

# VET Practitioners: A Front-Line Investigation

A research report on the activities Australian Vocational Trainers and Assessors perform in their workplaces, and the competencies they require to be effective

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## Executive Summary

The opinions of currently employed VET Trainers & Assessors were investigated to identify what should be included in a program of learning that will prepare them and others to be effective in their roles of supporting Australian industry and enterprise.

This report has gathered information from individuals who are at the front-line of VET to identify the tasks performed by VET trainers and assessors in their workplaces. The purpose was to determine the competencies that VET trainers and assessors require in order to perform their roles effectively.

The research project is justified due to the possibility of a review of the TAE Training Package. The date for a review has not yet been confirmed, but it is now more than three years since the current version of TAE was endorsed. PwC's Skills for Australia issued a draft proposed schedule of work to review this training package in May 2018<sup>1</sup>. PwC issued another draft proposed schedule of work for the same purpose in February 2019<sup>2</sup>.

There are many VET trainers and assessors in Australia. They fall into two main categories: those who work within a Registered Training Organisation and those who work in enterprise and industry, delivering various types of in-house training which is not aligned to nationally recognised qualifications.

This research project attempts to discover what these trainers and assessors actually do in their work roles, and therefore the types of competencies they require in order to be effective. It is considered that this should be the first step in a review of the TAE training package so that the revised qualifications and skill sets are aligned to real-world requirements.

This was an independent project undertaken by the author without remuneration. The research was undertaken using resources available to the author through her professional network as a VET practitioner.

Research data was collected through surveys of two groups, namely: practising VET trainers and assessors and experienced VET professionals in leadership and consultancy roles. This data was supplemented by interviews with three representatives of industry and enterprise.

The data has been collated and analysed to identify the similarities and differences in the performance requirements and priorities of VET trainers and assessors who work in public RTOs, private RTOs and in enterprise. It was further analysed to identify similarities and differences for RTO entry-level trainer/assessors and RTO experienced trainer/assessors.

The conclusions drawn and the recommendations put forward in this report are based on analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data provided by the respondents.

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<sup>1</sup> Industry Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work: PwC's Skills for Australia, Draft May 2018

<sup>2</sup> Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work: Draft for consultation: Education, PwC's Skills for Australia, February 2019

## Reasons for undertaking the research

TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40116) superseded the qualification TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110) in April 2016.

Prior to 2016, Innovation and Business Skills Council (IBSA) was the Industry Skills Council (ISC) responsible for development and management of the TAE Training Package. In September 2014 IBSA issued a Case for Endorsement of this Training Package<sup>3</sup>. This incorporated recommendations for TAE40110 to be superseded by a qualification TAE40114, incorporating the unit TAELLN401A into the core of the qualification and requiring all trainer/assessors of TAE40114 to hold a TAE Diploma qualification.

Subsequent to the release of this Case for Endorsement, IBSA conducted further industry consultation which continued through 2015. In October 2015 IBSA issued an Options Paper<sup>4</sup>, seeking contributions from VET professionals. Responses from 9 VET professionals were collated by Chemène Sinson of Blackwater Projects and submitted to IBSA<sup>5</sup>.

The Options Paper requested feedback on 3 options:

- Option 1 - Include TAEASS502 as a core unit in the Cert IV TAE
- Option 2 - Develop a new unit to be added to the core in the Cert IV TAE
- Option 3 - Enhance the three assessment units currently in the core of the Cert IV TAE

The response of the 9 VET professionals disagreed with options 1 and 2 and recommended option 3.

On 23 October 2015, IBSA held 3 identical webinars with VET practitioners seeking further feedback on the three options. When the votes of all webinar participants were collated, 15% chose option 1, 28% chose option 2 and a majority of 57% chose option 3.

In January 2016 the Australian Department of Education and Training released a discussion paper<sup>6</sup>.

Three of the questions in the discussion paper are quoted below:

1. *“Should the TAE Certificate IV be changed to a core unit on the design and development of assessment tools? How would this improve assessment outcomes for students?”*
2. *Should the core unit be the existing TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools unit of competency? Are there alternative approaches, such as developing a new unit on the design and development of assessment tools?*
3. *Is the TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools unit of competency a specialist unit that should only sit at the diploma-level on*

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<sup>3</sup> Innovation and Business Skills Australia, Case for Endorsement TAE Training and Education Package 2014

<sup>4</sup> Innovation and Business Skills Australia, Options Paper: Strengthening Assessment in the TAE Training Package 2015

<sup>5</sup> Chemene Sinson et Ors: Response to IBSA Options Paper: Strengthening Assessment in the TAE Training Package 2015

<sup>6</sup> Department of Education and Training: Quality of assessment in vocational education and training – Discussion Paper, 2016

*the basis the Certificate IV is currently designed for delivery to new entrants seeking to be trainers and assessors?”*

The above three questions reflect the three options discussed at the IBSA webinar, where the majority voted not to include the unit Design and develop assessment tools in the core of the new TAE Cert IV.

On 1 April 2016, the AISC issued a Communique<sup>7</sup> advising the endorsement of the new TAE40116. This stated:

*“The changes specifically respond to the quality issues identified by the Australian Skills Quality Authority through its strategic reviews.*

*The AISC has agreed to the inclusion of two new core units for the Certificate IV qualification. The inclusion of an additional unit in addressing adult language, literacy and numeracy skills will ensure that VET practitioners will have a greater understanding of the foundation skills required in their industry sectors.*

*The addition of a core unit on the development of effective assessment tools (Design and develop assessment tools) will help to assure employers that students graduating from VET courses will be more effectively assessed as having the necessary skills and knowledge to do the job.”*

The conclusion drawn from the above is that the AISC adopted ASQA’s recommendations to include TAEASS502 in the core of the qualification, although the majority of VET practitioners did not recommend this option.

Simultaneously, a government initiative in January 2016 instigated the establishment of Skills Service Organisations (SSOs) to replace the previous ISCs. IBSA’s application was rejected and Price Waterhouse Coopers was approved as the SSO responsible for a number of Training Packages, including TAE. This SSO is known as “PwC’s Skills for Australia” (PwC).

In addition to these changes, ASQA required all RTOs to apply for scope for TAE40116 rather than grant automatic scope for those RTOs previously approved to deliver TAE40110. This was a complex process and there were several months where no RTO could enrol students for a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. TAE40116 was endorsed on 5 April 2016.

The author’s client, International Teacher Training Academy (ITTA), applied for scope in April 2016 and was approved in September of the same year. ITTA was one of the first RTOs granted scope for the qualification. The author has a strong relationship with ITTA, which has used Welton resources exclusively since its registration. For this reason, the ITTA application was used as a test of the Welton resources. The assumption was that if ITTA’s application was approved, then the Welton resources were valid. Once ITTA received approval, the Welton resources were released for sale to other RTOs.

On 20 July 2016 PwC conducted a webinar for VET professionals in relation to the endorsed TAE40116 which the author attended. Various VET professionals voiced their concerns, in particular regarding the inclusion of TAEASS502 in the core of the qualification. At this webinar, PwC acknowledged the concerns raised and advised verbally that they were not

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<sup>7</sup> Australian Industry Skills Committee: Communique 1 April 2016

permitted to make any changes to TAE40116 for a minimum of 3 years. Now that the three years have passed, it is envisaged PwC will be permitted to review TAE40116.

In September 2016 the author agreed to conduct training and assessment for ITTA on a contract basis and has continued to do so to the present date. The objective was to gather information on the learner journey for TAE40116, and to evaluate the practicality of both the qualification and the Welton resources.

The above observations are the justification for conducting this research project. The objective was to determine the competencies required for VET trainers and assessors to effectively contribute to the success of Australian industry and enterprise.

The project is not intended to focus on issues with the current qualification. Rather, it is intended to provide pertinent information which will inform PwC in order to optimise the effectiveness of the new training products for TAE training package.

## Relevance to recent reviews of the VET system

In recent years there have been various reviews of the Australian VET system. This section provides an overview of the key findings that have given rise to this research project.

### Strengthening Skills: Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System<sup>8</sup>

This report was published in April 2019, written by The Hon. Steven Joyce and generally referred to as "the Joyce Report".

Steven Joyce is a former New Zealand politician and now runs an advisory firm, Joyce Advisory Limited, from Auckland, New Zealand. In November 2018 the Australian Government Department of Education appointed Mr Joyce to undertake a review into the vocational education and training (VET) system<sup>9</sup>.

This was a comprehensive report on all aspects of the VET system. Certain of the findings are directly relevant to this project. The following is an example:

*"For some providers and their trainers, a lack of capability, outdated industry knowledge or simply time can lead to the assessment process being inadequate. The previous issues with poor delivery and assessment of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) to VET trainers undoubtedly contributed to these problems."<sup>10</sup>*

Under the heading "Teacher Quality"<sup>11</sup> the review identified the quality of trainers as an issue for the VET sector and commented that the TAE qualification is not immune from the

*"broader issues associated with VET, including quality and variability of training and questionable assessments of competency".*

This statement raises two concerns:

1. The Joyce Report was released in 2019. TAE40116 was endorsed in 2016 and RTOs were intensively audited by ASQA prior to being awarded scope for the qualification. Nevertheless, three years later, the Joyce Report identified issues with the quality and variability of training and assessment of this essential qualification.
2. If a significant proportion of trainers and assessors are not competent, then every qualification is suspect. Employers cannot rely on a Certificate or Statement of Attainment to confirm the competency of employees in their trades and professions. This has the potential to bring the Australian VET system into disrepute.

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<sup>8</sup> © Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Strengthening Skills: 2019

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.education.gov.au/hon-steven-joyce>

<sup>10</sup> © Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Strengthening Skills, 2019 p 46

<sup>11</sup> © Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Strengthening Skills, 2019 p 49

This research project was designed to investigate what competencies are required by trainers and assessors and to recommend development of training products which meet the needs of Australian industry and enterprise. It is not concerned with criticising the current TAE40116, but is focused on moving forward.

