the training of financial counsellors to help those affected by drought, bushfires and COVID-19 is funded by government

incentives, but these students require 22 hours of work placement, which cannot take place during the pandemic. There are similar examples across industries of the work of VET teachers being affected during this period.

RTOs: educators, senior educators and leaders

Respondents were not united in their views on whether additions should be made to the VET teacher entry-level qualification. Some were of the opinion that additional requirements serve no purpose if there is no pool of suitable applicants to select from in the first place, a situation more critical in regional and rural areas. Others want to raise the entry-level qualification to diploma level, accompanied by the appropriate level of vocational qualification.

For example, industry experts might be good prospects for teaching because of their trade experience or professional know-how; however, they would require considerable support to acquire the basic entry qualification to VET teaching. Initial induction and basic training in the skills required for teaching could be provided, followed by a staged approach to becoming a fully qualified teacher and later progressing through various career stages to proficiency and excellence. In considerations of whether additional requirements are warranted, appropriate criteria would need to be identified before deciding upon those additions. RTOs had concerns about the practicality and risk associated with raising entry-level requirements for VET teachers. Some believed a thorough understanding of regulator requirements in relation to VET teacher qualifications is required to clarify existing confusion. Despite some frustration with the inadequacy of the Certificate IV TAE, there is hesitancy among these educators to advocate for additional changes for fear of triggering a mass exit from the VET system.

Since some RTOs are finding that new teaching recruits lack the digital and literacy and numeracy skills necessary for completing the entry-level training, it was proposed that a prerequisite benchmark for literacy, numeracy and digital skills be added to pre-enrolment assessment. In a useful example of staged entry from South Australia, designed to alleviate shortages of VET teachers, new teaching recruits (generally from industry and in areas of skills shortage) are able to undertake only the base entry-level skill set, Enterprise Trainer Presenting Skill Set, initially; following this they progress to completion of the Certificate IV TAE over a 12-month period. Where candidates lack adequate digital and literacy and numeracy skills, this acts as a barrier to completing both the Enterprise Trainer Presenting skill set and the Certificate IV TAE. In this case, prerequisite skills are essential to the success of this initiative.

A graduated approach to entering the profession, including internships, was supported by some RTOs, since these can provide an opportunity to experience the profession before investing time and effort in gaining the qualification.

Those who argued for raising the entry-level qualification did so because they believed it would improve the image of the profession and because the Certificate IV TAE was considered to be inadequate preparation for training and assessing.

Like many other stakeholders responding to our study, RTOs believe that the risk to raising the entry level would be a reduction in the pool of applicants from industry or community organisations who aspire to become VET teachers. The other risk would be the potential attrition among existing teachers who would need to undertake a program of study while working.

We are struggling to get teachers ... If we tell them to go out and get a diploma or a bachelor's degree, we will shrink the pipeline. The entry-level Certificate IV TAE is probably right. (RTO, NSW)

Opinion was divided on whether the entry-level qualification provides sufficient preparation for VET teachers, although all respondents identified issues with the existing Certificate IV TAE. Some proposed the Diploma of Adult Education as an alternative entry-level qualification, since it could be tailored better to sector needs. This suggestion was not universally supported since it could not be assumed that all Diplomas of Adult Education and Certificate IV TAE qualifications were equivalent. In addition, some industry experts might have difficulties completing the diploma – similar to those already being experienced with the Certificate IV TAE.

Entry requirements to the profession can be raised where there is competition for jobs:

We don't want to increase barriers, but in certain areas where the process is more competitive, we would consider specifying added entry requirements, but in other areas we would get no teachers [if we increased requirements]. (RTO, WA)

Union representatives

The Australian Education Union respondents who saw no issues with increasing entry requirements believed that existing requirements are too low. It was felt that the current Certificate IV TAE was unfit for the purpose for which it was intended, since, in view of its lack of focus on learning theory and teaching adults, it did not prepare practitioners effectively for the teaching role.

We need a higher base qualification and teaching qualification. (AEU representative)

A dissenting union view however proposed that the Certificate IV TAE should remain the entry-level qualification, with provisions for teachers to undertake higher qualifications should they seek promotional opportunities to supervisory, mentoring or other senior positions that attracted a higher salary.

The risk to raising the bar on entry-level qualifications is that it would be difficult to recruit entry-level teachers from industry, especially those wanting to change career. If the bar were too high, it would dissuade prospective teachers who would otherwise have the potential to succeed.

Once again, the suggestion was made to stage the timing of higher-level qualifications, based on the choices of teachers, who would be encouraged to progress at the time and stage of their own choosing. Incentives could include a reduction in teaching load and study release. In some enterprise agreements automatic progression occurs with the completion of higher qualifications, while in others the only way to obtain a higher salary is to apply for, and successfully gain, a promotional position.

Regulators

Regulators questioned the need for additions to existing entry-level requirements since recent changes to the Certificate TAE qualification had not in many cases had a positive impact on the quality of training and assessing, mainly because there was little support for their introduction (namely the LLN unit). They agreed that there would be merit in revisiting the Certificate IV TAE, with a view to customising it to the diverse roles in the VET sector, and adopting a staged approach to higher qualifications where individuals wanted to do so. They commonly agreed that, if the qualification for entry were raised too high, the system would risk losing industry experts who might otherwise become trainers and assessors. There was a reluctance to remove the Certificate IV TAE as the basic qualification for entry.

In reflecting on the risk to the sector in raising the entry qualifications, regulators referred to the feedback that ASQA and TAC had received from the sector, including:

- the shortage of quality teachers
- issues experienced during the recent Certificate IV TAE upgrade
- difficulties in retaining existing teachers, and associated with this, an inability to attract suitably qualified people from industry
- the risk to quality of having too many compliance requirements, with staff able to do only some things very well, but not everything.

Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group

ACDEVEG concerns itself with qualifications in VET pedagogy which are at a higher level than the Certificate IV in TAE. It is of the view that the system should introduce some targets for a certain proportion (say, 25%) of full-time VET teachers to be qualified at the AQF-6 level or above, and for such targets to be doubled to 50% of the workforce within 10 years. It also believes that new teachers should be encouraged to undertake such qualifications and be rewarded for doing so with increased pay levels and improved job security.

VET teachers should also be encouraged to undertake higher-level qualifications in their industry areas, especially since a 'deeper and broader knowledge base in a content area can improve teacher quality'.

School teachers have access to Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) for undertaking university-level study, and ACDEVEG also supports a similar system for VET teachers to undertake higher-level VET qualifications.

