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BEYOND 25 YEARS OF SKILLS ENHANCEMENT

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Improving the quality, capability and status of the VET teacher workforce

Claire Rasmussen

An International Specialised Skills Fellowship

2015 Higher Education and Skills Group International Fellowship

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i. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The improvement of quality delivery and training, learning outcomes for students and ongoing workforce capability are important topics for the Australian VET sector to address. They are also topics that are not necessarily being addressed with a national strategy in mind as there are different state-based approaches and these are tied into regulatory requirements at both Commonwealth and State level.

Through this Fellowship, the Fellow, Claire Rasmussen aimed to explore:

1. Vocational Education and Training (VET) teacher qualifications
2. Professional teaching standards and/or registration
3. Professional Development - maintaining teaching and vocational currency (examples of how teachers maintain teaching and vocational currency and competency through continuous professional learning)
4. The impact of the broader VET system on quality teaching.

The Fellow conducted interviews and attended an international conference. Interviews were underpinned with questions aimed at building a broader picture of the VET system and environment in which VET teachers work.

The research looked at models of leadership in teacher training, professional development and practice in countries across Europe to compare and contrast with those in Australia. This research aims to inform how we can improve the quality of VET teaching at a national and registered training organisation (RTO) level.

This research aims to inform how we can improve the quality of VET teaching as there is currently:

- No national strategy to address VET teacher capability building
- No national strategy to address ongoing professional development
- No national VET teaching standards or criteria
- No national VET registration body
- No national approach or documented framework that articulates and measures engagement in a teacher's ongoing professional learning against their vocational competency, currency, pedagogical skills and knowledge
- No national professional learning provider
- No national strategy to define what vocational currency, industry currency expectations are leaving this open to interpretation and inconsistent approaches within RTOs
- No national review of the cost of quality and compliance to an organisation
- No mapping or alignment of the regulatory requirements (which are different from state to state) between funding bodies and regulatory standard setting bodies (which are also different from state to state).

The current minimum qualifications required for a VET teacher in Australia is the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment along with the vocational competencies at least to the level of the unit/s they deliver. Given current concerns [1] in the skills of VET teachers, the Fellow is seeking effective approaches to build on existing pedagogical knowledge and skills to bridge capability gaps in her organisation.

A key strategy has been to develop an annual professional learning program. The professional learning program is embedded into the operation of Federation University TAFE and uses the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (specifically Standard 1)[2] as well as Innovation

1 Productivity Commission (2011) Vocational Education and Training Workforce: Productivity Commission research report. Melbourne. Productivity Commission

2 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

i. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

& Business Skills Australia (IBSA) *The VET Capability Framework* [3] to benchmark and track teacher engagement with quality learning and teaching practice. The program also provides a vehicle for leading organisational cultural change and attitude towards the importance of quality teaching, delivery and assessment through ongoing professional learning.

Emphasis in the professional learning program is placed on improving the quality of VET teaching by:

- Developing VET teacher understanding of the learning outcomes within the Training Package Unit of competency, industry and workplace requirements, and ability to perform these under a range of conditions (successful graduate attributes)
- Developing VET teacher capability to write robust, meaningful and relevant assessments that actually meet the learning outcomes described within the curriculum (Training Package)
- Developing VET teacher capability to articulate and document how and what they will deliver and when to ensure that the student can successfully complete assessment requirements
- Developing VET teacher vocational skills and currency so that they can teach industry relevant skills and knowledge and assist students to be work ready.

The Fellow attended the second International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training 2016, Winterthur, Switzerland and met with leaders in the field of VET research in the UK, Germany and Switzerland to discuss these challenges. The leaders met were:

- Alison Morris, Interim Program Manager - Vocational Education and Training, The Education & Training Foundation (United Kingdom)
- Patricia Odell, Program Manager, Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS), The Education & Training Foundation (United Kingdom)
- Professor Maggie Gregson, Professor of Vocational Education and Director of University of Sunderland Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (SUNCETT), University of Sunderland (United Kingdom)
- Sheila Kearney, Head of Research, The Education & Training Foundation (United Kingdom)
- Professor Kevin Orr, Professor of Work and Learning, University of Huddersfield (United Kingdom)
- Professor Thomas Deissinger, Head of VET Teacher Education, Department of Economics, Konstanz University (Germany)
- Dr Katherine Caves, Researcher, ETH Zurich KOF Swiss Economic Institute (Switzerland).

There were a number of key observations made which include:

Vocational Education and Training (VET) teacher qualifications

- Utilisation and differentiation between 'workplace trainers' (employed by industry) to that of early career and highly qualified teachers with vocational subject expertise (employed directly by the VET provider) therefore requiring a sliding scale of qualifications required.
- The de-regulation of the Further Education Sector in the United Kingdom means that there is no requirement to hold a minimum VET/FE teaching qualification. This comes with the understanding that the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) inspections will drive the desire for VET providers (public and private) to employ quality Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status teachers.
- Global concern (not just Australian) regarding access to quality and capable VET teachers who have both teaching and industry expertise and currency.

3 Innovation and Business Skills Australia 'The VET Practitioner Capability Framework'

Professional teaching standards

- The importance and power of having clear and explicit National professional standards for VET teachers (not to be confused with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015,[4] which are organisational or business standards) to inform and guide a teacher's personal career goals and professional development.
- The power of a nationally recognised VET teacher registration system to ensure professional learning beyond the minimum teacher qualification (even though this is no longer mandated in UK) and assist aspiring teachers to continuously improve their level of qualifications.
- The importance of setting a common 'position description' with common terminology for the VET teacher so that their status is held in regard (currently it is an interchangeable term between teacher, trainer, assessor and practitioner or 'just a tradie').