## ASQA Regulatory Strategy<sup>12</sup>

ASQA released a Regulatory Strategy in December 2018 identifying a number of target areas for stronger oversight. The second target area was Trainer and Assessor Capability (p. 8). It stated that trainer and assessor capability was a “*complex issue and has been the subject of several reviews*”. It indicated four main areas of concern:

1. *the poor quality of the TAE qualification*
2. *unduly short qualifications and the prioritisation of the TAE qualification over the skills required for successful teaching*
3. *sessional teaching*
4. *a lack of professional development.*

This research project directly relates to items 1 and 4 above. Item 1 refers to the poor quality of the TAE qualification, and yet this review took place in 2018, two years after TAE40116 was endorsed. Item 4 refers to a lack of professional development. After attaining TAE40116, there is no interim qualification or skill set that provides for professional development other than a Diploma.

ASQA stated on page 8:

*“A review of the TAE is being undertaken by the relevant Skills Service Organisation, and is expected to be completed in 2020.”*

The relevant Skills Service Organisation is PwC’s Skills for Australia. The results of this research project will be submitted to PwC to assist in the review of the TAE training package.

## “All Eyes on Quality” Review Response<sup>13</sup>

This review was led by Professor Valerie Braithwaite, Professor of Regulatory Studies in the School of Regulation and Global Governance at the Australian National University. It addressed key issues and challenges that ASQA faces in regulating the VET sector, and how the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 and its supporting legislation and VET quality framework, supported ASQA’s evolving work.<sup>14</sup>

Key recommendations by Professor Braithwaite that related to teaching excellence were quoted in the Australian Government’s response to the Review. These are quoted below.

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<sup>12</sup> Regulatory Strategy 2018-20: Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), December 2018

<sup>13</sup> All eyes on quality: Review of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011, Australian Government Response, June 2018

<sup>14</sup> All eyes on quality: Review of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011, Australian Government Response, June 2018, p. 3

*Professor Braithwaite made three recommendations on improving teacher excellence:*

**Recommendation 7:** *The VET Quality Framework be revised to require an RTO to assess the quality of its teaching workforce and develop teacher quality improvement actions, which must be submitted to ASQA annually as a part of the Quality Indicator Annual Summary report.*

*The Government **supports** in principle this recommendation*

**Recommendation 8:** *The Training and Education Training Package be reviewed with the purpose of creating a career path for teaching excellence in vocational education and training.*

*The Government **supports** in principle this recommendation*

**Recommendation 9:** *The Australian Government leads a process to raise the standards of teaching and training excellence and professionalism in the sector through creation of the role of Master Assessor. A Master Assessor would be placed at the pinnacle of the VET teacher/trainer career path with the responsibility to mentor through professional development programs and assess the quality of an RTO's next cohort of graduating students.*

*The Government **notes** this recommendation*

The objective of this research project relates directly to the recommendations of the Braithwaite review and the Government's response. Surveys of VET practitioners sought information on whether there should be levels of excellence in VET training and assessment so as to create a career path for VET practitioners.

## PwC's Proposed Schedule of Work 2018 – Review of TAE<sup>15</sup>

Section 3 of the PwC's Schedule of Work explained the Case for Change for TAE and FSK Training Packages. The schedule for review of TAE Training Package was:

- *Year 1 (2017-18): Review career pathways in the Training and Education Training Package*
- *Year 2 (2018-19): Review of all Units of Competency in TAE v2.1*

Prior to issue of the Schedule of Work, PwC issued a request for responses to the Case for Change of the TAE Training Package. Individual responses were provided by various VET professionals, including a joint response from 21 VET professionals, consolidated and submitted by Nancy Pavlovic.<sup>16</sup>

The consensus of the response was that the TAE qualifications need to have clear pathways for different purposes and cohorts and specifically a distinction between an enterprise trainer and assessor and that of a trainer/assessor in an RTO.

This research project has gathered information on the different cohorts and the competencies they require.

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<sup>15</sup> Industry Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work: PwC's Skills for Australia, Draft May 2018

<sup>16</sup> TAE Business Case for Change - Industry Consultation Submission: Nancy Pavlovic MAITD, MAIPM, April 2018

## PwC's Industry Skills Forecast and Schedule of Work 2019<sup>17</sup>

In its Executive Summary, PwC stated:

*The Education Industry Reference Committee (IRC) is in ongoing dialogue with the Australian Industry Skills Committee (AISC) and with the Department of Education and Training regarding the appropriate timing and scope of a review of the TAE Training Package. (p 2)*

In relation to the TAE Training Package, PwC found the following:

*In 2017, the overwhelming majority of TAE enrolments (91 per cent) were in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. This indicates that a single qualification is currently endeavouring to meet the needs of a broad range of learners and their employers. Feedback from industry consultations have indicated that this has a negative impact on the quality of training learners receive. (p 8)*

PwC sought feedback from employers and stated:

*Employers are experiencing challenges with the Training Package stemming from a view that it is structured to provide a 'one size fits all' approach to training without addressing needs in different areas. (p 10)*

PwC stated the opinion of the Education IRC as follows:

*The Education IRC believes a key challenge with the Training Package is that it offers 'one size fits all' qualifications that are not aligned to the variety of current job roles.*

The conclusion can be drawn that the IRC, employers and the VET sector have reservations about whether TAE40116 is fit-for-purpose and that a review should investigate whether more than one training product is required so as to align with the variety of roles of trainers and assessors working in RTOs and enterprise.

## Survey of the current VET workforce

The PwC report<sup>18</sup> referred to a survey being conducted by NCVET to determine the variety of roles of the VET workforce. This was commenced in April 2018 and was due for release in September 2019.

The primary aim and methodology of this project is stated as follows:

*Research aims: The primary aim of this project is to obtain a more accurate number of trainers and assessors currently within the VET workforce.*

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<sup>17</sup> Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work: Draft for consultation: Education, PwC's Skills for Australia, February 2019

<sup>18</sup> Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work: Draft for consultation: Education, PwC's Skills for Australia, February 2019

*Secondary to this, the research also aims to obtain further information about the locations from which trainers and assessors deliver training.*

*Methodology: An online survey delivered to all registered training organisations (RTOs) on the National Register of VET.<sup>19</sup>*

The proposed methodology states that it seeks numerical information on trainers and assessors and their location. There is no indication that this research will gather information on the tasks that VET trainers and assessors perform and the competencies they require.

Further, this methodology is unlikely to garner useful data on enterprise trainers and assessors. The methodology is to survey RTOs only. Although RTOs with scope for TAE40116 may be able to provide data on their current and past students, there is no indication that the survey will seek this information.

This report is not yet available on the NCVET website.

## Employers' use and views of the VET system 2019<sup>20</sup>

The publication does not relate to the TAE training package qualifications. It relates to employer satisfaction with VET training and assessment in general, with the exception of apprenticeships and traineeships.

Nevertheless, this publication does support the proposition that there are many individuals working in enterprise who deliver in-house non-accredited training for specific purposes. The following data is copied from page 10 of the publication.

*48.8% provided unaccredited training to their staff*

*the top reasons for using unaccredited training were to:*

- *provide the skills required for the job (57.0%)*
- *meet and maintain professional or industry standards (36.0%)*
- *meet highly specific training needs (34.5%).*

*Of employers who used unaccredited training, 56.8% of employers did not use an external training provider, 16.3% used a private training provider, and 14.3% used a professional or industry association*

According to this survey, 56.8% of the employers surveyed conducted in-house training which was not aligned to nationally recognised qualifications.

Therefore, there are many trainers and assessors who work in enterprise and conduct in-house training which is not aligned to nationally recognised qualifications.

TAE40116 is currently the only qualification designed for trainers and assessors, whether they work in enterprise or in an RTO. One of the objectives of this research project is to gather data on the performance requirements of enterprise trainers and compare these with the performance requirements of RTO trainer/assessors.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/current-research/in-house-research/national-vet-workforce-survey> (August 2019)

<sup>20</sup> NCVET 2019, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: employers' use and views of the VET system 2019*, NCVET, Adelaide.

## Research Methodology

The author has been a VET practitioner for sixteen years, specialising in training and assessment and management qualifications. In order to ensure that this research was conducted credibly, she enrolled with Fortress Learning (RTO Code 31974) to undertake the unit of competency TAERES501 Apply research to training and assessment practice<sup>21</sup>. The author wishes to acknowledge the guidance of Bryan West of Fortress Learning in ensuring that this research and report complied with the principles outlined in the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research<sup>22</sup>.

### Sources of data

Data was sought from individuals who are at the front-line of VET, as follows:

#### 1. VET professionals who are part of the author's professional network.

Questions for this group relied on their experience of delivering training to TAE students and their experience working in an RTO. This group provided expert opinions of the competencies required of the following cohorts:

- RTO trainer/assessors at entry level, after one year and after three years
- Enterprise trainers and assessors who do not work in an RTO

#### 2. Previous students who have recently completed TAE40116 with ITTA.

This survey was undertaken with the consent and support of Carolyn Fletcher, Director of International Teacher Training Academy (RTO Code 40716).

Questions for this group focused on the tasks they perform in their work role as a trainer and assessor. This group fell into two categories:

- Those who had completed the full course and were therefore entry-level trainer/assessors
- Those who had completed the upgrade from the previous TAE40110 to TAE40116 and were therefore experienced trainer/assessors.

#### 3. Interviews with representatives of industry:

- Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) which has hundreds of employees in various roles from administration to high risk activities.
- HB Group trading as HB Recruitment, which is a preferred supplier of recruitment services to government and a number of companies across the Darling Downs.
- The Queensland Regional Skills Investment Strategy (RSIS) which supports selected regional communities to identify current and emerging jobs in key industries and ensure there is a supply of skilled local people to meet this demand

Interviews were conducted informally with these individuals to gather qualitative data on the required or preferred competencies of enterprise trainers. Due to the limited sample of employers, this data is supportive but not reliable to indicate the situation for

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<sup>21</sup> <https://fortresslearning.com.au/courses/taeres501/>

<sup>22</sup> Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research: National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018

employers throughout Australia. However, an informal discussion has the advantage of gaining in-depth knowledge of the issues facing employers in this context.

## Survey Approach

Consideration was given to using applications such as Survey Monkey or Google Forms to distribute the surveys. Advice was sought on the benefits and disadvantages of this approach. The benefits are that the survey is on-line and easy to access for respondents. Both applications also have automated features for analysing the data and reporting. These applications are ideal for managing large quantities of data, but would not have enabled the versatility and depth of analysis required for this project.