Also suggested are full-time qualifications (comprising substantial hours of practicum placements) and a 'Teach VET for Australia' program, along the lines of the 'Teach for Australia' program, which enlists talented teachers to go to secondary schools in areas of disadvantage, the aim being to help students achieve their potential. Such an initiative was suggested by other stakeholders.

ACDEVEG agreed that expecting entry-level teachers to have a qualification at AQF-6 level or above might be a barrier to entry for many, especially as entrants to VET teaching are generally older than entrants to school teaching and may not be in a position to forgo full-time work, unless they were assured of employment in the VET sector. It proposed a system whereby teachers who gain employment in the sector are expected to gain higher-level qualifications over time, an approach that could be built into the career expectations of existing teachers.

The role of industry in recruitment and selection

Respondents from all categories agreed that no case could be made for involving industry in the actual selection of teachers, although it could offer advice on vocational and industry competence, assistance in developing selection criteria related to industry practice, and participation in course advisory bodies. There were, however, instances where employers had been involved in selection panels to determine the industry expertise of candidates, although they were not expected to select candidates according to their learning and teaching expertise. Employers could also help to identify industry experts who might make good teachers, as well as provide opportunities for RTO teaching staff to maintain their industry currency.

Industry peak bodies

Peak body participants were of the view that, since industry already has a role in developing training packages, validating curriculum at local levels, and deciding the extent of experience required for a person to maintain industry currency, there was no need for it also to be involved in the selection of trainers and assessors. Comments included:

When it comes to pedagogical issues, industry does not need to have a role. (TDA)

What is not acceptable is having employers vetoing [staff selection]. It is the RTO's role to employ the right people. (VTA)

Indirectly, industry is vital to identifying what should be taught, by its involvement in Training Package development. This should be reflected in identifying selection criteria for teacher recruitment. (VDC)

Industry already have a role ... RTOs will select relevant trainers according to location, discipline and population cohorts. (ITECA)

Education Industry Reference Committee

Opinion is divided among respondents about the involvement of industry in the selection of teachers and trainers, with some refusing to consider it, while others saw merit in helping to develop selection criteria to ensure that trainers have the vocational currency, experience and expertise to prepare workers for their industry.

RTOs: educators, senior educators and leaders

RTOs did not identify a major role for industry in the recruitment and selection of teachers, since they were unsure what type of a role it could play, and which industries might be involved. One suggestion was to include industry on selection panels in a minor way. Another was for industry to provide opportunities for teacher development, including industry seminars, targeted to debates about education.

Union representatives

Opinion of the Australian Education Union respondents was divided over industry involvement in the recruitment and selection of teachers, with some seeing no role and others a limited role. Supporters of a limited role suggested employers could be on selection panels but only give advice on issues of industry currency and the practical experience of the applicant and not on their teaching ability (unless they too had been teachers).

Regulators

There was no appetite among regulator respondents for involving industry in the selection of trainers and assessors, although they could be used to provide advice on issues in which they could be reasonably expected to add value, including any assessment of the vocational currency of the candidate or the possession of legislated licences for certain occupations.

The reason given is that considerable consultation with industry, including industry regulators and industry reference committees, happens already. There is also engagement with industry in the validation exercises.

Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group

ACDEVEG supported a role for significant employers to be involved in the selecting 'content' criteria, perhaps at the national level.

Using peer observation to improve teacher practice

A common practice in many training places is the use of peers as critical friends to help teachers focus on areas needing improvement.

Insights into the merits of using peer observation on teacher practice was not canvassed from all stakeholder groups since consultations had already been completed when this research question was suggested by the research sponsors.

Education Industry Reference Committee

Respondents were generally in agreement with the merits of peer observation and noted that, in many cases, it was already normal practice. They referred to trade workshops, where teachers work together in the same space and have time to observe others, seek advice, share experiences or provide guidance. In some instances this practice forms part of the TAFE practicum in the VET teaching course. Rather than using peer observation in teacher-performance reviews, most respondents believed that peer observation should occur as part of the continuous improvement process, and ideally in the early part of the teacher's career and used as a mentoring or supportive strategy for improving VET teaching quality. For peer observation of new teachers to work well, the observing teacher should be quite skilled both in teaching delivery and also in providing constructive feedback. New teachers can also learn from observing the techniques used by teachers who are skilled and experienced teachers. There was a view that managers should not use peer observation for performance-related issues unless they were simply providing advice and feedback in a mentoring capacity.

The prospect of having other teachers observe their work or being observed by external inspectors (as happens under the OFSTED system in the United Kingdom) could be daunting or threatening if teachers perceive that they might be admonished, especially if the RTO had received a negative audit report from the regulator. Teachers are also fearful of having their assessments viewed or critically reviewed by their peers, making peer observation challenging to implement across the board.

One view held that if peers are asked to critically analyse a teacher's practice, many individuals may not be able to accept the feedback, thereby causing interpersonal conflict. There were also concerns about friends teaming up to give each other a positive evaluation.

While the prospect of introducing peer observation was considered a good idea in principle, respondents felt that issues might arise if it were to be implemented. A culture of collegiality and sharing would be required, whereby learning is about improving practice, which is seen as a positive thing.

The concept of the *preceptor*, as used in nursing, was suggested as a way forward, in which an experienced professional would guide, instruct and mentor beginning teachers from the time they commence employment, so that observation would not be foreign but welcomed. The preceptor would be the 'wise' person to turn to informally for advice and support, a process benefiting both the experienced teacher and the preceptor.

RTOs: educators, senior educators and leaders

RTOs generally supported peer observation for teachers if it were done in spirit of trust and collegiality, noting that some would feel threatened by it, especially if not confident when performing in front of peers. Many teachers would feel threatened if observation were done by line managers, or if the results were to be used later for disciplinary purposes.

Alternative suggestions for helping teachers to improve their practice was for them to undertake professional development focused on teaching skills and techniques, receive feedback on their teaching from students, and share learnings with colleagues. Another option is for senior staff to mentor and observe junior teachers in a staged approach, from induction onwards, until the teachers become sufficiently proficient to become mentors themselves.

In the words of one stakeholder: 'Induction is about being a teacher and not just being an employee [of an RTO]'.

Union representatives

There were some reservations among respondents from the Australian Education Union about how comfortable some teachers would be with having peers observe their teaching practice and receiving constructive feedback on strengths and weaknesses, although this practice is already occurring in a variety of ways. For example, language, literacy and numeracy teachers often go into classrooms to help students with LLN difficulties, in practice, therefore, either observing others or being observed themselves. Teacher comfort levels might depend on their self-confidence, so peer observation and feedback would need to be conducted in a friendly and advisory way.