Professional Development - maintaining teaching and vocational currency

- There is international endorsement of continuing professional development (CPD) as an integral part of a VET teacher's working life. This is reinforced in a *Briefing Paper* released in July by CEDEFOP (the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) titled 'Professional development for VET teachers and trainers'.[5]
- The duration and outcomes for CPD are not defined in Europe but have been established in each country on either a legal basis, a teacher's right, an obligation, rewarded by a wage bonus or addressed by a collective agreement.
- The power of joint practice research, supervised teaching practice prior to commencement of teaching and peer review and/or mentoring.
- The importance of time allowance for the VET teacher to undertake research around an area of their own practice that they deem as requiring improvement, similar to that of the Joint Practice Development (JPD) program delivered by the University of Sunderland Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (SUNCETT).
- The benefit of a national strategy for VET teacher workforce development through a professional body that supports the VET teacher.
- The benefit of one national professional learning body so that there is consistency in the communication and interpretation of a shared vision for CPD standards and practice.
- The value of professional learning being teacher led (rather than a regulatory directive).
- Rewarding engagement in professional learning, upgrade of qualifications through a national registration for qualified teachers.

The Fellow, through this research, has been able to identify a range of recommendations and observations that are applicable for government, education and training providers, industry, the Fellow's regional community, the network of Victorian TAFEs, VET Development Centre and the ISS Institute.

Key recommendations for consideration are:

R1 Based on these observations, the Fellow recommends that raising the level of the minimum qualification beyond a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment will address some of the concerns, although additional requirements are also needed to raise the quality of VET practice.

4 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

5 Professional development for VET teachers and trainers' A Briefing Paper European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), 2016

R2 Establish a set of nationally recognised VET learning and teaching standards. These standards must identify levels of capability to develop quality assessments, resources, training and assessment strategies for a broad range of student cohorts.

R3 Develop a national strategy to upskill the existing workforce of VET teachers so that they can meet new requirements of training packages and the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

R4 RTOs put their own systems in place to advance the skills of their VET teachers beyond any minimum base level teaching qualification and find solutions to bridge gaps in relation to industry currency, industry experience and vocational competence.

R5 Improve the integration of VET provision across the whole education sector ensuring the same priority for initial teacher education, ongoing professional development and importance and emphasis on subject/industry currency.

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ii. DEFINITIONS

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) means the framework for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system.

AQF qualification

AQF qualification is the result of an accredited complete program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF.

Assessment

Assessment means the process of collecting evidence and making judgments on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace, as specified in a Training Package or VET accredited program and is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.

Assessment system

Assessment system is a coordinated set of documented policies and procedures (including assessment materials and tools) designed and implemented to ensure that assessment of learners conforms to assessment policy and procedures.

Assessment tools

Assessment tools include the following components: the context and conditions of assessment; tasks to be administered to the student; an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the candidate; and evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (i.e. the assessment decision-making rules).

Assessors

A qualified assessor is a person who has the competencies required under the Standards for RTOs and relevant Training Package or Curriculum Qualification who assess a learners competence.

ASQA

Australian Skills Quality Authority

Competency

Competency means the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

Competency Based Completion (CBC)

Competency Based Completion (CBC) means that Apprentices are no longer locked into fixed time periods and can complete the apprenticeship at their own rate. The apprentice is completed when the RTO gets employer confirmation of competence in all areas required under their qualification. In some industries, wages are affected at progression points.

ii. DEFINITIONS

Current industry skills

Current industry skills are the knowledge, skills and experience required by VET trainers and assessors and those who provide training and assessment under supervision in accordance with the National Standards for RTOs to ensure that their training and assessment is based on current industry practices and meets the needs of industry.

Current industry skills may be informed by consultations with industry and may include, but are not limited to:

a) having knowledge of and/or experience using the latest techniques and processes

b) possessing a high level of product knowledge

c) understanding and knowledge of legislation relevant to the industry and to employment and workplaces

d) being customer/client-oriented

e) possessing formal industry and training qualifications

f) training content that reflects current industry practice.

ETF

Education and Training Foundation

HESG

Higher Education Skills Group

Industry engagement

Industry engagement may include, but is not limited to, strategies such as:

g) partnering with local employers, regional/national businesses, relevant industry bodies and/or enterprise RTOs

h) involving employer nominees in industry advisory committees and/or reference groups

i) embedding staff within enterprises

j) networking in an ongoing way with industry networks, peak bodies and/or employers

k) developing networks of relevant employers and industry representatives to participate in assessment validation

l) exchanging knowledge, staff, and/or resources with employers, networks and industry bodies.

Industry relevanceIndustry relevance is when learners, employers and industry have confidence in the integrity, currency and value of certification documents issued by the RTO. RTOs must document and maintain current evidence of industry engagement activities.

This must be demonstrated though a range of strategies of industry engagement and the systematic implementation of the outcomes of that engagement to ensure relevance of the; training and assessment strategies, practices and resources, and the current industry skills of its trainers and assessors.

Learner

Learner means a person being trained and/or assessed by the RTO for the purpose of issuing AQF certification documentation.

OFSTED

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

Professional development

Professional development means activities that develop and/or maintain an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a trainer or assessor. This includes both formal and informal activities that encompass vocational competencies, currency of industry skills and knowledge and practice of vocational training, learning and assessment, including competency based training and assessment.