For this reason, the surveys were Microsoft Word documents attached to emails addressed to each individual respondent. The students and ex-students of ITTA have basic computer literacy. Their TAE40116 course has developed the necessary skills to work with Word and to navigate web sites for research purposes. Therefore, all of this group were competent to receive a Word document attached to an email, complete and return it.

## Survey Design

Two surveys were designed. Both surveys contained the same list of tasks, as follows:

- Downloading/analysing qualifications and units of competency from training.gov.au
- Packaging qualifications for trainees and writing training plans / training and assessment strategies
- Designing or modifying learning resources
- Designing or modifying assessment tools
- Writing session plans
- Investigating training needs for employees in the workplace and planning training
- Training groups – face to face
- Training/mentoring individuals or groups in the workplace
- Supporting on-line learners
- Assessing competence and recording assessment judgements
- Supporting candidates through RPL and assessing competence
- Validating assessment tools and/or judgements
- Applying reasonable adjustment for special needs
- Developing and/or assessing LLN core skills
- Supervising workers and/or teams in the workplace
- Liaising with industry/employers
- Administration/management of compliance with VET Standards

The above list was developed by analysing the current performance requirements of TAE40116 and the VET Practitioner Capability Framework<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> The VET Practitioner Capability Framework Implementation Guide: Innovation & Business Skills Australia Ltd, 2013

## Survey Results

### ITTA students who had recently completed TAE40116

Each respondent was provided with the above list of tasks and asked to check a box as to how frequently they performed each task.

The graphic below shows a portion of the survey form.

Your work role:			
I work in a TAFE	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I work in a private RTO	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I work in an enterprise (company or other type of organisation <b>not</b> an RTO)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I work in an enterprise (company or other type of organisation which is also an RTO)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
How frequently do you perform the following?	Often	Occasionally	Never
Downloading/analysing qualifications and units of competency from training.gov.au	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Packaging qualifications for trainees and writing training plans / training and assessment strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Designing or modifying learning resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Designing or modifying assessment tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing session plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigating training needs for employees in the workplace and planning training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 1: Survey Form - Practising Trainer/Assessors

The respondents to this survey fell into two groups:

#### Group One – students who completed TAE40116 full course

Respondents who had completed the full course were categorised as “entry level”. After gaining the qualification, they met the requirements of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations. They were therefore now permitted to work without supervision as trainer/assessors in an RTO.

#### Group Two – students who completed the upgrade from TAE40110 to TAE40116.

Respondents who had completed the upgrade were categorised as “experienced”. They were already working as trainer/assessors and required to upgrade the qualification to meet the changed requirements of the Standards.

In total, 238 emails were sent.

- 77 were to those who had completed the full course and 26 responded
- 161 were to upgrade students and 30 responded

The benefit of limiting the sample to students of ITTA was that each individual had completed their training with the author or with her colleagues. Information relating to their location, employer and personal characteristics was known. This would not have been possible with a larger cohort, and would have prevented in-depth analysis from different perspectives.

Total responses were as follows:

Category	Full Course	Upgrade
Working for a public RTO (TAFE, University or School)	11	11
Working for a private RTO	6	14
Working within an enterprise which is also an RTO	2	3
Working within an enterprise which is not an RTO	7	2

Figure 2: Total responses Practising Trainer/Assessors

### Group Three – VET Professionals

A survey with the same list of tasks was emailed to the author’s professional network, who have substantial experience working in the VET sector.

The graphic below shows a portion of the survey form.

Please identify your role as a VET professional (you may select more than one)	
RTO Manager/Owner/CEO	<input type="checkbox"/>
RTO Quality Manager/Administrator	<input type="checkbox"/>
RTO Trainer/Assessor in a leadership role	<input type="checkbox"/>
RTO Trainer/Assessor	<input type="checkbox"/>
RTO Consultant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developer of learning materials	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developer of assessment tools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enterprise manager with responsibility for training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: (please describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please identify the performance requirements you consider to be essential for each of the following**

- Entry level as a trainer/assessor in an RTO
- After one year’s employment as an RTO trainer/assessor
- After three years’ employment as an RTO trainer/assessor
- Enterprise trainer/assessor (non-RTO)

Performance requirements	RTO Entry Level	RTO After One Year	RTO After 3 Years	Enterprise
Downloading/analysing qualifications and units of competency from training.gov.au	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Packaging qualifications for trainees and writing training plans / training and assessment strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 3: Survey Form - VET Professionals

Group Three were asked to use their expertise and experience to categorise the list of tasks by selecting checkboxes.

In total, 33 emails were sent and 22 recipients responded.

The majority of VET professionals identified themselves as performing multiple roles, as shown in the table below:

---

Role identified	Total
RTO Manager/Owner/CEO	8
RTO Quality Manager/Administrator	1
RTO Trainer/Assessor in a leadership role	7
RTO Trainer/Assessor	8
RTO Consultant	7
Developer of learning materials	11
Developer of assessment tools	11
Enterprise manager with responsibility for training	4

*Figure 4: Total Responses - VET Professionals*

## Analysis of the Survey Data

The data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. The Excel spreadsheet incremented the number of responses as they were received. The data was also segregated on the spreadsheet into various groups, namely:

- VET professionals
- Those working in a TAFE or other public RTO such as a university or school
- Those working in a private RTO
- Those working in an enterprise which is also an RTO
- Those working in an enterprise which is not an RTO

The analyses involved use of the =Rank() function, which provided a score for each response. Those items with the highest ratings of “frequently” or “occasionally” have been analysed and presented in tabular and graphical format. Ranking was used so that the discrepancy in numbers of responses for each group would not present a false result.

The resulting data was then analysed to determine whether the items apply to RTO and enterprise trainers and assessors, or whether they only apply to one group.

A code for each of the tasks on the questionnaire has been provided in the table below, so that the data can be presented graphically.

Task performed either frequently or occasionally	Code
Downloading/analysing qualifications and units of competency from training.gov.au	Using training.gov.au
Packaging qualifications for trainees and writing training plans / training and assessment strategies	Packaging quals
Designing or modifying learning resources	Writing learning resources
Designing or modifying assessment tools	Writing assessment tools
Writing session plans	Writing session plans
Investigating training needs for employees in the workplace and planning training	Training Needs Analysis
Training groups – face to face	Group Training
Training/mentoring individuals or groups in the workplace	Workplace Training
Supporting on-line learners	Online Training
Assessing competence and recording assessment judgements	Assessing Competence
Supporting candidates through RPL and assessing competence	Conducting RPL
Validating assessment tools and/or judgements	Validation
Applying reasonable adjustment for special needs	Reasonable Adjustment
Developing and/or assessing LLN core skills	Supporting LLN
Supervising workers and/or teams in the workplace	Supervision in workplace
Liaising with industry/employers	Liaise with industry
Administration/management of compliance with VET Standards	Managing Compliance

Figure 5: Task Descriptions and Short Codes

## Analysis 1 – Tasks Performed at Entry Level

TAE40116 is the qualification required in order to work as a trainer/assessor in an RTO. Therefore, it is appropriate to determine which tasks are actually performed in the workplace by those who have recently completed the full course.

The data from the surveys of ITTA students and the VET professionals was consolidated in the Excel spreadsheet by totalling the responses to:

- ITTA students – task completed frequently added to tasks completed occasionally
- VET professionals – identified as a requirement at entry level for an RTO or Enterprise

The sum of the responses was then ranked, so as to show the priorities of tasks performed.

The results identified differences between those working in an RTO and those working in enterprise (see below).

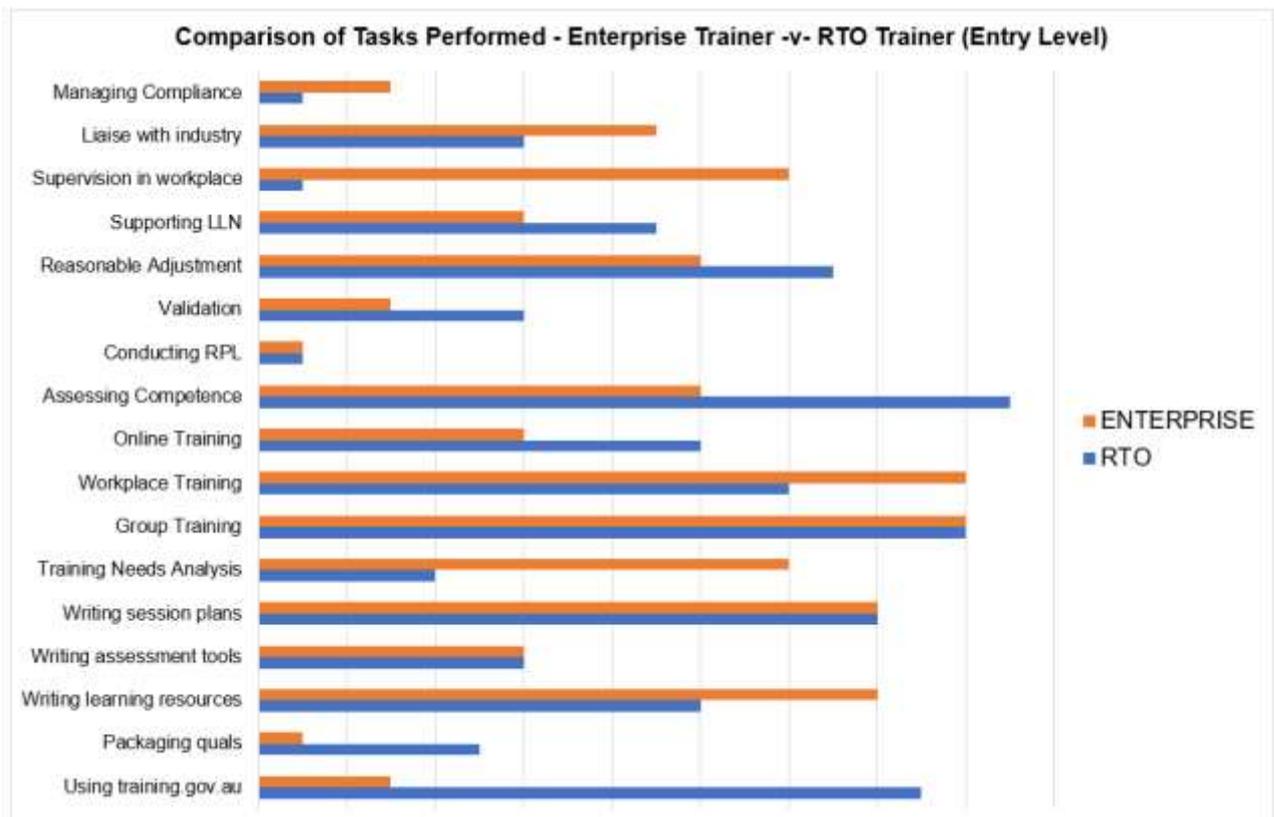


Figure 6: Chart - Ranking of Entry Level tasks.