Regulators

Regulators reminded us that peer observation is not new, since there is already a requirement for VET teachers who are not fully qualified to work under supervision, although there is no provision in the standards for peer observations to occur across the board. It was suggested that peer observation and feedback could form part of an RTO's professional development strategy, including participation in communities of practice and other professional networks for improving teaching quality. Although there was some support for peer observations undertaken in a spirit of collegiality and trust, there was little support for peer or manager observations to be mandated or used for the purpose of reviewing performance. Feedback about performance could also be accessed via student satisfaction or course evaluation surveys.

Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group

Peer observation undertaken by observers with the required expertise is considered to be a useful strategy for helping to improve VET teaching quality, but observation by managers might be viewed by teachers with 'suspicion'. ACDEVEG also identified a role for ASQA in conducting such observations, which could be valued by the sector since it might 'signal that ASQA is interested in actual teaching quality'. Our conversation with ASQA reveals that the standards for RTOs do not refer to the practice of peer observation, other than for teaching under supervision when not yet fully qualified to teach.

The merits and challenges of implementing frameworks and standards

Respondents were asked whether they saw any merit in introducing standards or capability frameworks as a benchmark for assessing and improving the quality of VET teaching, given that VET teachers were already required to meet some legislated standards for the registration of RTOs (regulated by ASQA, Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority, or the Training and Accreditation Council in Western Australia). The discussions revealed a range of opinions on the benefits of capability frameworks or standards for VET teaching.

All categories of respondents generally supported having a set of benchmarks that informed the development of capability statements, provided professional development and enhanced performance. It was agreed, however, that these would only be useful if they were aligned to remuneration, career progression and enterprise agreement conditions.

Industry peak bodies

Although all agreed that the introduction of capability benchmarks could be useful, this group highlighted the importance of recognising that they would vary across disciplines and should reflect the diversity of provider types, geography and student cohort. Nonetheless, they were supported as a proactive approach to professionalisation.

We should use such arrangements solely as benchmarks and not for regulatory purposes. They should be something to aim for but not mandated. We have a sector that is over-specifying and regulating. If over-regulated the system could die. What we need is an underpinning philosophy of educational design and approaches to assessment. (TDA)

The key areas of teacher performance that should be included in such benchmarks were varied and are as follows:

- the ways by which teachers provide support to students to achieve outcomes
- teacher interaction with industry and community
- the areas covered in the IBSA capability framework: teaching (theory, design, facilitation, evaluation); assessment (theory, products, processes, validation); industry collaboration (engagement, networks, vocational competence, workforce development); systems and compliance (system standards, system stakeholders, products, processes); skill areas (leadership, ethics, cultural competence, innovation, team work and collaboration, evidence-based practice and research)
- course and curriculum design, assessment design, adult learning approaches.

Education Industry Reference Committee

There was general support for having some sort of capability framework as a diagnostic tool or advisory guideline against which teachers could self-evaluate to inform, modify and enhance their practice, identify skill gaps, work on areas for improvement and identify opportunities for professional development.

One suggestion was for using a capability framework to revamp the Certificate IV TAE and to specify various types of qualifications, according to the roles of the teacher, but not during the period of the pandemic. A strategic policy on these issues could be an option for future consideration.

The view of one respondent was that the use of levels of capability as a way of classifying teachers was dangerous, in that such levels should only be used for career progression rather than as a rating of quality teaching. There was also a view that, although the VET system wanted the most proficient and capable teachers to be teaching, these capable teachers are often promoted to managerial positions, where they are 'bogged' down in administration.

A cautionary note was sounded by one member of the EIRC, who only supported the use of capability frameworks that are aspirational and that advance, rather than merely replicate, the existing skills and knowledge of teachers; otherwise, they are a waste of time, and an 'unnecessary imposition'.

When respondents were asked about the areas that a capability framework should cover, they identified a range of areas, which sometimes overlapped. The IBSA framework was identified by some as a good framework to follow, but suggested that it needed tweaking in some areas and expansion in others. For example, skills in leadership and conflict resolution needed to be expanded and customised for teachers at all levels. The attraction of the IBSA framework relates to its coverage of the key domains relevant to the VET sector and that it is based on extensive sector consultation. Other respondents identified a range of areas that are repeated in many of the capability frameworks reviewed thus far.

In self-assessing against these capabilities, teachers could identify their level of skill and decide on the type of training, qualification or skill set required. Credit could be granted for the skills, qualifications and skill sets they hold. While it is considered relatively easy to address the content to be taught, it is understanding the VET system and the needs of both industry and students that constitute the challenges for teachers.

It was suggested that all new teachers be required to make an upfront commitment to continual professional learning, development and skills upgrading as part of their employment contract, so they would be aware of their obligations from the outset. This would ideally form part of the organisational culture and be expected of all VET teachers, regardless of level.

Some respondents favoured a national framework, mainly so that RTOs would not have to develop their own frameworks, while others disagreed. Some favoured the reinstatement of a national body to develop a capability framework and standards, with the authority to spell out the work of VET teachers and what they need to know and be able to do, at a range of levels, which would also be useful for teacher training and for identifying areas for professional development.

EIRC respondents made the following suggestions for including in the capability frameworks:

- possessing professional knowledge, skills and practice in teaching delivery
- possessing professional skills in assessment (including design of assessment tools, and use of fair adjustment principles, including language used), and in engaging students in practical assessments
- holding skills in program design, planning, delivery and review
- having skills in communicating and engaging effectively with students via presentations, learning materials and activities, using plain English
- understanding the needs of different student cohorts and customising learning activities to meet learning preferences of delivery

- understanding and managing cultural diversity, including the special needs of those with LLN difficulties, and the needs of equity groups, including Indigenous learners
- involving teachers in RTO corporate committees that make decisions about organisation-wide policies and processes
- understanding that teachers will be involved in continual learning throughout their careers.

RTOs: educators, senior educators and leaders

Opinion was divided on whether a national capability framework or set of standards was necessary. Some believed it might help teachers who were moving interstate to take up positions. One RTO was firmly of the view that no national framework was required, and that RTOs should develop their own, even if they borrowed from existing frameworks: ‘We have a capability framework but don’t need a national one’ (RTO, WA). One RTO had begun investigations into establishing a national capability framework by helping set up a National VET Educator Network, open to all VET institutions.

In the main, there was support for the argument that a framework with benchmarks could be useful as a diagnostic tool for facilitating professional conversations with managers and identifying gaps in teaching and vocational currency. There was also support for aligning the framework with RTO performance management systems to assist teachers to establish their performance plan in consultation with their manager. An alternative use might be negotiating objectives and performance measures, based on business and personal development needs (that is, professional and vocational competence, and industry currency), to inform their strategy for achieving these objectives, including performance indicators associated with student outcomes. Performance plans based on a capability framework would also provide teachers with opportunities to set out their career aspirations and progression pathway with the assistance of their manager. For some the concept of capability was felt to resonate more strongly with practitioners than the concept of professional standards.