Program

Program is a series of units of vocational education and training, or the modules of a VET accredited course that combine to become a qualification from an accredited Training Package or skill set.

PRPD

Performance Review and Professional Development Plan

RTO

Registered Training Organisation

Training and assessment strategies

Training and assessment strategies are the approach of, and method adapted by, an RTO with respect to training and assessment designed to enable learners to meet the requirements of the training package and accredited course. They include the amount of training provided, which will be consistent with the requirements of Training Packages and VET accredited courses and the assessment practices that enable each learner to meet the requirements for each unit of competency or module in which they are enrolled.

Training Package

Training Package refers to a set of qualifications for a defined industry, occupational area or enterprise endorsed by the Industry and Skills Council or its delegate in accordance with the Standards for Training Packages. The endorsed components of a Training Package are: units of competency; assessment requirements (associated with each unit of competency); qualifications; and credit arrangements.

Unit of competency

Unit of competency is the unit of learning in a VET qualification and includes assessment requirements and the specification of the standards of performance required in the workplace as defined in a Training Package.

ii. DEFINITIONS

Validation

Validation is the quality review of the assessment process. Validation involves checking that the assessment tool/s produce/s valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgments to be made as to whether the requirements of the training package or VET accredited course are met. It includes reviewing a statistically valid sample of the assessments and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, processes and/or outcomes and acting upon such recommendations.

Vocational competencies

Vocational competencies as applied to trainers' means broad industry knowledge and experience usually combined with a relevant industry qualification. Vocational Competency is determined on an industry-by-industry basis and with reference to the relevant Training Package or VET accredited course.

QTLS

Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills

1. ABOUT THE FELLOW

Name: Claire Rasmussen

Current employment: Director of VET Practice, Federation University Australia (FedUni TAFE)

Qualifications and Experience:

2012	Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110) (Including LLN unit)University of Ballarat
2011	Master of Education (Applied Learning) La Trobe University
2008	Graduate Certificate in Education (Educational Leadership)Victoria University / Chair Academy
2006	Diploma Project Management – (BSB51504)University of Ballarat
2000	Certificate of Industry Recognition of a Trainer – Workplace Trainer (Hospitality Common Core Units, Hospitality Core Units, General Units) The Australian Hospitality Review Panel
1991	Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) Ballarat University College
1990	Bachelor of Arts – (Visual Arts) Ballarat University College

Biography

Claire Rasmussen currently holds the position of the Director of VET Practice at Federation University Australia (FedUni TAFE) where she is responsible for providing the strategic direction of VET delivery and leading quality learning and teaching outcomes. She is also responsible for ensuring that through professional development, the unique and complex characteristics of VET teachers are maintained and enhanced to meet the demands of a complex education and training environment.

Prior to this the Fellow assumed the role's of Associate Director, Teaching Innovation and Apprenticeship Development within the Industry Skills Centre and the Associate Dean Learning and Teaching in the School of Food and Rural Science. In these positions, Rasmussen led strategic educational change in predominantly trade based programs and provided strategic advice to the University Senior Team and Managers around building viable and responsive education and training through innovative and flexible delivery. The Fellow has been instrumental in establishing and implementing professional development programs that develop the capability and capacity of VET Practitioners, particularly around the theme of teaching and assessment practice.

The Fellow joined Federation University (formerly University of Ballarat) in 2005 as a Senior Educator in the TAFE Development Unit. During this time, she was seconded as Educational Consultant to the establishment of one of four Technical Education Centres (UB Tec, now FedCollege Youth), a Victorian State Government initiative. She made a contribution to the curriculum design, educational philosophy and the building design project which is now home to Federation College and the Manufacturing Engineering Skills Centre. In 2007, the Fellow took up the position of Head of Student Programs where she led and managed the development of an innovative model of delivery for young people undertaking a senior secondary qualification and developed a range of policy and procedures associated with the establishment of the TEC and importantly education of post-compulsory young people. Rasmussen has also been a sessional lecturer in the Faculty of Education and Arts and has been a secondary teacher in both public and private schools for over 15 years.

The Fellow is a member of the University's Academic Board, FedUni TAFE Board, was former Deputy Chair of Curriculum Committee and is the current Chair of the University's Learning and Teaching Committee. She is committed to driving cultural change through positive, creative and solution driven educational leadership in a rapidly changing and changing and complex workforce. Claire is highly regarded as a change manager and influential VET leader within her organisation.

2. AIM OF THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Through this Fellowship, the Fellow, Claire Rasmussen aimed to explore:

1. Vocational Education and Training (VET) teacher qualifications
2. Professional teaching standards and/or registration
3. Professional Development - maintaining teaching and vocational currency (examples of how teachers maintain teaching and vocational currency and competency through continuous professional learning)
4. The impact of the broader VET system on quality teaching.

The Fellow conducted interviews and attended an international conference. Interviews were underpinned with questions aimed at building a broader picture of the VET system and environment in which the teachers work.

The research looked at models of leadership in teacher training, professional development and practice in countries across Europe to compare and contrast with those in Australia. This research aims to inform how we can improve the quality of VET teaching as in Australia there is currently:

- No national strategy to address VET teacher capability building
- No national strategy to address ongoing professional development
- No national VET teaching standards or criteria
- No national VET registration body
- No national funding model to support capability building of both vocational and pedagogical skills and knowledge
- No national professional learning provider
- No national review of the cost of quality and compliance to an organisation
- No mapping or alignment of the regulatory requirements (which are different from state to state) between funding bodies and regulatory standard setting bodies (which are also different from state to state)
- No national approach or documented framework that articulates and measures engagement in a teacher's ongoing professional learning against their vocational competency, currency, pedagogical skills and knowledge.