### Highest ranked tasks per group

RTO Trainer/Assessors	Enterprise Trainers and Assessors
Assessing competence and recording assessment judgements	Training groups – face to face
Training groups – face to face	Training/mentoring individuals or groups in the workplace

RTO Trainer/Assessors	Enterprise Trainers and Assessors
Downloading/analysing qualifications and units of competency from training.gov.au	Writing session plans
Writing session plans	Designing or modifying learning resources
Applying reasonable adjustment for special needs	Investigating training needs for employees in the workplace and planning training

Figure 7: Entry level - highest rankings - RTO -v- Enterprise

### Lowest ranked tasks per group

RTO Trainer/Assessors	Enterprise Trainers and Assessors
Designing or modifying assessment tools	Downloading/analysing qualifications and units of competency from training.gov.au
Investigating training needs for employees in the workplace and planning training	Packaging qualifications for trainees and writing training plans / training and assessment strategies
Supervising workers and/or teams in the workplace	Validating assessment tools and/or judgements
Administration/management of compliance with VET Standards	Administration/management of compliance with VET Standards
Supporting candidates through RPL and assessing competence	Supporting candidates through RPL and assessing competence

Figure 8: Entry level - lowest rankings - RTO -v- Enterprise

A review of the above results demonstrates a substantial difference in tasks and priorities between RTO trainer/assessors and those who work in enterprise.

It is also noted that the 5 lowest ranked tasks for RTO trainer/assessors included design of assessment tools and conduct of RPL, which indicates that entry-level RTO trainer/assessors are seldom required to perform these tasks.

## Analysis 2 – Tasks Performed RTO Trainers and Assessors

Responses from those employed in enterprise have been omitted from this analysis, so as to concentrate on those employed in public and private RTOs.

### Analysis 2A – Comparison of Entry-level versus Experienced RTO Trainer/Assessors

Analysis 2A is designed to test the proposition that there is a difference between the level of competency of an individual who has recently been employed as an RTO trainer/assessor, as opposed to one who has at least one year's experience. If this proposition is true, then experienced RTO trainer/assessors are likely to perform additional and more complex tasks than those performed at entry-level.

Analysis 2A collated data from ITTA students currently employed by an RTO who had completed the full course (entry level) and those who had completed the upgrade course (experienced). The sum of tasks completed frequently and occasionally for both cohorts were collated and ranked.

#### Ranking comparison – RTO entry level -v- experienced

	Entry level	Experienced
1.	Using training.gov.au	Writing session plans
2.	Assessing Competence	Assessing Competence
3.	Reasonable Adjustment	Using training.gov.au
4.	Writing learning resources	Reasonable Adjustment
5.	Group Training	Group Training
6.	Writing session plans	Validation
7.	Writing assessment tools	Writing learning resources
8.	Liaise with industry	Writing assessment tools
9.	Validation	Supporting LLN
10.	Supporting LLN	Conducting RPL
11.	Supervision in workplace	Managing Compliance
12.	Workplace Training	Liaise with industry
13.	Packaging quals	Supervision in workplace
14.	Conducting RPL	Workplace Training
15.	Training Needs Analysis	Packaging quals
16.	Online Training	Training Needs Analysis
17.	Managing Compliance	Online Training

Figure 9: Ranking comparison (RTO) - entry level -v- experienced

The comparison is presented graphically below

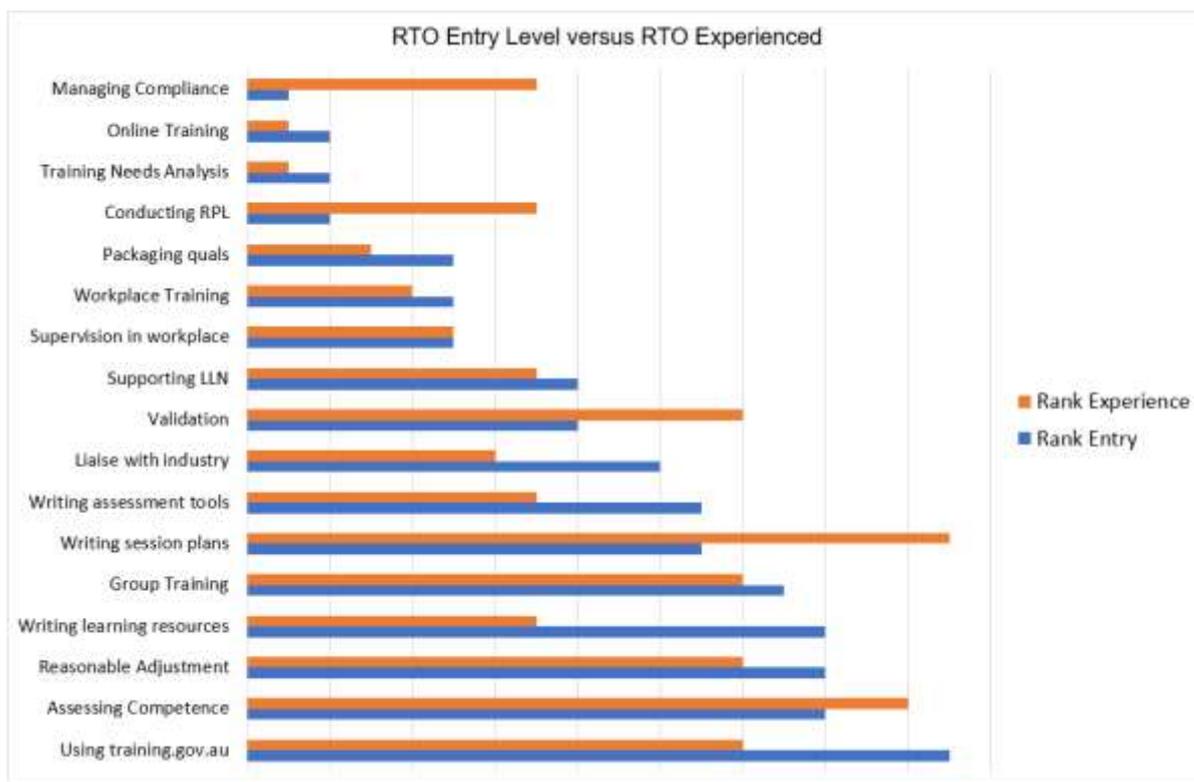


Figure 10: Chart - Ranking: RTO Entry Level -v- RTO Experienced

The results are provided in table format below.

**Tasks common to both groups**

Assessing competence
Making reasonable adjustment for special needs
Group training
Supporting LLN development
Supervision in the workplace and workplace training (low priority)

Figure 11: RTO - Entry -v- Experienced - common tasks

**Tasks ranked higher for experienced trainer/assessors**

Writing session plans
Participating in validation of assessment tools
Conducting RPL
Managing compliance with the RTO Standards

Figure 12: RTO - Entry -v- Experienced - Higher Ranking for Experienced

**Tasks ranked higher for entry-level trainer/assessors**

Downloading and interpreting qualifications and units of competency from training.gov.au
Writing learning resources
Writing assessment tools
Liaising with industry

Figure 13: RTO - Entry -v- Experienced - Higher Ranking for Entry Level

### Analysis 2B – Comparison of Public versus Private RTOs

When the data from Analysis 2A was collated and ranked, a difference was noted between the responses from experienced trainer/assessors working in a TAFE or other public RTO (school or university) and those working in the private sector.

The ranking comparison between these two cohorts is as follows:

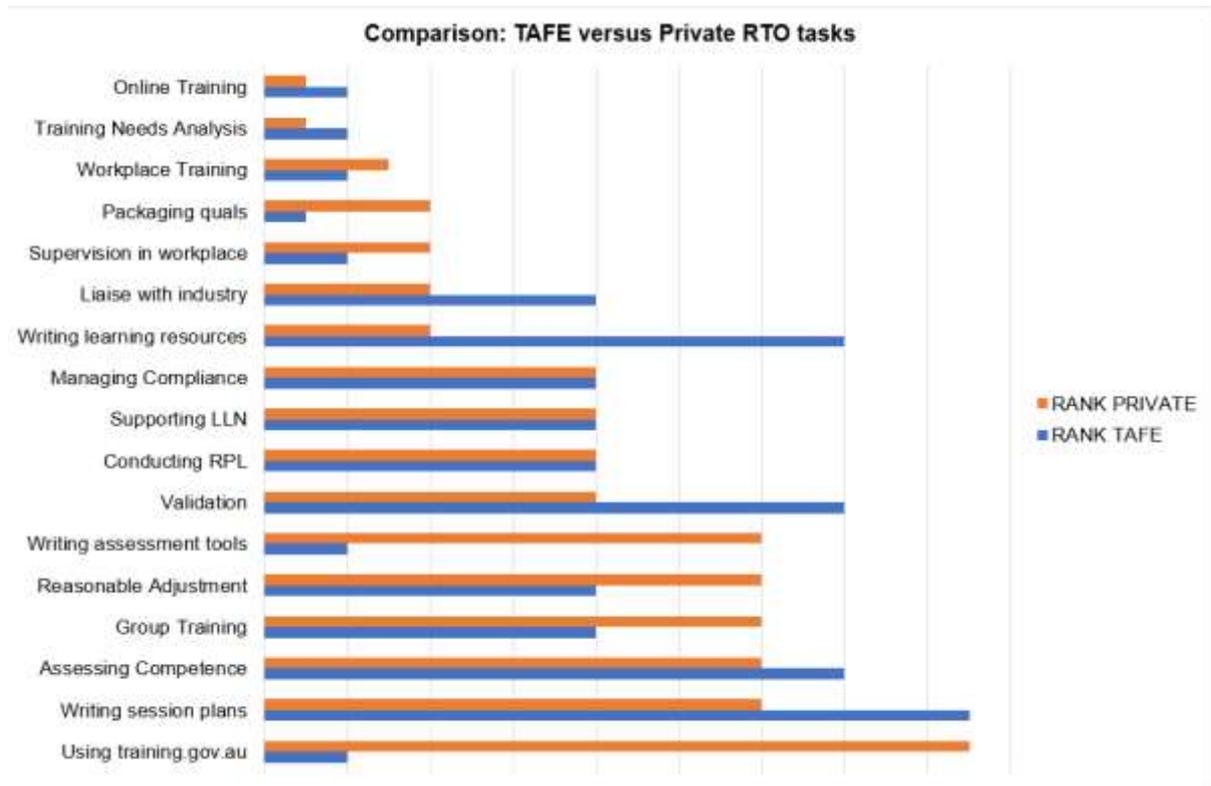


Figure 14: Chart - RTO Experienced – TAFE -v- Private

### Ranking comparison – public -v- private RTO

	TAFE and other public RTOs	Private RTOs
1.	Writing session plans	Using training.gov.au
2.	Assessing Competence	Writing session plans
3.	Validation	Assessing Competence
4.	Writing learning resources	Group Training
5.	Group Training	Reasonable Adjustment
6.	Reasonable Adjustment	Writing assessment tools
7.	Conducting RPL	Validation
8.	Supporting LLN	Conducting RPL
9.	Managing Compliance	Supporting LLN
10.	Liaise with industry	Managing Compliance
11.	Using training.gov.au	Writing learning resources
12.	Writing assessment tools	Liaise with industry
13.	Supervision in workplace	Supervision in workplace
14.	Workplace Training	Packaging quals
15.	Training Needs Analysis	Workplace Training
16.	Online Training	Training Needs Analysis
17.	Packaging quals	Online Training

Figure 15: Table - RTO Experienced – TAFE -v- Private

These responses indicate that there are differences between the role of a trainer/assessor in a private RTO and in a TAFE.

**Tasks common to both groups**

Assessing competence
Conducting RPL
Supporting LLN
Managing compliance

*Figure 16: RTO TAFE -v- Private - common tasks*

**Tasks ranked higher for TAFE trainer/assessors**

Writing session plans
Participating in validation
Writing learning resources
Liaising with industry

*Figure 17: RTO TAFE -v- Private - TAFE high ranked tasks*

**Tasks ranked higher for private RTO trainer/assessors**

Downloading and interpreting qualifications and units of competency from training.gov.au
Group training
Applying reasonable adjustment for special needs
Writing assessment tools
Packaging qualifications
Supervision in the workplace and workplace training

*Figure 18: RTO TAFE -v- Private - Private high ranked tasks*

Further investigation of the reasons for this result is required. The result suggests the possibility that operational systems and procedures differ, which may be explained by the relative size and resources of public versus private RTOs.

### Analysis 3: VET Professionals

This survey sought the expert opinions of VET professionals on the tasks and competencies required for trainer/assessors in four categories:

- Entry-level – RTO trainer/assessors
- Experienced – after one year – RTO trainer/assessors
- Experienced – after three years – RTO trainer/assessors
- Trainers and assessors working in enterprise – not working for an RTO

Respondents could check multiple checkboxes, where a task would apply to more than one category.

A chart of the complete results is provided in figure 4 below.

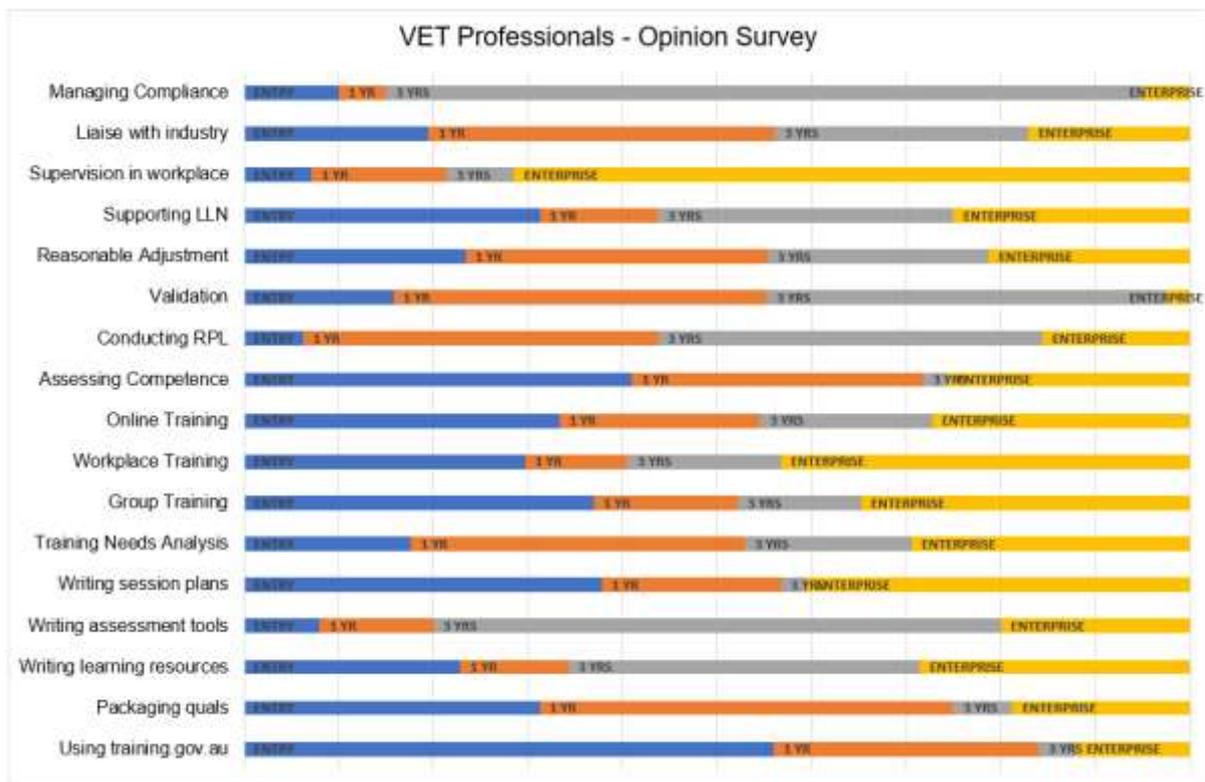


Figure 19: Chart - VET Professionals - Task Rankings for the 4 Categories

The following tables interpret the data, listing the tasks which VET professionals believe are ranked highly for each category.

#### RTO Trainer/Assessor – Entry level

Training groups – face to face
Assessing competence and recording assessment judgements
Downloading/analysing qualifications and units of competency from training.gov.au
Writing session plans
Training/mentoring individuals or groups in the workplace
Supporting on-line learners
Applying reasonable adjustment for special needs
Developing and/or assessing LLN core skills

Figure 20: Table - VET Professionals - RTO entry level tasks

**RTO Trainer/Assessor – After One Year (experienced)**

Applying reasonable adjustment for special needs
Liaising with industry/employers
Validating assessment tools and/or judgements
Assessing competence and recording assessment judgements
Investigating training needs for employees in the workplace and planning training
Supporting candidates through RPL and assessing competence
Training groups – face to face
Downloading/analysing qualifications and units of competency from training.gov.au

*Figure 21: Table - VET Professionals - RTO experienced (1 yr) tasks***RTO Trainer/Assessor – After Three Years**

Validating assessment tools and/or judgements
Administration/management of compliance with VET Standards
Designing or modifying assessment tools
Supporting candidates through RPL and assessing competence
Designing or modifying learning resources
Applying reasonable adjustment for special needs
Liaising with industry/employers
Developing and/or assessing LLN core skills

*Figure 22: Table - VET Professionals - RTO experienced (3 yrs) tasks***Enterprise Trainer/Assessor – non-accredited training**

Training groups – face to face
Training/mentoring individuals or groups in the workplace
Writing session plans
Designing or modifying learning resources
Applying reasonable adjustment for special needs
Investigating training needs for employees in the workplace and planning training
Assessing competence and recording assessment judgements
Supervising workers and/or teams in the workplace

*Figure 23: Table - VET Professionals - Enterprise Trainer tasks*

## Comments from VET Professionals

The survey forms provided a place for respondents to make comments. The comments of all respondents who consented to be quoted are copied in full and without modification.

### **Carey Carson: My Global Skills Pty Ltd**

As a Trainer/Assessor of TAE40116, I am regularly fielding complaints about the relevance of some of the units within the current TAE40116. These complaints are coming from both individuals and employers in non-RTO workplaces.

For these non-RTO people, training & assessment is undertaken in-house as part of the natural course of workplace activities and continuous improvement processes. Training & Assessment aligns with performance reviews and worker professional development, with priority given to risk management and quality assurance related outcomes. Organisational and individual needs are immediate and ongoing. In many instances training is provided on an as-needs basis for individuals, rather than groups.

Group training for employee professional development is considered desirable rather than essential, and often outsourced. Training may link to nationally recognised qualifications or statements of attainment but, often, paying for staff to attain nationally recognised qualifications is not considered high priority. Career pathways are important for workplaces and they do want workers to grow and take on more responsibility, however they balk at employees completing lengthy qualifications that aren't specifically focussed on organisational goals and outcomes. The Cert IV TAE40116 is no exception.

From my own experience, the ratio of Cert IV TAE students who go on to work for RTOs is probably only 2:10 which suggest that the TAE40116 is either inappropriately weighted to RTO employment or that there needs to be two training & assessment qualifications, both of which should be at AQF level IV.

To suggest that Enterprise training & assessment only qualifies for a skill set comprising 3 or 4 units, or that it is only worthy of qualification at AQF level III, is insulting to Enterprise (keeping in mind that private enterprise is the engine of Australia's economy and vocational education and training is supposed to support this).

The design of this alternate training & assessment qualification MUST be ENTERPRISE-DRIVEN, with a high level of flexibility to ensure each industry can tailor the subject matter to suit their requirements. There needs to be less emphasis on compliance and more emphasis on addressing workplace need in a responsive, flexible and cost-effective way.