Capability frameworks are useful ... but lecturers will turn off if we talk about standards.

(RTO, WA)

Capability frameworks as benchmarks for performance were felt to be useful when they were also linked to something worthwhile, such as pay-advancement stages and enterprise agreements. Some considered they would be useless unless they were enforceable.

According to these respondents, the key areas that should be covered in such frameworks or standards generally referred to skill areas, including:

- standards and capabilities covered in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, and the various educator capability frameworks (already discussed)
- digital skills for training
- high-level digital skills (in automation, technology and robotics)
- return-to-industry programs for maintaining industry currency.

Union representatives

In principle, capability frameworks and standards are valued by the respondents from the Australian Education Union as they provide teachers with aspirational targets, indicating what they should know, be aware of, and be able to do. Some of the capabilities are relevant to different levels of proficiency, roles and levels of experience. The linking of capabilities to a teacher’s personal development plan is

supported because it provides them and their manager with a common language for planning development. Nonetheless, it is considered that they should not be mandated, since this would add to the workload of teachers, which is already excessive. Union respondents agreed that some enterprise agreements spell out the capabilities expected of teachers and align these with roles and pay scales, but this is not universal. At times a great deal of effort is devoted to the development of capability frameworks, but they are not always implemented: ‘unless there is serious resourcing, these things sit on the side’.

Respondents identified a range of capability areas that should be covered in such frameworks, including:

- understanding how students learn and designing various learning activities to address diverse learning styles and preferences
- using delivery modes that are combination of face-to-face, mixed mode, workshops, online learning, industry work placements, and project-based learning
- keeping up with changes in qualifications requirements
- possessing skills in engaging with students
- understanding diversity and the support services that are available to support challenges faced by students from culturally diverse backgrounds
- holding pedagogical skills and knowledge – how to teach.

Regulators

There is general agreement among regulator respondents that capability frameworks should be used as guidance tools and for career development initiatives but should not be mandated. For example, teachers might use the framework to move to the next career level.

There was also agreement that, in view of the many frameworks already operating, there was no need to develop a national one. The frameworks already available can be used by RTOs to develop their own framework, one customised to their particular environment. Small RTOs may not be in a position to develop their own but could borrow from an existing framework.

They key areas of performance that should be covered in capability frameworks include:

- acknowledgement of the role of dual professionals, and the importance of industry experience
- the domains, capabilities and standards identified in the IBSA Framework and the AITSL Australian Professional Standards for teachers
- capabilities in developing training and assessment strategies from the standpoint of the teacher
- teacher competence in designing assessment tools and materials to ensure good practice in assessment
- teacher ability to interpret the training package performance criteria and engage students in practical assessments.

Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group

In considering the merits of introducing frameworks and standards for VET teaching, ACDEVEG noted that some are more useful than others, and that selecting or designing one could be informed by the AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Queensland College of Teachers VET Practitioner Standards (based on the AITSL standards but never implemented). Indonesian and Lao VET teacher standards⁹ (focused on professional standards and behaviour) were also suggested as examples.

ACDEVEG strongly supports increased attention to ethical behaviour in any set of standards, and we note that professional values form one of the key domains in the Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training in England (also included in this study). We also observe that the IBSA framework, and those informed by the IBSA Framework, refer to ethics as part of the ‘general skills’ capabilities.

According to ACDEVEG, none of the reviewed standards and frameworks place enough attention on evaluating the teachers’ capabilities in their own discipline or industry areas, by comparison with higher education programs. In addition, it does not believe that having an industry qualification and experience gained in just one or two organisations is sufficient background for preparing industry experts for VET teaching.

ACDEVEG sees some benefits in introducing a common set of standards, but it believes that too much attention to this could detract from efforts towards improving quality in VET teaching. Any implementation of standards should also include time for evaluation and improvement.

The following capabilities should be included in any set of capability frameworks or standards:

- pedagogy, classroom management, and subject content knowledge
- assessment and evaluation
- diversity
- professionalism and ethical behaviour.

⁹ These standards were not identified in our scan of available frameworks and standards.

Agreed areas of capability to be covered

In table 1 we detail capabilities suggested by stakeholder groups and find considerable overlap.

Table 1 Items of capability identified by stakeholder groups

Knowledge of pedagogy and subject content	<p>Knowledge of pedagogy, subject content and discipline area, including teaching practice that is research- and industry-informed</p> <p>Ability to plan, design and evaluate programs (including self-evaluation)</p> <p>Ability to design assessment tools and materials, conduct assessments (and engage students in assessment)</p> <p>Knowing how to teach, including classroom management</p> <p>Ability to communicate effectively with students, and deliver engaging presentations</p> <p>Professionalism and ethical behaviour</p> <p>Keeping up with changes in qualification requirements</p> <p>Applying principles of reasonable adjustment in assessment</p>
Professional and ethical values	Professionalism and ethical behaviour
Understanding individual student needs	Understanding and customising training to suit student needs, learning preferences and styles
Knowledge of cultural diversity and social inclusion	<p>Knowledge and understanding of different cultures</p> <p>Understanding and catering for the learning needs of diverse equity groups, including Indigenous cultures</p> <p>Knowledge of support services available, and identifying and managing services to meet student needs</p>
Dual professional issues	Understanding both the strengths and challenges of having a dual professional sector
Knowledge and application of basic and/or advanced digital skills and technologies	<p>Ability to use basic digital skills and platforms for training</p> <p>Understanding of and or skill in using advanced digital technologies, and higher-level technologies used in industry</p>
Involvement in higher-level corporate responsibilities	Opportunities to be involved in higher-level decision-making about policy and processes, including training and assessment strategies

Attracting and developing a capable workforce: barriers and facilitators

Respondents were asked to identify the barriers they perceived as influencing the attractiveness of the sector to a capable VET teaching workforce. They were also asked to identify strategies that would help to address these barriers.

Key barriers

Across our stakeholder groups there was agreement on the key barriers preventing a capable teaching workforce from entering the VET sector and the strategies required to address the barriers.

Industry peak bodies

As a group, the peak body respondents agreed that regulatory burden, the requirements for acquiring a Certificate IV TAE qualification (in the case of industry experts) and the periodic upgrading of units in the qualification, lack of career path, non-comparable salaries, and the perceived status of the profession were the key barriers to attracting a capable workforce. Comparisons were also made with other education sectors.