It is anticipated that the outcomes of this Fellowship will contribute to an improved quality VET workforce and – subsequently – student outcomes, as the quality of the teacher and learner outcomes are directly linked.

The Fellow visited the UK, Switzerland and Germany (specifically Konstanz) to examine a variety of VET/Education environments that reflect, embed and document scholarly practice and standards for teacher qualifications and present a sound argument that a strong model of educational leadership can change culture leading to improved student outcomes. The Fellow also focussed on the complex skills required for teachers to ensure innovative pedagogy, delivery and assessment in VET.

2. AIM OF THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Identifying the skills and knowledge enhancements required

The focus of the applied research made possible through this Fellowship is to develop knowledge (rather than skills). The international study tour has allowed exposure to explore more broadly the following key concepts:

VET Teacher Qualifications

Models of supporting the overall skills of teachers to design innovative delivery and assessment which benefit our learners, industry and the economy.

Professional Development

Models of leadership that support the development of a strategic approach required to driving a workplace culture that enhances and progresses the capability of VET teachers through professional development.

An improved understanding of how to embed and manage professional/scholarly practice for VET teachers that leads to improved pedagogy, delivery and assessment practice.

Models of engaging teachers in owning responsibility for ongoing professional currency.

Professional Standards

An understanding of how Professional standards, professional currency in both teaching practice and vocational competency can improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes.

An understanding of the role that professional standards play in improving the quality of VET teachers.

A better understanding of the synergy between the VET system and the status of VET and therefore VET teachers.

3. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015[1] as regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority assist RTOs in raising the quality bar. They are more explicit than their predecessors and set a new benchmark to hold RTOs to account in relation to the quality of delivery. Of particular benefit and importance is Standard 1:

The RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices are responsive to industry and learner needs and meet the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses.

Background information

Vocational Education and Training (VET) teacher qualifications

The current minimum qualification required by VET teachers in Australia is as follows and as prescribed in Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015:

TRAINER AND ASSESSOR REQUIREMENTS–TAE TRAINING PRODUCTS (CLAUSES 1.21 - 1.25)

All of:

- relevant requirements of clauses 1.13 - 1.20
- vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered
- current relevant industry skills
- current knowledge and skills in VET
- ongoing professional development in VET.

From commencement of standards	From 1 January 2016	From 1 January 2017
Providing training and/or assessment – Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or any Assessor Skill Set		
One or more of: • *Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* • *Diploma of Vocational Education and Training* • *Diploma of Training Design and Development* • Diploma or higher qualification in adult education • Equivalent competencies.	One or more of: • *Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* • *Diploma of Vocational Education and Training* • *Diploma of Training Design and Development* • Diploma or higher qualification in adult education.	One or more of: • *Diploma of Vocational Education and Training* • *Diploma of Training Design and Development* • Adult education qualification higher than diploma **or** • *Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* and be working under supervision of a person that holds one of the qualifications listed directly above (person cannot determine assessment outcomes in this case).

Users' Guide to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 | 41 [2]

1 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

2 Users' Guide to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 | 41

3. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

The following excerpt is from the 'Users Guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015', p.3.[3]

Quality training and assessment depends on the skills and knowledge of trainers and assessors. Therefore, high-quality delivery of qualifications for trainers and assessors is of vital importance. The Standards require that RTOs and people delivering these qualifications meet a high standard. The Standards specify that trainers and assessors are skilled VET practitioners with current industry skills and knowledge, so learners receive the training they need and graduates are properly assessed before being issued with a qualification or statement of attainment. While the Standards allow flexibility in how industry skills and knowledge are obtained and demonstrated, they also set clear expectations about this, and about the VET competencies that must be held by trainers and assessors.

The current Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is an entry level teaching qualification required for VET Teachers. It does not provide opportunity for learning in the development of robust assessment tools. However, the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) (established by the COAG Industry and Skills Council in May 2015 to give industry a formal, expanded role in policy direction and decision-making for the vocational education and training sector) endorsed a revised TAE Training Package in February 2016, and RTOs wishing to add the new qualifications to scope face some very stringent requirements before approval by ASQA.[4] These requirements can be found on the ASQA website under the VET Registration area.

The changes deem the qualification as non-equivalent and include specifically the following:

- **A New unit:** TAEASS502 Design and develop assessment tools

  This has been added as a core unit and imported from the Diploma of Vocational Education and Training

- The addition of a statement in each of the qualification descriptors outlining the AQF Volume of Learning specifications related to the qualification level.

These changes are worthwhile and there is more emphasis on the development of assessment skills and are more robust and specific in how a learner should meet the assessment requirements.[5] However, there is currently no proposal to change the current Standards (a legislative instrument) to mandate an upgrade for all teachers to replace their old qualification with the new.

Locally, Professor Erica Smith is leading an Australian Research Council Linkage project around the theme *'Would more highly-qualified teachers and trainers help to address quality problems in the Australian vocational education and training system?'*[6] This two-year project brings together researchers from Federation University Australia, the University of Technology, Sydney and the University of South Australia to work with partners from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, the VET Development Centre, the Australian Council for Private Education and Training, Queensland TAFE and Federation Training.

Professional teaching standards and/ or registration

There are currently no nationally endorsed professional teaching standards nor is there a registration body for VET teachers.