We need to encourage trainer creativity, building mentor/learner relationships, achieving outcomes that are measurable in terms of company profitability and instilling a sense of passion and enthusiasm for continuous learning (a far cry from the top-heavy assessment and compliance focus of TAE40116)

### **Carmel Thompson: CEO - The Southern Cross Connection**

Thank you Sandy for carrying out this research. It is sorely needed.

I strongly believe from my experience with over 25 years of working in VET that we need skill sets for Entry Level Trainers and Assessors. Our workplace supervisors and those required to sign off competencies in the workplace (particularly in the trades) only need to be able to do that as part

of their job role. If they then wanted to be full time trainers and assessors then they could go on and undertake further studies at a later stage.

Newly qualified graduates from the Cert IV TAE are not skilled enough to be writing Assessment Tools and shouldn't be attempting to do so until they have a great deal more experience and have been a member of a moderation/validation team on a number of occasions. The number of poorly designed assessment tools currently being report by ASQA Auditors are a result of all TAE graduates thinking they have the skills to carry out this function. The unit TAEASS502 Develop Assessment Tools belongs to a Diploma level qualification or even a higher education qualification as instructional designing is a specialist skill.

The Cert IV in Training & Assessment (TAE40116) does not work as an outcome to providing competent trainers for the VET Industry. It is too repetitive, bureaucratic and boring leaving no room for experienced TAE Trainers to introduce flexible and innovative assessment exercises into the program which will bring out the relevance to participants of different target groups.

A rethink is definitely needed for this very important qualification.

**Carolyn Fletcher, Director, International Teacher Training Academy (Australia)**

Regarding assessing competence – this would vary for an RTO Trainer and Assessor and an Enterprise Trainer and Assessor. RTO Trainer and Assessor would be assessing against national units of competency whereas an Enterprise Trainer and Assessor would not necessarily.

Regarding validation of assessment tools and/or judgements – I believe in Enterprise organisations that this is done by the L & D department/person. In my experience with organisations such ESTA, Rural Fire Services, Essential Energy, Commonwealth Bank, St John Ambulance, Surf Life Saving and others, the Trainer and Assessor does not do this.

Regarding the assessment of LLN core skills – I feel that for Enterprise organisations this would more than likely be done by the Learning and Development section/officer. I have put that it's important at entry level for RTO Trainers and Assessors simply because I feel that they have to understand the LLN skills of their learners. I don't feel that they should have to assess their levels or develop tools (this often sits with a specialist support person in LLN). As far as I know, TAFE Teachers have nothing to do with the assessment of the LLN skills of students – this is done via an automated system, students are enrolled and if support is needed then the Disability Support officer and the General Education staff work with the students to develop the LLN skills.

**Chemène Sinson: Principal, Blackwater Projects**

Packaging qualifications for trainees and writing training plans / training and assessment strategies (not 'essential' but suitable for those who aspire to this, and can be attained after one year)

Applying reasonable adjustment for special needs ('essential' after 3 years, but until then it's possible that such requirements could be referred – ability to recognise the need for a reasonable adjustment is essential at entry level)

Developing and/or assessing LLN core skills (on an informal level, essential at entry level, and include all foundation skills, not just LLN skills) (formal assessments and plans are for specialists who want to go there after a few years, so not 'essential')

Supervising workers and/or teams in the workplace (depends on job role; not essential for all)

\* I think entry level assessors should be able to participate in validation of assessment decisions, so they can ensure their own assessment practice is/will be valid, fair and consistent with others' decisions. But validating assessment tools is better for people who have had some experience.

\* I struggled with the questions, as the main question asks what is 'essential' – also the fact that the question options refer to time-based work (e.g. after 1 year, after 3 years). I think it's possible to stay in the same position for a long time (i.e. master the essential entry level skills and stay there). However, if by 1 year and 3 years you mean more senior level staff, I would more easily have been able to speak about what is essential vs what is not essential.

In short, I think entry level qualifications should focus on practitioner level (facilitate learning and conduct assessments in a way that meets RTO and VET Quality Framework requirements); higher level quals should focus on senior practitioner level (e.g. identifying needs, designing resources, designing assessment tools, supporting new practitioners, etc), and even higher level quals may focus on leadership of practitioners.

**David Lorkin, TAE Trainer/Assessor, International Teacher Training Academy**

A lot of the performance requirements are set out in the Core Units of TAE40116 – Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, though some students have advanced level knowledge in these areas and can/could do them at RTO Entry level whilst others may need more experience and/or practice to be able to achieve these requirements.

Likewise, requirements that I have indicated as after One Year and/or Three (3) years could be an entry level achievement when they have sufficient knowledge and/or experience.

**David Page, Lead Trainer/Assessor and Course Developer, Southern Cross Civil & Rail Training**

Trainers and Assessors require a mentoring program as part of their PD. New Trainers and Assessor require support as the current TAE entry level doesn't provide the depth of skills for some tasks. A new person with industry background in an industry becomes a Trainer and Assessor with a course that is acceptable as entry level but requires further skill develop to correctly complete the tasks required for:

RPL

Course Development

Assessment Tools Development

Ensuring LLN core skills are covered

Validating assessment tools

Writing training plans

Packaging qualifications

It still shocks me that RTO managers and compliance still don't have the required skills to complete the above.

**Deb Sytema: TAE Trainer/Assessor, Vic Uni / genU / own business**

Enterprise trainer – this can be a little tough as I suspect there needs to be a basic qual for this group with a range of skill sets. I often dream of a plan like this:

RTO Trainer	Enterprise trainer
A basic Cert IV qualification focussed on how to train really well and a very thorough "how to assess" unit with really basic validation /	

moderation skills (intro to accredited and non accredited training) – but focus on how to train well.	
After 1 year need to complete Diploma which includes advanced training, assessment design, validation, e learning and leadership Maintain a Diploma in Design Develop Diploma e learning	A Diploma specifically for Enterprise trainers (not compulsory) focussed on TNA, design and assessment design for non-accredited training and online (as most industries dabble here)

Review the skill sets so that there's more skill sets for industry and then train industry to identify exactly what skills their staff need (not a Cert IV just because this is the only qual known by industry)  
 Develop an ongoing PD system for VET/RTO practitioners so that there's continuous currency and more recognition of the professionalism in the industry – not a scramble each time the TAE qual upgrades.  
 Stop devaluing qualifications – when industry has the need for lots of assessors (some industries seem to put lots of staff through assessor skill sets but then they tend to use these staff to basically tick and flick staff through qualifications AGGHH!). Stop this! If lots of staff are involved in assessing, then get them to contribute to assessment, but have a fully qualified assessor responsible for final assessment decision. Maintain the integrity of this system a little more.  
 I could waffle all day about potential improvements, Sandy. Oh to dream!

**Denise Meyerson, PhD: Director, Management Consultancy International Pty Ltd**

I don't think that tenure in the organisation is as important as the amount of exposure to different forms of assessment and training. The level of mentoring is also important – the current TAE gives a foundation and nothing more. And it is way too theoretical as compared with actual practice.

**Karen Squire-Ryan: Training and Assessment consultant/facilitator, RMIT and also own consultancy**

For all the ones in “entry level” column I add that the entry level trainer and assessor should have a supervisor or at the least a “buddy” who is closely involved in supporting them, including observing training sessions and giving feedback, checking assessment judgements and working with the person on their own continued development. This should not be a “tick and flick” or nominal supervision as this is the time it is essential to ensure trainer and assessor is doing things correctly, compliantly and in line with RTO's standards and protocols.

I would also suggest that a Certificate III or a skill set be provided which includes,

- VET system
- Basics of major VET compliance items – TAS, Session Plans, Assessment Plans
- Presentation and communication skills
- Basics of instructional design
- Competency based assessment
- Moderation and Validation
- And has a Practicum component

The outcome should be that a person can work under supervision as a trainer and as a co-assessor for assessment design, judgements and validation

This could include a mix of units usually at AQF III and IV and give some credit towards the TAE40106 (or whatever new one is).

Either a formal pre-requisite or a “recommended” precursor and then the CIV entry to include “the Cert III or skill set I’ve described” of equivalent or a Certificate III or IV qualification which includes units on communication skills, writing skills, compliance/VET skills etc.

**Kerry Hall: Facilitator, Workplace Consultant and Mentor, International Teacher Training Academy**

I would like to see the TAE offered similar to an apprenticeship where new trainers/teachers are given support and mentored in the first year.

Pre stage 1 for organisations such as SES, Surf lifesaving etc.

- TAEDEL301 Provide work skill instruction
- TAEDES401 Design and develop learning programs
- TAEDES402 Use training packages and accredited courses to meet client needs
- TAEASS402 Assess competence

Stage 1 -RTO Entry level Trainee

- Cert IV TAE could include
- BSBCMM401 Make a presentation
- TAEASS301 Contribute to assessment
- TAEASS401 Plan assessment activities and processes
- TAEASS402 Assess competence
- TAEASS403 Participate in assessment validation
- TAEDEL301 Provide work skill instruction
- TAEDEL401 Plan organise and deliver group-based learning
- TAEDES401 Design and develop learning programs
- TAEDES402 Use training packages and accredited courses to meet client needs
- TAEELLN411 Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills

I would also suggest including a unit more relevant to the role of a trainer/teacher. Eg the unit could include how to manage students, class dynamics, using emotional intelligence in facilitation, communicating with influence. (or possibly include these units using emotional intelligence in facilitation, communicating with influence as they would be very helpful)

Stage 2 - Level 2 Teacher/Trainer

TAEASS502 this could be completed after one year of teaching or more to attain level 2 (this would also be in line with what is the current standard)

Stage 3 Level 3 Experienced Teacher/Trainer

Three years experience plus additional PD course to attain Experienced teacher status

Stage 4 Level 4 Master Teacher/Trainer

Minimum 5 years experience in VET

Diploma of VET (includes evidence of PD courses completed and third party)

**Nancy Pavlovic: Managing Director Pavlov Group**

The Qualification needs to have very clear pathways. Prior to defining the pathways, there needs to be an Org Chart that reflects different roles within an RTO and who completes what task/s. The unit selections need to be expanded.