In the past, someone who has retired from a trade occupation may have done some casual teaching at TAFE. Now they have to get another qualification. This is in itself not a bad thing, but the same restrictions do not apply to higher education. A person can go tomorrow to work in higher education but not in VET. (ITECA)

Wages are going up in the construction sector [as an example] so it is harder to attract people to VET. What can we offer that is better than staying on the tools? The compliance burden is an administrative risk that can turn people off. (VTA)

The imbalances in pay scales for VET teachers compared with high-paying trades (for example, plumbing and electrical trades) were also identified as major barriers to attracting industry experts to VET teaching.

Education Industry Reference Committee

Respondents nominated a range of existing barriers to attracting a capable VET workforce, such as the perceived low status of the occupation. Since VET teaching is considered easy to enter, with a low-level entry qualification, it is not an aspirational path. In addition, increased regulation and compliance can dissuade would-be VET teachers, and teachers in the system fail to promote it.

Another barrier to attracting teachers is the complexity of the occupation and the effort needed to engage learners, which is not always well understood by would-be teachers. The limited career path, with few promotional opportunities, especially in small RTOs, and flat career structure (typical of the teaching profession as a whole) also reduces the attractiveness of teaching in the VET sector.

The significant barriers to attracting VET teachers relate to industrial issues such as high rates of casual employment with variable work hours, which affects job security and stability.

RTOs: educators, senior educators and leaders

Similarly, RTOs agreed that the time, cost and effort required to complete the Certificate IV TAE, particularly onerous for part-time and casual teachers, and the pay level imbalance between high-wage trades and VET teaching, act as significant barriers to attracting a capable VET workforce. The limited career progression opportunities, low professional status and infrequent access to professional development opportunities inhibit the development of a capable VET teaching workforce.

Compliance requirements and the associated paperwork, limited opportunities for suitable professional development, and vague prescriptions of what is a suitable teaching load for teachers applying different delivery methodologies were also identified as barriers to both attracting and developing capable VET teachers.

Issues were also identified with the practice of engaging industry specialists on the assumption that they would be able to teach.

Others saw no major barriers in the existing climate, since staff would often start teaching on a casual basis, later transferring to a contract position, and eventually take up a permanent position if things worked well.

Outdated perceptions of the VET sector in the community and in secondary schools as relating mostly to teaching in the trades and teaching low-achieving learners were also identified as major barriers to attracting VET teachers. Perceptions of teachers burdened by high workloads also deter those potentially interested in joining the VET workforce.

Limited access to professional development in teaching and learning and related professional issues, and a higher reliance on using professional development for compliance-related training, are also perceived as deterrents.

Issues in building an Indigenous VET workforce and developing the confidence of Indigenous Australians in their abilities to become VET teachers were also identified.

Union representatives

Similar views to those articulated by other stakeholders were expressed by Australian Education Union respondents, namely, low pay for VET teachers being a disincentive for individuals to leave their jobs for VET teaching, especially from high-paying trades and professions. Recent bad press on poor provision in the VET sector was perceived to have tainted the image of VET teachers. The need to complete the Certificate IV TAE qualification, including periodic requirements to upgrade it, with no guarantee of a permanent job, provided further disincentives to teach, exacerbated by limited job security and casualisation.

To get a quality education students have to have the same teachers [throughout a course] to give them support and build trust and confidence. Casual teachers teach their course and then leave. They do not provide students with pastoral care.

Additional barriers for some are the high workloads experienced by VET teachers, and the loss of access to overtime for those coming from industry.

Regulators

The key barriers to attracting a capable VET workforce identified by regulators were similar to those raised by other stakeholders relating to:

- the cost of upgrading qualifications and maintaining industry currency
- the higher pay in certain trades (for example, electricians, plumbers, engineers) by comparison with VET teacher pay levels
- the onus for professional development being shouldered by individual VET teachers.

Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group

The lack of status for VET teachers, due to the low-level entry qualification to the occupation, was perceived by ACDEVEG as deterring people from choosing to become VET teachers. In addition, the recent requirement for teachers to upgrade their Certificate IV TAE qualification has led many existing teachers to leave the occupation and aspiring entrants to be deterred. One view was that problems in VET cannot be fixed by such means (that is, upgrading the existing TAE), but a more highly qualified workforce would reduce the need for such measures.

Key facilitators

Suggestions for ways of attracting suitable recruits to VET teaching were offered by respondents from representatives of peak bodies and RTOs.

Industry peak bodies

In reflecting on what strategies were required to address such barriers, peak body respondents made a range of suggestions, which included:

- removing the regulatory burden
- ensuring reforms are based on identified problems in the market and evaluating the feasibility of solutions in addressing such problems
- implementing collaborative models to enable the sharing of resources and facilities among institutions
- piloting a training program for VET teachers similar to the ‘Teach for Australia’ model, which would provide university graduates with two years full-time work as a teacher, with full salary and benefits while they also undertake a postgraduate-level degree. Similar to this initiative is the United Kingdom’s ‘Teach First’ program, which is employment-based teacher training, whereby participants achieve ‘qualified teacher status’ by participating in a two-year training program involving the completion of a postgraduate Diploma of Education, along with leadership skills training and an optional master’s degree
- applying a higher apprenticeship model, with students undertaking the VET entry-level course over vacation times (although this would not be favoured by unions)
- establishing a VET alumni network to attract high-quality tradespeople to VET teaching.

Education Industry Reference Committee

Since job security and stability, and the ability to attract and retain teachers, remains a challenge in the VET sector, respondents considered that the way to attract and retain staff is to offer permanent employment, or sufficient work hours. The majority of teachers want a full-time job and, in the COVID-19 climate, the need for job stability is more important than ever.

When teachers who want to join the VET system to ‘give back’ to their industry (usually when in their sixties) were asked to undertake online learning and training and to pay for a qualification upgrade, they were reported as not being prepared to do this.

Other ways of attracting VET teachers would be to promote the importance of the VET workforce in preparing workers for building the economy while also improving the status of VET teachers and qualifications; facilitate positive messaging about good VET teachers and a satisfying career; and conduct a promotional campaign on how VET teachers can obtain further qualifications while working.

To retain teachers, it was agreed that more support was needed to enable inexperienced trainers in their early years to transfer their learning about teaching to everyday practice. This could be integrated within teacher preparation programs to allow trainees to practise their teaching skills while learning, thereby building self-confidence.

The support strategies could also include collaboration between government and industry to build the level of teacher capability in specific areas of the economy. In addition, such support could include the provision of wrap-around services to help teachers to deal with students who have issues with mental health, violence or drug and alcohol use.