3 ibid, p. 3

4 http://www.asqa.gov.au/vet-registration/deliver-training-and-assessment-qualifications/provide-evidence-when-applying-for-tae-products.html

5 http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/TAE40116

6 2014, Smith, E., Yasukawa, K., Harris, R. & Tuck, J. Would more highly-qualified teachers and trainers help to address quality problems in the Australian vocational education and training system? Australian Research Council Linkage grant.

Professional Development - maintaining teaching and vocational currency

There is no national strategy or funding to directly invest in the ongoing development of teachers.

The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 do, however, explicitly make reference to professional development. Without major industrial implications, these standards can be hard to 'retrofit' to a workforce that has been in place for many years.

Clause 1.16

The RTO ensures that all trainers and assessors undertake professional development in the fields of the knowledge and practice of vocational training, learning and assessment including competency based training and assessment.[7]

Research around VET professional practice and workforce development in the Australian context examines this very topic. *The Future Focus: 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy* notes that there is no national strategy to ensure VET teachers have access to quality professional development. This contrasts with the higher education sector which has established the Office for Learning and Teaching with funding of $50 million over four years to promote excellence in learning and teaching.[8] Therefore, it is up to each individual RTO (including Federation University Australia) to strategically lead, promote and invest in professional development for their own VET teachers to ensure ongoing capability and reputation as a provider of quality tertiary education.

In response to the outcomes of the Productivity Commission 2011, Vocational Education and Training Workforce, Research Report, Canberra, Innovation & Business Skills Australia (IBSA),[9] developed *The VET Practitioner Capability Framework*.[10]

The Framework describes the broad capabilities required for a range of job roles in the VET sector. It provides a common language for the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes that so-called 'VET practitioners' will display if they are performing well in their roles.

The Framework has:

- Three levels that reflect different levels of expertise and responsibility in job roles
- Four domains that each group or cluster four capabilities describing the specialist skills required of VET practitioners.

Professional learning options for VET teachers are variable. The VET Development Centre (VDC) with its mission statement of 'Building Workforce Capability', is a primary supporter of professional VET teacher practice in Victoria. One of the VDC's key objectives is to identify, encourage and contribute to the development of research into vocational teaching and learning in Australia and overseas. They also support the development and maintenance of vocational and educational currency by ensuring that VET teachers, managers and specialist staff have access to recent and relevant articles of interest as well as providing significant project funding and professional development programs.

Velg Training is the largest national provider of professional development and is committed to providing the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector community with quality, flexible and innovative services and products. The provision of quality resources, online networks, regular and up-to-date professional development (particularly good at webinars etc.) is strong, but mostly it is focussed around teaching to compliance.

7 Users' Guide to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 | 3

8 Future focus: 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency http://www.awpa.gov.au/

9 Productivity Commission 2011, Vocational Education and Training Workforce, Research, Canberra

10 The VET Practitioner Capability Framework Innovation & Business Skills Australia in association with the Commonwealth Government through the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE). IBSA website http://www.ibsa.org.au.

3. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

The establishment of a national VET professional association has been documented in the Department of Education and Training - *Quality assessment in vocational education and training – Discussion Paper*, January 2016.[11] The former TAFE Development Centre (now VET Development Centre) also commissioned a scoping project in 2011 to assess the benefit and interest in this concept - *An association for VET's professionals: What's the story?*[12]

Research into VET

There is a body of Australian research around quality of teaching, some of which is listed in the reference section of this report. The Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group (ACDEVEG) whom advise the Australian Council of Deans of Education Board on VET matters, are represented on the National VET Workforce Development Managers' Network which is part of the project reference group that developed the VET Capability Framework in 2011.

The activities of this group include the promotion of better quality delivery of, and consistency in recognising, VET teacher-training qualifications (Certificate IV and Diploma of Training and Assessment).

ACDEVEG terms of reference which can be found on the website are to:

- Promote the importance of university qualifications as contributing to the professional standing and teachers work towards increasing the proportion of the VET workforce holding university level qualifications.[13]
- Work with stakeholders to seek recognition of higher-level qualifications through industrial award career progression incentives. Work towards better quality VET teacher preparation.

11 Department of Education and Training - Quality assessment in vocational education and training – Discussion Paper, January 2016

12 Clayton, B & Guthrie, H 2011, An association for VET's professionals: What's the story?, TAFE Development Centre, Melbourne

13 http://www.acde.edu.au/

4. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

This section provides a record of the findings and outcomes from each visit, which have informed the Fellow's understanding of the international scene.

Visit 1. The Education and Training Foundation (ETF)

Destination: United Kingdom

Contact: Alison Morris, Interim Programme Manager, Vocational Education and Training at The Education & Training Foundation & Tricia Odell, Programme Manager, QTLS, The Education & Training Foundation.

Description

The Education and Training Foundation is a government agency. However, it is non-for profit and expected to be financially independent and sustainable.

ETF is owned by peak bodies in the UK training sector – the Association of Colleges, Association of Employment and Learning Providers and the Association of Adult Education and Training Organisations. The ETF builds and promotes the professionalism and status of those working in the sector, ensuring that members gain wider recognition for their educational and occupational expertise. It also brings together members into professional communities of practice that share and build knowledge through events and networks and promotes the creation and dissemination of research into effective teaching and learning practice.

ETF also provides opportunities for relevant, quality professional development to members at a reasonable cost.

VET Teacher Qualifications

There is a body of work that has been commissioned by the Education and Training Foundation to look at the topic of VET teacher education and training. The OECD's policy review of vocational education and training (VET), 'Learning for Jobs'[1] has the underpinning message that great education organisations prioritise improving the skills and knowledge of their teaching staff.

The Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL) report *It's about work - Excellent adult vocational teaching and learning*'[2] published in 2013 made ten recommendations aimed at strengthening the VET system. One of these recommendations was to put the focus back into building capability of the teaching workforce.

An important highlight of the Fellow's interview with ETF was the contrast in the approach the UK VET system is taking in comparison to the Australian system. As the UK de-regulates, the Australian sector continues to increasingly regulate, complicate and frustrate with little sign of quality improvement. Amongst the UK's de-regulation is their recent requirement to abolish the need to hold a teacher qualification. It is important to note that despite this, the number of teachers aspiring to gain QTLS status is increasing as is the Society for Education and Training (SET) membership.

The regulatory body Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) provides an incentive for Colleges to employ qualified teachers through audits and reviews that can occur without warning. These are what provide the momentum for Colleges to:

1 OECD Policy Reviews of Vocational Education and Training (VET) - Learning for Jobs & OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training A Skills beyond School Review of the Netherlands Mihály Fazekas, Ineke Litjens

2 'It's about work - Excellent adult vocational teaching and learning' CAVTL (2013)

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a) employ teachers who have QTLS status

b) ensure that they are on top of good teaching practice.

The results are very public and high performing colleges are well celebrated and reported publically.

ETF are confident that quality VET providers and those with good OFSTED reports are more likely to only employ teachers who had QTLS status. They believe that it gives them confidence that the teachers are qualified and experienced practitioners.

Professional Development

Society for Education and Training (SET) has developed a strategy which puts professional development at the centre of its activities. Below are some of SETs commitment to supporting VET educators:[3]

1. Provide access to quality professional development opportunities
2. Provide access to valuable educational content, with support to apply it in practice facilitating active face-to-face and online communities to share thoughts and experiences on addressing new policy or teaching practice
3. Support members' involvement in their own practitioner research to add to the wider knowledge base for the post-16 sector
4. Build recognition for ongoing professional development through refreshed membership levels, enhancements to Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills.

The Fellow asked how SET is building recognition for ongoing professional development, what type of professional development programs are offered from a national perspective and how these link to enhancing Qualified Teacher Learning and Skill.

ETF reported that there are a number of interesting initiatives that are either in development or being implemented.

1. The Society for Education and Training (SET) which sits within the Education and Training Foundation Membership/registration to SET is voluntary however there are a number of benefits including:
   - » A newsletter specifically for sector news and developments across the sector
   - » Participation in their professional development contributes to 'continual professional development' (CPD) points which in turn contribute to Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status
   - » Access to professional development and online resources and content including self-evaluation tools.
2. ETF have developed a self-assessment tool that provides a simple, quick and effective way to understand how well a teacher is currently performing against the Professional Standards for teachers and trainers working in further education and training.

   The Standards provide a common framework for tracking development and this resource enables a teacher to score themselves against each of the 20 Standards and add comments. At the end, you can print a summary that includes charts that display your self-assessed skills. From this summary, teachers can identify where they need to concentrate their CPD.

   The 20 standards are grouped into:

   - » Professional skills
   - » Professional values and attributes
   - » Professional knowledge and understanding.

3 https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/home/

Professional Standards

The ETF is a standards setting body but unlike in Australia where our Standards for RTOs 2015 (as regulated by ASQA) are a legislative instrument, ETF standards on governance, leadership and professionalism are not. The UK has Professional standards for VET teachers and according to ETF, these appear to be making a difference to the status of VET teachers and the quality of teaching across the sector.

Odell noted the importance of the ETF working with its members (whom are teachers, not HE researchers or policy makers) to develop the Professional Standards that define the expectations for teachers in the FE and Skills sector. By working with its members, the teachers have greater ownership of the standards. The ETF is trying to establish itself as the teachers 'friend' rather than driving good practice with a regulatory stick.

In feedback and interviews conducted by ETF, UK FE managers noted that the standards provide a focus for teacher reflection, they provide a checklist of expectations, they are motivational and they articulate what commitment to professional practice looks like.

The Pye Tait Consulting (2014) *Review of Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in England*[4] noted that the overall purpose of the revised professional standards was to support teachers and trainers to maintain and improve standards of teaching and outcomes for learners.

The revised professional standards are intended to be aspirational and:

- Set out clear expectations of effective practice in education and training against which teachers and trainers can compare, affirm and celebrate their own practice
- Enable teachers and trainers to identify areas for their own professional development in a consistent and systematic way
- Provide a national reference point that organisations can use to support the development of their staff and so improve learning experiences and outcomes for learners
- Support initial teacher training and staff development and enhance their teaching.[5]

The ETF has recently inherited the Society for Education and Training (SET) which is the new professional membership organisation of the Education and Training Foundation. EFT is for practitioners working in the post-16 education and training sector in the UK. They work with teachers, trainers, leaders and employers to help them deliver excellent further and vocational education and training.

Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) is a professional status that you can gain by completing professional formation (like an exam). To gain QTLS status is not mandatory, however, OFSTED audits demonstrate that there is a clear link between high performing and poor performing colleges based on the number of teachers with QTLS status.

Whilst teachers are no longer mandated to hold a formal qualification, the numbers of those seeking QTLS status is rising. To gain QTLS you have to hold the Diploma level teaching qualification and demonstrate how you are continuing to develop and apply the skills and knowledge gained in your initial qualification. QTLS is referred to level 5 (not to be confused with the Australian AQF level 5) Diploma level. There are around 2000 registrations for QTLS status per year. SET is the only body that can confer QTLS status.