Refer from Submitted: TAE Business Case for Change:

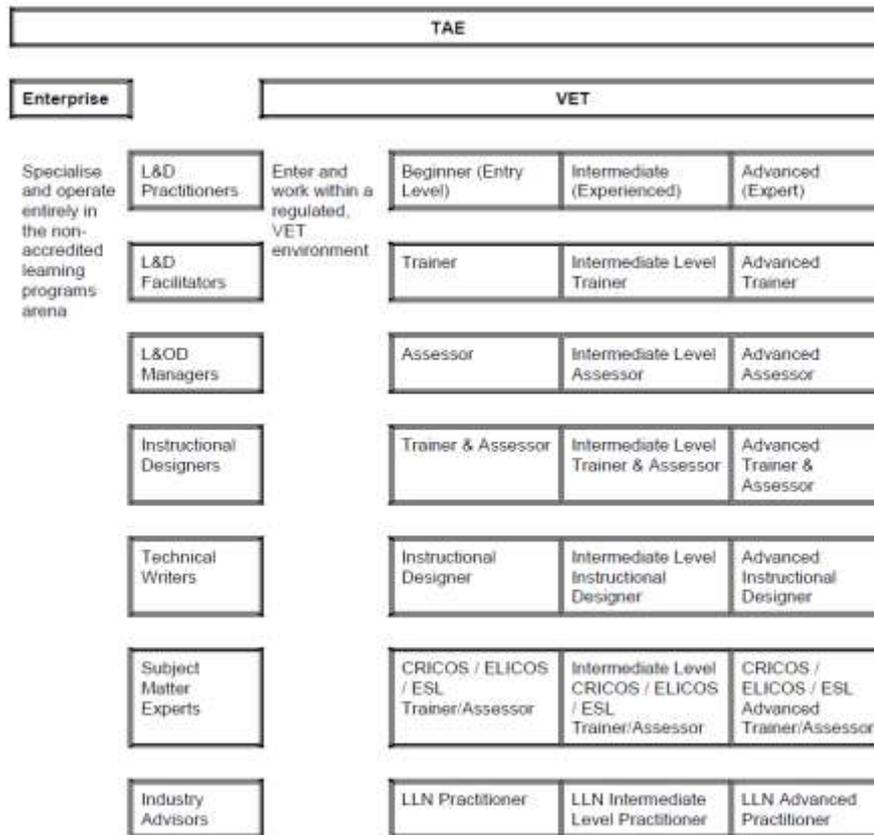


Figure 1: Career Pathways

Equally, there needs to be specific levels of complexity added across the pathways and the different roles that reflect the Org Chart.

Unit Selection and offering needs to also expand and distinguish Enterprise L&D, Training Functions as there is little requirement for them to have a strong foundation in VET.

Note Enterprise Training is typically focused on Career Path Skill Building, and VET context generally is irrelevant.

**Paul Pellier: Director, Accellier (SAVE Training Pty Ltd)**

I think designing and modifying assessment tools (and to an extent learning materials) are two distinct areas.

It's not uncommon for a first-year trainer who is an industry professional to see some assessment activities and make some modifications to them to make them more relevant (within the framework of an already well designed and mapped assessment tool).

As we found when taking people through TAEASS502 the skill of developing an assessment tool from the ground up is quite a special skill set requiring a mix of strong creative, collaborative and analytical skills.

It's far easier to critique than create.

So I'd say YES to entry level / first year people modifying assessment tools, but NO to them developing from scratch.

**Rebecca Parrick:**

I have worked in the following types of organisations:

- Enterprise, in Australia and overseas
- Private RTO supporting workplace trainees and conducting workplace assessments.
- TAFE

- Private RTO delivering public and corporate training, and developing enterprise training

My involvement with the Australian VET system started in 2000, and at that time, it was possible to attain a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training and then immediately go out and train other people in the same qualification. This was the ONLY industry where this was acceptable – to train electricians or chefs or hairdressers or mechanics, someone had to be trade qualified, then gain their Cert IV.

The use of the term 'training package' was, and is still, completely misunderstood outside of the VET training environment – people expect that a package includes training materials – session plans, assessments, etc. Even worse is that commercially available training materials still need to be mapped by the purchaser. Even though developers often include mapping in their materials, there is no assurance that they meet the requirements of the training package. Lots of people are not aware of this and assume that if it's for sale and includes mapping that it will be fine.

The ever-increasing emphasis on nationally recognised components of the VET system in the Training and Assessment qualification means that it is completely missing the needs of enterprise trainers. I came to the VET system with a Bachelor of Education and prior experience in a multi-national company that prided itself on the training programs that they offered to employees. I was involved in a project that involved the development and delivery of training related to a new software system and one of the training programs that I assisted in developing and I delivered was a very detailed, week-long train-the-trainer course specific to that program. Not one of those trainers would have benefited from the current nationally-recognised qualification in training and assessment – we provided them with information on adult learning styles as well as a detailed delivery program to follow and training resources. They learned how to deliver the 1-day training and how to support their trainees following the training. I was available by phone to support the trainers on an ongoing basis, which I don't believe happens much with any training in the VET system.

The increasing emphasis on compliance tasks, such as validation, while necessary, is burdensome for RTOs, and poorly understood by managers, trainers and assessors. Determining a "statistically valid" sample caused us huge issues. I had massive difficulty explaining to our manager why that wasn't just a flat percentage. He had difficulty understanding why it was over 90% for something we delivered occasionally when requested by corporate clients vs under 10% for something we delivered every week in multiple locations to both public and corporate learners. It was also an expensive exercise as involving industry meant paying someone, who potentially didn't understand the training system, or involving trainers or assessors from our competitors and risking our IP.

**Wendy Cato: Director, CatoHR / RPL Assist**

I think there is a gap in the survey while this may work based on skill set as per questionnaire, there is also the issue of qualifications these people hold. I don't believe anyone should be doing RPL assessments without the Diploma unit and I don't believe that TAEASS502 belongs in the Certificate IV. I believe we need to review if a person can bypass the Cert IV to go straight into a Diploma. So if I have 3 years of training in a RTO and only have a Diploma, my skill set will be different as I possibly haven't had all the underpinning knowledge or practice as someone who has undertaken a Cert IV, thus my answers are skewed as I am assuming they all have a Cert IV which is not correct.

I would also like to see (and I know it's not your research project) why there is not an advanced diploma which concentrates on advance RTO needs such as tender writing, and compliance management, rectification management etc.

**Tania Teese: Manager Teaching and Learning Enhancement, Box Hill Institute**

I would like to see:

- A pared back qualification for trainers who come in and train and assess but do not write resources or assessments.
- More choice of electives within course structure, one is not enough.
- A course that relates to coordinator or quality roles

The responses have been quoted in full. Various respondents commented on the shortcomings of the current TAE40116 but a majority also provided opinions on how the TAE training package qualifications could be improved.

## Interviews – Industry Representatives

In order to gather further information about the roles and needs of enterprise trainers and assessors, three representatives of industry were interviewed.

- **Anne Selman: General Manager, HB Group trading as HB Recruitment, Toowoomba, Queensland.**

Ms Selman has over 18 years' experience in the role and strong relationships with employers on the Darling Downs.

The objective of this discussion was to seek information on the types of work roles where a TAE qualification was either a requirement or preferred in the selection criteria. Ms Selman advised that this was usually a requirement for Work Health and Safety (WHS) Officers and similar roles. She also believed that the qualification was relevant for some large organisations which had their own human resources and training departments and therefore did not use the services of her recruitment agency.

- **Fenella Gesch: Principal HR Business Partner- F&BS/P&DS/OCEO People and Organisational Development, Toowoomba Regional Council, Queensland**

- **WHS Officers**

Ms Gesch confirmed TAE Certificate IV was a requirement for Council's WHS Officers.

Council constructs and maintains roads, bridges, buildings, parks and gardens and other infrastructure for the region. This involves high risk work including the use of heavy plant, work in confined spaces and at heights. Therefore, they have a team of WHS Officers in the field, supervising operations.

These personnel are required to plan and deliver safety training on a regular basis, often in the form of presentations on specific safety matters. Training may occur in one of Council's training rooms or on-site in the form of toolbox talks or meetings. These officers are also currently collaborating with instructional designers to design on-line "Take 5" training sessions where workers are given a short training session and then answer questions to confirm understanding. A key role of the WHS personnel is to design Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) and to communicate this information to workers.

None of these WHS personnel are required to be competent in analysing and interpreting qualifications and units of competency. Council has relationships with an RTO and they would provide all advice and information in this regard. The WHS officers do not conduct assessment of competency against units of competency.

Plant Assessors are designated WHS personnel with expertise and licences in plant operations. Certain plant operators require a high-risk work licence issued by the Safe Work Regulator.

This includes:

- Cranes and hoists
- Forklift truck
- Pressure equipment

Other plant operations require a Statement of Attainment confirming competency in their operation.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Backhoes and loaders
- Graders, scrapers and rollers
- Excavators

Plant Assessors are responsible for checking that workers are authorised to operate the plant, which requires some degree of knowledge of the units of competency and licensing requirements but does not require analysis and interpretation of the units of competency.

It is Council policy for the Plant Assessors to conduct their own internal assessment of plant operators, after confirming the worker's credentials. Ms Gesch explained that they check for skills in operation because an individual may hold a Statement of Attainment, but this is not a guarantee of their skill in operating the plant.

The Plant Assessors and WHS Officers must therefore maintain records of competencies and training provided, for compliance with WHS legislation.

○ **Librarians**

Council's librarians deliver community-based training. All of these staff hold a degree in education, which is a requirement to deliver the community training. Council does not require library staff to hold a full TAE40116 but does require TAESS00014 Enterprise Trainer – Presenting Skill Set.

This training is delivered at library premises throughout the region. It is informal, comprising groups who may be retired and looking to gain computer skills and children of pre-school and school age. The group training sessions with children are largely story-telling, reading from books and encouraging discussion. They also provide community support training for disengaged youth, such as the "Get Set for Work" program.

Ms Gesch, who holds a TAE Diploma and several post-graduate qualifications, does not consider that a full TAE Cert IV provides any additional skills and knowledge that would enhance the performance of librarians.

○ **Human Resources Personnel**

Several personnel in Council's HR Department hold TAE40110 and are currently upgrading their qualifications to TAE40116. This is a personal decision that they have made. Ms Gesch considered this qualification was no benefit in relation to their job role.

She expressed a belief that these personnel thought the qualification would assist them if they chose to leave Council and work for another organisation where the TAE Certificate IV was preferred in the selection criteria.