In terms of those considering entry to the profession, respondents identified the need for raising awareness of what is involved in the job by enabling observation of classes, whereby experienced teachers engaged with students and delivered training, including addressing behaviour management. This would present a realistic view of the demands associated with giving presentations and delivering lessons in front of a class, which would ensure a well-informed decision about whether or not they are suited to the role.

RTOs could develop their existing staff by providing them with up-to-date knowledge on what is happening in the sector, via in-house professional development on topical areas (for example, e-learning), in partnership with local industry where relevant.

RTOs: educators, senior educators and leaders

RTO respondents highlighted issues with attracting industry recruits in areas where large pay imbalances exist between industry and VET teaching (for example, mining and engineering), including that additional obligations took teachers away from their teaching role, and the need to acquire the entry-level qualification (Certificate IV TAE and periodic upgrades).

Suggestions for addressing these issues included having teachers attend classroom-based training rather than learning in online situations only, providing time during this training for learning the practical skills of teaching, undertaking professional development, and maintaining vocational competency and industry currency. Industry experts, those with expertise, currency and work experience, could be paid to acquire the VET teaching entry-level qualification while working under supervision, based on their commitment to completing the training, and a guarantee of employment on completion.

In considering strategies for attracting capable people to VET teaching, respondents suggested:

- improving teacher pay and conditions
- promoting good leave conditions
- emphasising that, in the main, VET teaching was a Monday to Friday job, with no unscheduled after-hours work
- promoting the opportunity to become a professional teacher
- reducing the VET sector's dependence on casual work
- introducing face-to-face training as opposed to a purely online model.

Suggestions were also made for a national marketing campaign to raise the profile of VET and the professional image of VET teachers, by, for example, celebrating and profiling excellent educational practice and the positive outcomes from VET qualifications.

We need to professionalise the industry and the message should be that our teachers are highly qualified and highly skilled. (TAFE leader, Victoria)

Union representatives

In terms of making the VET workplace more desirable and thus attracting competent VET teachers, respondents from the Australian Education Union argued for systems and RTOs to provide a reasonable allocation of hours and money to professional development and release-to-industry programs. One strategy that some believed would address the lack of teaching skills of industry experts on commencement is the 'teaching under supervision arrangement', which would enable beginning teachers to gain their Certificate IV TAE while teaching. Another approach would be to find industry experts suitably qualified in their own vocation or professions and to provide them with support to obtain higher qualifications, as well as a decent salary.

Also widely suggested, not only by union respondents but also by other respondents, is the need for beginning teachers to access mentoring arrangements with experienced teachers who can provide advice and assistance as the beginning teacher becomes more experienced in teaching; however, this would also increase the workload of the mentor.

While attracting suitable, qualified VET teachers is not considered easy, union respondents offered the following suggestions:

- promoting the good working conditions that prevail, for example, VET teachers are not always on call 24 hours a day, since there is no shift work
- promoting the family-friendly leave conditions and working hours, which enable a positive work–life balance
- highlighting the opportunities for experienced workers to give back to their industry, by passing on their skills
- offering improved pay rates to attract those whose salaries are higher
- emphasising the opportunities to apply the skills gained through work or other professional learning with another employer, if their existing employment should cease.

In the words of one respondent, 'If you offer secure employment and good pay you will be able to attract people'.

Regulators

In making suggestions for how the VET sector could attract a capable VET workforce, regulators emphasised that their responses should be considered in the light of their role in encouraging RTOs to meet the standards as well as providing an educative function that would help them develop and achieve quality provision.

Some proactive strategies that could be used to attract new teachers to the sector are to promote the good employment conditions available in VET, including reasonable pay for most areas (although attracting those from high-paying industry jobs would be a challenge), opportunities to belong to a permanent workforce in some areas, and family-friendly hours.

Regulators also believed there was merit in developing close relationships with industry so RTOs could identify industry employees with the potential to become lead trainers and assessors.

Maintaining teachers in the system also required some proactive strategies, including:

- reducing the amount of change in the system so as not to place extra compliance requirements on teachers
- embracing the skills of industry experts by supporting those who decide to become VET teachers with the skills required for teaching and by recognising the value of the dual professional as a key strength, even if some challenges require attention.

In the words of one regulator respondent, ‘We need to change the language we use. We should talk about what VET teaching is, rather than what it is not’.

Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group

ACDEVEG’s position is that higher-level qualifications would raise the status of VET teaching in relation to school teaching and other professions:

A more educated workforce would more readily engage in professional development, which could be pitched at a higher level because VET teachers would already possess necessary basic knowledge and skills.

ACDEVEG also suggested that if the sector wants to attract a capable VET workforce it needs to increase its efforts in:

- supporting and retaining casual staff, including establishing suitable career pathways for them
- enabling VET teachers to obtain higher-level qualifications
- providing opportunities for VET teachers to undertake learning in VET workplaces
- promoting individuals with VET teaching qualifications to management positions
- trialling a ‘VET practitioner’ pathway, whereby individuals would continue their VET teaching careers and their specialist roles in industry simultaneously
- reducing the focus on compliance in RTOs and in the content of the Certificate IV TAE.

Developing a capable VET workforce

All categories of respondents were united on the importance of supporting VET teachers from recruitment and induction through the various stages of their careers. There was agreement on the need for implementing systematic approaches to teacher preparation, mentorship support and continuing professional development. Although the actual activities suggested did not vary in substance, they tended to differ in their detail.

Initial and continuing professional development

All respondents highlighted the need to strengthen the formal requirements for teachers to engage in professional development, which included establishing the objectives for undertaking PD in individual performance review plans. Also universally supported was the need for specifically allocated time and money for teacher professional development. This included opportunities for them to:

- attend conferences to listen to and share learnings about policy and practice within their own jurisdictions, and, more broadly, and to share information with colleagues on their return
- collaborate with colleagues in professional learning groups or communities to share information and expertise on: the application of new methodologies; dealing with student issues; and teaching and assessment tools and resources. Such conversations would also make it possible for teachers to discuss the impact of new policies and regulations.

A range of issues act as barriers for teachers to attend or request participation in professional development or return-to-industry activities. These include limited resources for their employer to hire relief teachers to backfill their position and the preparation needed prior to engaging in such activities (for example, arranging a replacement, informing students and preparing materials for them to work on). These demands sometimes result in teachers undertaking industry release during vacation periods.

Suggestions were also made for implementing a model such as the Victorian VET Development Centre, which is funded by the Victorian Government to provide professional development and industry forums for VET teachers.

Appendix A: Environmental scan of literature critiquing capability frameworks and standards

We used targeted online searches to identify papers and research focusing on the development, implementation, evaluation and review of capability frameworks and standards. They are presented below.

Key issues in development

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Appendix B: The Chisholm Educator Excellence Framework

The key dimensions of performance are organised under seven areas of professional understanding and practice. They include:

- Professional practice
 - *Sector knowledge*: displays and maintains knowledge of educational sector [in which you work] and wider education sector and professional associations; and understands and applies relevant legislation and standards.
 - *Currency*: engages in ongoing educational and industry currency activities; provides evidence of impact of currency activities on learning and assessment; and maintains vocational currency and professional competency and applies these skills and knowledge to ensure programs are aligned with contemporary needs of industry.
 - *Reflective practice*: engages in practices that promote self-reflection; leads and mentors others through the components of educational excellence framework; and applies reflective practices to improve educator performance.
- Design
 - *Planning*: planning and designing programs using current industry practices: consults with key stakeholders when planning future developments; uses research to identify student cohorts and their backgrounds and characteristics; considers future study and employment outcomes for graduates; validates program design with industry; plans effective teaching techniques based on industry knowledge; and maintains current knowledge of industry practices to develop innovative design to ensure contemporary learning and assessment strategies aligned with the demands of employers.
 - *Development*: adapts program design to suit learner needs based on learning style; applies innovation so program design meets key stakeholder needs; designs learning programs for different delivery modes (online, video, workplace, conferencing, face-to-face); includes evaluation strategy; develops program design within a range of learning environments; and makes use of innovative technologies and industry-based practices to engage learners and provide pathways for future studies and or employment outcomes.
- Assess
 - *Assessment creation*: ensures learning outcomes are evidenced in assessment tasks; develops marking criteria to assess effectively and consistently; uses a range of assessment methods and technologies; consults with external and internal stakeholders in design of tasks; takes appropriate records while undertaking assessments; records assessment outcomes appropriately; provides detailed assessment feedback to learners; creates assessment tasks that meet the full requirements of the units; adapts assessment tasks for different learner groups, learning environments, technologies and available resources, and undertakes assessment to meet the needs of students/clients/industry while ensuring that the assessment addresses appropriate learning outcomes.
 - *Validation*: consults with internal stakeholders to ensure consistent approaches and validates assessment materials and practices; builds relationships with industry to inform assessment

practice; participates in validation processes; coordinates industry validation sessions; evaluates validation outcomes and makes appropriate changes to assessment materials; and evaluates, measures, judges and provides feedback on performance throughout the course.

- Facilitate

- *Learning approaches*: understands educational theories and applies different strategies based on individual student needs; applies different learning approaches to meet the needs of differing cohorts; applies a range of teaching approaches to cater for a range of learning styles; uses technology to implement flexible learning strategies; makes use of technology to improve learner outcomes; contributes to the implementation of new learning strategies; and provides advice and mentoring to others in a wide range of delivery methods.
- *Delivery modes and environment*: demonstrates a range of facilitation strategies (including face-to-face, e-learning, video conferencing and work-based); guides others in the design and use of alternative delivery methods; selects appropriate delivery modes to best meet the needs of learners and clients; selects learning resources that are suitable to the learning mode; and creates a learning environment that encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning.
- *Learning resources*: considers learners and their needs when selecting learning resources; selects learning resources that meet the needs of the curriculum and industry; evaluates all learning resources effectively; customises resources to meet changing needs of the learner; adapts learning materials in line with the available environment and facilities.

- Engage

- *Learner engagement*: displays a solid knowledge of the student support services offered by the institution; applies institute-approved strategies for ensuring learner LLN skills are measured at pre-enrolment; plays an active role to ensure that all students understand the course requirements prior to enrolment; makes appropriate referrals to learners who have LLN concerns; identifies and makes appropriate referrals for students with personal and learning challenges; assists learners to make an informed decision to engage in their chosen courses, makes adjustments to teaching styles to cater for students who are experiencing learning challenges; reviews learner cohort characteristics via Institute-approved pre-training and assessment tools; and provides suitable course orientation and information to ensure that learner expectations align with course requirements to promote student success

- Support

- *Attendance and participation*: tracks student progress effectively, including making case notes where appropriate; ensures that student results are accurate and entered in a timely fashion; monitors student engagement levels and takes action where appropriate; and manages student administration processes in line with organisational requirements.
- *Student communication*: provides frequent feedback to students about learner progress; and maintains frequent and ongoing communication with learners to ensure they feel supported and remain connected to the learning process.
- *Student success*: identifies common risk factors for typical learner cohorts; effectively communicates with learners suspected of being at risk; works with learners identified as being at risk to develop an agreed learning plan; identifies learners at risk and implements support strategies; provides basic pastoral care to learners; identifies and takes supportive action to minimise risk factors for individuals and learner cohorts to encourage successful outcomes;

negotiates with industry bodies and stakeholders to ensure that learner support meets or exceeds expectations and that teaching and assessment practices reflect current trends.

- Review
 - *Stakeholder feedback*: implements course experience survey tools designed to evaluate the outcomes of programs; implements processes to ensure that evaluation data is recorded and analysed; engages with key stakeholders to gather feedback on the course; evaluates course-based trend data such as student results and attrition rates; gathers readily available data and feedback on course performance to continuously improve the learner experience; and conducts assessment and training evaluations of students, employers and industry clientele to determine areas of strength and embed relevant recommendations into the course processes.
 - *Continuous improvement*: reports on evaluation data and makes recommendations for improvement; implements continuous improvement strategies for learning and assessment resources; implements continuous improvement strategies that promote ongoing improvement of course quality based on student results, attrition rates, module completion rates, market intelligence and emerging industry needs; researches, develops and improves assessment and learning methods and implements changes across the program area, including program design and system improvement.

Appendix C: Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training (England)

These standards are divided into three key domains, associated standard statements, and differentiated capabilities, according to stages of career development (Stage 1: the developing teacher/trainer; Stage 2: The professional teacher/trainer; and Stage 3: the advanced teacher/trainer). Associated with each of these stages are some transition stages which reflect the fact that teachers will progress through stages at different speeds. Here we reproduce from the standards themselves, the key capabilities organised under the three domains.

Professional values and attributes

1. Reflect on what works best in your teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of learners.
2. Evaluate and challenge your practice, values and beliefs.
3. Inspire, motivate and raise aspirations of learners through your enthusiasm and knowledge.
4. Be creative and innovative in selecting and adapting strategies to help learners to learn.
5. Value and promote social and cultural diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion.
6. Build positive and collaborative relationships with colleagues and learners.