• **Allan Pitter: RSIS Project Coordinator (Ipswich Region) Community, Cultural and Economic Development Department, Ipswich City Council, Queensland**

Allan Pitter: RSIS Project Coordinator (Ipswich Region) Community, Cultural and Economic Development Department, Ipswich City Council, Queensland

The Regional Skills Investment Strategy (RSIS) is an initiative of the Queensland Government that supports selected regional communities to identify current and emerging jobs in key industries and ensure there is a supply of skilled local people to meet this demand. RSIS will bridge the gap between existing training opportunities provided through the Queensland Government's Annual VET Investment Plan and current workforce skill needs in targeted regions.

Mr Pitter is the Ipswich Region Coordinator of this strategy, with responsibilities in the areas of advanced manufacturing, defence industries, transport and logistics. He also holds a degree in Adult Education and has experience of working as a VET trainer/assessor in a number of RTOs. He provided the following opinions in a telephone discussion lasting one and a half hours.

Employers do not necessarily require training of their staff in nationally recognised qualifications. He described an employer of qualified air-conditioning installation and maintenance engineers who required training to be arranged on a proprietary brand and type of air conditioning equipment. There was only one place where the training was available and the engineers were flown to Melbourne for the training, which would have been highly technical and specific to their specific technology.

Mr Pitter commented that, because of advances in technology and the changing workplace requirements, existing trainers would need the opportunities and motivation to keep up with new trends in their industries.

He believed that workplace trainers needed skills to develop skills appropriate for the employer, and for this they require strong communication skills and the ability to conduct valid training needs analysis. These trainers also needed to develop or contextualise training resources to that skilling requirement.

Mr Pitter also described some of his prior experience as an RTO trainer/assessor, supporting work-based learning programs (apprenticeships and traineeships). He commented that the role of a trainer frequently isolates the trainer, who is continuously travelling between workplaces to visit the trainees. They must be self-sufficient in planning individual training programs, communicating and negotiating with workplace managers. It was also necessary for them to have skills to market the RTO to employers and to "sell" trainees to the employers.

He also considered that the role of RTO administration has been overlooked and that a qualification covering the performance requirements for maintaining records, reporting, enrolling trainees and conducting inductions would be beneficial. In relation to RTO compliance, his experience indicates that this role involves establishing and maintaining quality systems, validations and often also requires development of assessment tools and sourcing learning resources.

In summary, Mr Pitter does not consider that the current TAE40116 meets the needs of enterprise trainers and assessors. He considers it only partially meets the needs of RTO trainer/assessors and does not meet the needs of other personnel essential to the operations of an RTO. His recommendation is that an approach consisting of a number of skill sets would more effectively meet the needs of the VET sector.

## Supporting Data – SEEK positions vacant

A search was conducted on the SEEK recruitment website for the keyword “training officer”. Each of the advertisements was perused. Those where it was inferred from the wording that the employer was a Registered Training Organisation were omitted. An assumption was then made that the majority of the remainder were likely to be enterprise employers.

The objective was to provide supplementary information only, using the resources available on-line as to how many enterprise training roles required TAE Certificate IV. In order to obtain accurate data, further research is required with greater resources than were available in this research project.

The results are summarised in the table below.

### SEEK Advertisements – Keyword: “Training Officer”

Position Title	Location	TAE Cert IV
Communications, Change and Training Officer (Public Sector)	Brisbane	not mentioned
Training Officer (Retail Franchiser)	Melbourne	not mentioned
AO5 Training Officer	Brisbane	not mentioned
Training & Checking Aircrew Officer	Sydney	not mentioned
Training & Placement Officer - GR 2	Brisbane	not mentioned
HR Officer (Training)	Western Qld	not mentioned
Application Support and Training Officer	Melbourne	not mentioned
National Training & Quality Officer	Gold Coast	not mentioned
8 do not mention TAE Cert IV		
Franchise Training Officer / Instructional Designer	Brisbane	preferred
Training and Development Officer	Brisbane	preferred
Learning & Development Officer	Sydney	preferred
3 state that TAE Cert IV is preferred, highly regarded or beneficial		
Education and Training Officer	Melbourne CBD	required
Training Officer	Hunter Valley	required
Training Officer	Parramatta	required
Training Development Officer - Government	Melbourne	required
Lead Training Officer	Parramatta	required
Change Management & Training Officer	Brisbane	required
Change and Training Officer – Council	Brisbane	required
Education and Training Officer	Melbourne	required
Training and Placement Officer	Geelong	required
Training and Development Officer (Public Sector)	Cloncurry	required
Technical Training Officer	Kalgoorlie	required
11 state that TAE Cert IV (or a Certificate in Workplace Training) is a requirement		

Figure 24: SEEK search - Training Officer

## Conclusions

The samples for this research report were opportunistic, using the resources available to the author. These resources included members of the author's own professional network, which may have introduced an element of bias. More extensive sampling is required in order to confirm the transferability of the results. Nevertheless, the data collected provided a number of consistent results from which extrapolations can be made.

### Two divergent cohorts – Enterprise trainers and RTO trainer/assessors

The data collected from students who had recently completed TAE40116 demonstrated a difference in performance requirements and priorities between those working in an RTO and enterprise trainers. This data was substantiated in the responses by the VET professionals.

The quantitative data indicates that it is more common for enterprise trainers to conduct training needs analysis, plan training and design learning resources. Qualitative data from VET professionals and representatives of industry indicates that these tasks are performed for in-house training which is specific to the needs of an organisation, rather than aligned to nationally recognised qualifications.

The tasks ranked lowest for enterprise trainers related to nationally recognised qualifications and units of competency, validation of assessment tools and compliance with VET Standards.

The conclusion from this data is that a single qualification cannot meet the needs of two such divergent cohorts.

### RTO trainer/assessors – a range of performance requirements

#### Public -v- Private

When the data relating to enterprise trainers was excluded from the analysis, the results for RTO trainer/assessors revealed variations which had not been predicted. It follows that the situation is more complex than might be expected.

When data from RTO trainer/assessors was analysed, a difference in priorities was noted, depending upon whether the individual worked for a TAFE or a private RTO. It appears from this small sample that private RTOs require a broader range of competencies than those required by a TAFE.

The TAFE trainer/assessors placed little or no priority on interpreting qualifications and units of competency, writing assessment tools or applying reasonable adjustment. These tasks were in the high priority category for private RTO trainer/assessors. Experienced TAFE trainer/assessors were the least likely to give these tasks priority.

The reason for this result is unclear. It may be a false result, due to the size of the sample. However, if this result is accurate, then it warrants further investigation as to the cause.

#### Experienced -v- Entry-Level

The data collected from upgrade students (experienced RTO trainer/assessors) demonstrated different priorities in the tasks they perform, in comparison with those who

completed the full qualification (entry-level RTO trainer/assessors). The ranking comparison is provided in Figure 9. This analysis included both TAFE and private RTO trainer/assessors, which may help explain the inconsistency of the responses.

The conclusion from this data is that RTOs do not require the same performance for entry-level and experienced trainer/assessors, but that there may be a range of requirements depending upon the operations, scope and clients of different types of RTO.

The survey of VET professionals indicated a delineation between requirements at entry-level and those of an experienced trainer/assessor and the responses were consistent. This data may be more reliable than the student responses because the VET professionals were specifically asked to differentiate between entry-level and experienced, whereas the students were asked to identify the tasks they performed frequently, occasionally or never.

Figures 20 and 21 show that VET professionals expect entry-level trainer/assessors to concentrate on the core activities of training and assessment. After one year, trainer/assessors are expected to perform more complex tasks of performing RPL assessment, planning and designing training, conducting validations and liaising with industry.

### Comments of VET professionals (qualitative data)

The VET professionals who were surveyed have first-hand knowledge of how the VET system operates in practice and the issues that VET practitioners face. None of these respondents expressed satisfaction with TAE40116.

There were a number of common themes that could be identified in the quoted comments, as follows:

Flexibility	Acknowledgement that all trainer/assessors do not perform the same tasks. Providing sufficient flexibility through electives or skill sets
Support	A new trainer/assessor should be supported to learn and improve their performance over time, through experience in the workplace
Stability	Change is disruptive and it is essential to gain consensus from VET stakeholders before imposing arbitrary changes, so that further need for change is minimised
Relevance	The new TAE qualifications need to be relevant to the actual, rather than assumed, needs of the VET sector
Enterprise	Enterprise must be consulted directly, to ensure enterprise trainer needs are included
Skill sets	There was support for a pathway using Skill Sets

## Recommendations

The emergent theme from these conclusions is the necessity of gathering sufficient factual information on the actual roles of VET trainers and assessors and their performance requirements. If the TAE training package qualifications are to be “fit-for-purpose” then the purpose must be clearly defined at the outset.

This research project was designed with two key premises in mind. Firstly, the only people who know what they actually do are the people who perform the tasks. Therefore, trainer/assessors should be asked what tasks they perform. Secondly, the best people to provide in-depth information on what trainers and assessors should be able to do (as opposed to what they actually do) are experienced VET professionals at the front-line. They should be asked what trainer/assessors are expected to do.

It is therefore recommended that the first step in re-designing the TAE qualifications should be an in-depth study of what trainers and assessors actually do, and what is expected of them in their work roles. Further analysis is required to demonstrate an indicative pattern reflecting the findings of this report. This research project reveals that a credible source of data will come from people who are currently working as VET trainers and assessors in RTOs and in enterprise.

### **Recommendation 1:**

Use the national database to extract the names of all individuals who have completed TAE40116 or the upgrade. The majority of these will be working for an RTO, but this research project demonstrates that responses will also come from enterprise trainers who are actively maintaining currency. Survey these individuals to identify the tasks they perform.

### **Recommendation 2:**

Survey VET professionals seeking information on the tasks that the different cohorts of VET trainers and assessors should be able to do, at different levels of experience. This survey could be distributed with a link on the PwC website.

### **Recommendation 3:**

Use the information in the publication *NCVER 2019, Australian vocational education and training statistics: employers' use and views of the VET system 2019*, NCVER, Adelaide to identify employers who provide in-house training. Survey these employers seeking data on the tasks performed by their in-house enterprise trainers.

### **Recommendation 4:**

Collate and analyse the data from all four surveys and present this in a consultation paper. Seek feedback and recommendations from VET professionals prior to developing a draft qualification structure.

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