Professional knowledge and understanding

7. Maintain and update knowledge of your subject and/or vocational area.
8. Maintain and update your knowledge of educational research to develop evidence-based practice.
9. Apply theoretical understanding of effective practice in teaching, learning and assessment, drawing on research and other evidence.
10. Evaluate your practice with others and assess its impact on learning.
11. Manage and promote positive learner behaviour.
12. Understand the teaching and professional role and your responsibilities.

Professional skills

13. Motivate and inspire learners to promote achievement and develop their skills to enable progression.
14. Plan and deliver effective learning programmes for diverse groups or individuals in a safe and inclusive environment.
15. Promote the benefits of technology and support learners in its use.
16. Address the mathematics and English needs of learners and work creatively to overcome individual barriers to learning.
17. Enable learners to share responsibility for their own learning and assessment, setting goals that stretch and challenge.

18. Apply appropriate and fair methods of assessment and provide constructive and timely feedback to support progression and achievement.
19. Maintain and update your teaching and training expertise and vocational skills through collaboration with employers.
20. Contribute to organisational development and quality improvement through collaboration with others.

More detailed Information on the standards, associated stages of development and the transition stages (A, B and C) can be found at:

Education and Training Foundation 2018, Achieving professional potential: professional standards framework for teachers and trainers in education and training, viewed May 2020, <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ETF_Professional_Standards_Framework_Spreads_Web.pdf>.

Appendix D: USA Career and Technical Education (VET) Standards (teachers of 11 to 18-year-olds)

These standards comprise five core propositions and 10 standard statements. They also include arrangements for voluntary certification and assessments of teachers for certification. Key aspects taken from these standards and arrangements are reported here.

- Core propositions: Teachers are committed to students and their learning; Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students; Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; Teachers are members of learning communities.
- Standard Statements: Knowledge of students; Responding to Diversity; Knowledge of Content; Learning Environments and Instructional Practices; Assessment; Post-secondary Readiness (preparing students for employment and further study opportunities); Program Design and Management; Leadership in the Profession; and Reflective Practice.
- Voluntary Certification: The teacher must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, have a minimum of three years' teaching experience at the early childhood, elementary, middle school, or high school level; and where it is required hold a state teaching licence.
- Assessment for certifications: The teacher must complete four components, comprising three portfolio entries submitted online and a computer-based assessment held at a testing centre.
 - Portfolio entries: These deal with an analysis of their practice as it relates to student learning and to being a reflective, effective practitioner. These are designed to capture what a teacher knows and can do in real time and in real-life settings (captured on video and in student work samples). These are marked (scored) by educators who are themselves practitioners in the same certificate area. They must have completed training and qualify for scoring on the basis of an understanding of National Boards' standards and scoring guidelines.
 - Computer-based assessments administered at a testing centre: These comprise open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions delivered in a secure testing site. Assessments are based on the standards and are developed for every certificate area by educators who specialise in same content and student developmental level.

For further information refer to:

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, Career and Technical Education Standards (for teachers of students ages 11-18+, viewed August, 2020, <<https://www.nbpts.org/newsroom/national-board-publishes-new-standards-for-cte/>>

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, 2016, What teachers should know and be able to do, viewed July 2020, <http://accomplishedteacher.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/NBPTS-What-Teachers-Should-Know-and-Be-Able-to-Do-.pdf>

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, Guide to National Board Certification, viewed July 2020, <https://www.nbpts.org/wp-content/uploads/Guide_to_NB_Certification.pdf>,

Appendix E: ITECA College of Vocational Education and Training Professionals

The ITECA College of Vocational Education and Training Professionals was established to enable practitioners in the private sector to acquire voluntary accreditation and membership of the college. The two credentials conferred by the college are the Certified Education Professional (CEP) and the Certified Education Manager (CEM).¹⁰ These credentials recognise a practitioner's commitment to professionalism and enable them to demonstrate 'their mastery as assessors, trainers and managers' in VET (ITECA 2019). They are aligned to the quality assurance standards for RTOs, regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA 2015), and the Australian Quality Training Framework standards, overseen by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority in Victoria and the Training and Accreditation Council in Western Australia.

Admission as a Certified Education Practitioner

The conditions for eligibility for CEP registration comprise:

- Training qualifications: TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or its successor; TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and TAELLN Address adult language and literacy and numeracy skills or its successor or TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and TAELLN Address adult language and literacy and numeracy skills and one of the following: TAEASS502 Design and develop assessment tools or its successor; TAEASS502A Design and develop assessment tools or its successor or TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools or its successor or diploma or higher-level qualification in adult education.
- Vocational qualifications and experience: vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed, and minimum of three years experience in Australia, which provides current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment provided.
- Safeguard check: if working with people under 18 years old, a state/territory endorsement for working with minors and or a vulnerable persons check (where available).
- Continuing professional development (CPD) obligation (on admission): completion of professional development activities equating to at least 10 hours per year on matters relating to training and assessment; and participating in CPD activities equating to at least 10 hours per year on matters relating to the discipline/s they are working in.
- Endorsements: letter of support from two supervisors and or CEM (certified educational manager) attesting to their professionalism and demonstrated competency as a trainer and assessor.

¹⁰ It is important to note that these membership credentials are not endorsed by ASQA.

Admission as a Certified Education Manager

The conditions for eligibility for CEM registration comprise:

- Training qualifications: proof of meeting ASQA requirements mandates trainers and assessors to have qualifications in training and assessment, reflected in a requirement to hold: TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or its successor; or diploma or higher-level qualification in adult education.
- Management qualifications: a demonstrative understanding of approaches to business management, human resource management, accounting and general business compliance by holding:
 - diploma or higher in business management, business administration or a related discipline; or admission as a member (or higher) of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) or the Institute of Managers and Leaders (IML).
- Management experience: minimum of three years experience as chief executive officer; managing director, division head or proprietor of a registered higher education or vocational education and training provider.
- Fit and proper person requirements: have not been listed by ASIC as banned director at any time in the past seven years; have not been a director of or manager (including shadow directors) of a company placed into administration or liquidation in the past seven years, have not been convicted of fraud in the past seven years and have not be a director or manager (including shadow director) of a provider for which ASQA, TEQSA (or another jurisdiction) has cancelled the registration in the past seven years; and must be an Australian citizen.
- Continuing professional development (CPD) obligation (on admission): participating in CPD activities equating to at least 15–20 hours per year on matters relating to management of RTO.
- Endorsements: letter of support from two colleagues at chief executive officer, managing director level and or CEM (certified educational manager), attesting to their professionalism and demonstrated competency as a manager.

For further information, refer to:

<https://www.iteca.edu.au/ITECA/Professionals/ITECA_College_Introduction/ITECA/Content/Professionals/ITECA_College_Introduction.aspx>.