There are 25 main FE teacher training qualifications ranging from level 3 awards to level 6. City and Guilds is still the largest awarding body. The salary of a qualified FE teacher is between £20,000 and £30,000 (A$35,000 – A$52,000).[6]

4 Pye Tait Consulting (2014) Review of Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in England

5 Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training – England http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/

6 http://futureapprenticeships.org.uk/useful-links/

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There are new apprenticeship standards for teaching professionals. These new standards can be found on the Future Apprentice website which is commissioned by the Education Training Foundation .

The Learning and Skills Teacher (LST) is coined the 'dual-professional'. LST's achieve competence in a vocational qualification/subject area first (and work in this industry and then train as a teacher. This is similar to our Australian VET teacher and therefore teaching becomes their later or second career.

Education and Training Higher Apprenticeship Standard is a Level 5 qualification and teachers study for around 24 months. They are seen as pivotal to the success of delivery of traineeship and apprentice programs.

Key Observations

- Professional Standards for VET teachers are important factor in providing teachers with a benchmark to identify their own level of capability. The 20 standards are grouped into:
- Professional skills
- Professional values and attributes
- Professional knowledge and understanding.
- The online self-assessment tool developed by SET for practitioners to evaluate their level of expertise against the standards is a useful resource to help practitioners identify their own PD requirements.
- A single, key national agency (rather than many) that holistically supports VET teachers through membership to a professional body is worthwhile.
- Until now, even the threshold (minimum) teaching qualification all had a teaching practicum.
- It was felt that the level of qualification did make a difference to the quality of learning and teaching and student outcomes.
- Until this new reform, teachers were required to complete 30 hours of CPD (Continuous Professional Development) but unless you are seeking QTLS status, this is no longer required.
- QTLS status is rising despite the de-regulation. More than 15,000 professionals have achieved QTLS since its introduction in 2008.
- SET is supporting managers and leaders to improve teaching through 'observation of teachers practice' by conducting 'learning walks'. These walks are like peer reviews and gives opportunity for constructive feedback on teaching practice.
- The Learning and Skills Teacher (LST) standards are clear and provide a well-defined description of the expectations of these positions
- Please see Appendix 1 for interesting links from ETF.

Visit 2: University of Sunderland SUNCETT

Destination: United Kingdom

The Kings Library – British library

Contacts: Professor Maggie Gregson, Professor of Vocational Education and Director of University of Sunderland Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (SUNCETT) and Sheila Kearney, Head of Research at ETF.

Professional Development

SUNCETT is the Centre for Excellence for Excellence in Teacher Training at the University of Sunderland. SUNCETT develops collaborative approaches to the professional development of teachers in Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET). The SUNCETT approach to the professional development of teachers in the sector is unique in its aim to demonstrate how collaborative enquiry, Joint Practice Development (JPD) and shared practice can lead to real and sustainable improvements in teaching and learning and re-energise the creative capacity of teachers.

The Fellow learned how SUNCETT is building recognition for ongoing professional development, what type of professional development programs are offered from a national perspective and how these link to enhancing Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills. The Fellow also examined what the minimum qualifications are for VET teachers in the UK and if this in fact makes a difference to the quality outcomes in the VET sector.

The Fellow gained an understanding of how networks of partnerships involved in initial teacher training and continued professional development play an important part in the quality and capability of VET teachers.

Gregson was excited to share her views on the link between research and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Gregson believes that professional practice can be enhanced through JPD. The model of JPD draws on the work of Michael Fielding.[7]

Gregson explained that JPD is really a way of finding new ways of working through mutual agreement of a topic or shared desire to improve practice with colleagues. It is a truly collaborative peer approach to problem solving learning and teaching practice. The ETF and SUNCETT provided scholarships and project opportunities for teachers and organisations to undertake JPD projects.

Below is a simplified version of the four steps that Gregson explained to implementing JPD:

1. Get a team of teachers together to talk honestly about what is actually happening in their teaching practice. Creating a safe environment where trust and collaoboration with collegaues can occur.
2. Find a colleague within the team (can be from a different subject/industry area) who shares the same desire to improve an aspect of their teaching practice. Research a variety of solutions, taking small steps including, changing existing approach, reading about the topic, identifying small milestones etc.
3. Test out the new approachs together with students collecting evidence of the impact on student progress.
4. Review and evaluate progress.

Joint Practice Development does require careful facilitation and mentoring to assist the achievement of milestones and evaluating progress.

7 Fielding M et al, 'Factors Influencing the Transfer of Good Practice', University of Sussex, 2005.

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Key observations

- Central to JPD is recognition by the teacher that changing practice involves the identification that their practice needs to change or be improved. This means that they have to own the improvement.
- Continuous Professional Development must start with the teacher. Gregson points out the importance of 'research engaged practitioners'.
- One-off, expensive PD tends to be a simple transfer of information from an 'expert'. This does not often provide opportunity for exchange and deep learning or new learning.
- To bring about real change it takes time and involves collaboration and investment by individuals concerned.
- JPD is possibly a more sustainable way and should be an integral part of an organisations long term strategy for improvement.
- JPD needs to be facilitated and structured in its overall process and evaluation ensuring the conditions are right and improvement priorities are measurable
- 'Hard' and 'soft' indicators can be used to demonstrate impact such as:
  - » Retention rates
  - » Achievement rates
  - » Course completions

8 Odell, T, Joint Practice development: an alternative approach to professional development Issue 1, Spring 2016 (page 14) InTuition Research The Society for Education and Training

  - » Staff attitudes and interest in PD
  - » Students are more settled
  - » Teachers are more creative in their approach to assessment and delivery
  - » Staff willing to challenge poor practice
- JPD allows managers and teachers to share power to improve the experience and achievements of learner.

4. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Visit 3: Professor Kevin Orr, Professor of Work and Learning, University of Huddersfield

Destination: United Kingdom

Professional Development

Professor Kevin Orr is the Professor of Work and Learning and Project leader of a national research project on initial teacher education for science, engineering and technology teachers. This project is one of the largest single funded research projects into Vocational Education and Training is in its second year. This project aims to bring about significant improvements in the standards of technical and vocational education and training in the UK. Essentially, this project is around improving the quality of VET teachers through a professional development program. The professional development (research) program targets a specific cohort of teachers only.

The School of Education at University of Huddersfield focuses on training Further Education teachers. It is a major provider of information technology and engineering teaching for the Further Education sector along with its many partner providers whom they are collaborating.

This research investigates current pedagogy and practice in training teachers of engineering, technology and vocational science subjects, principally in Further Education colleges. The pilot study focussed on engineering teacher's continual professional development (CPD) because of the shortage of teachers in this field. The pilot had limited success because teachers were time poor and despite financial incentives, the pilot did not gain traction.

The research team started by conducting a literature review to assist in the creation of an intervention model and develop a language around teaching practice. This has led to the development of an "intervention" strategy, designed to raise the standard of VET teaching practice. The participants of the teacher education pilot program are developing both online and physical resources that provide guidance and instructions for teacher training.

Central to this research is the development of a language that teachers can use to describe their own practice. The project is helping teachers to improve teaching practice by focusing on their subject specialist knowledge, especially in connection to the effective sequencing of teaching, expectations of students' understanding at appropriate thresholds and effective assessment.

Around 60 to 100 in-service, new and teachers in their second year of teaching took part in around 20 hours of online, face to face, webinar and Adobe Connect sessions. The intervention tested the broad understanding of pedagogy and the teacher's ability to make 'reasoned decisions' and/or 'situated' decisions. The participants were taught a range of language skills to assist them to articulate threshold knowledge and crystallise the transfer of key skills and knowledge. The research project is about teaching practice so maintaining industry currency is a weakness of the project.

In his Position paper 'Teachers, learning and pedagogy',[9] Orr outlines the aims of the project with emphasis on initial teacher education rather than continual professional development (CPD). Orr advised the Fellow that the first year of the project had limited success. In the second year, the intervention will be trialled around the country, involving as many trainee teachers as possible.

"This is about taking technician-level training seriously, identifying the best ways of improving the education and training of these people and therefore thinking about the people who teach the technicians and how they can be developed,

9 Orr, Kevin (2016) Position paper: Teachers, learning and pedagogy. In: LSRN Workshop: The future of technical and professional education and training: Joining up the dots, 12th May 2016, London. (Unpublished)

Our goal is to improve our understanding of how trainees in this area best learn what is valuable and what is useful for them, in order to inform better teacher education."

Professor Kevin Orr

Key observations

- Getting teachers to participate in CPD is a challenge, globally.
- Developing a language or intervention strategy with resources may assist teachers who are independent learners.
- The interventions around effective sequencing, student expectations, appropriate threshold tasks and assessment are the same weak spots in the Australian VET context.

Visit 4: Professor Thomas Deissinger, Head of VET Teacher Education, Department of Economics, Konstanz University

Destination: Germany

VET teacher qualifications

The mixed terminology between 'teacher' and 'trainer' is not dissimilar to Australia, however in Germany the terminology is differentiated between the education environment that they work in. 'Teachers' are employed in the various vocational schools, while 'trainers' are skilled workers in enterprises, who provide trainees above all with the practical, vocational knowledge and practical skills of a training occupation. In Germany, the Land Ministries of Education are responsible for teacher training. The relevant legal standards include the laws and regulations on teacher training, the study directives on study programmes for the teaching profession, the training directives on teaching practice and the examination process.

The University of Konstanz is a significant provider of teacher education programs. Teachers undertake teacher training at Masters level (around six years). An external exam is conducted at the conclusion of a teacher training program. Trainers (employed by the apprentices' workplace) are not required to have a Masters qualification and only undertake around 72 hours of training.

The vocational education teaching profession is well-paid and a highly respected career. There appears to be a direct correlation with the status of a VET teacher and the level of teaching qualification that they hold. Teachers enter into a teaching career as a first career choice and the teacher education model is similar to the Australian secondary education training.

Visit 5: Dr Katherine Caves, Researcher, ETH Zurich KOF Swiss Economic Institute

Destination: Switzerland

The VET (VPET) system

The Fellow met Dr Caves to discuss the importance and impact of national economic policy on Vocational Professional Education and Training (VPET). Dr Katie Caves has a PhD in Economics of Education. The research conducted through the Centre for the Economics and Management of Education and Training Systems where she works has led to the establishment of a Summer Institute on Economic Policy Development Research Program for Educational Reform Leaders. Whilst this does not sound related to the topic of the Fellow's research, it assists in understanding the 'big picture' and the VET system in which the teachers train and work and also the elevated status that VET has in Switzerland and Germany.

The three-phase program developed as part of the Summer Institute requires participants (who have strict application process) to define a reform issue and context that they would like to work on. Participants then attend a ten-day summer school to discuss their ideas for reform with key policymakers, stakeholders, leading scholars and researchers in public finance, and education economics. The Summer School assists in improving the capability of attendees to implement, evaluate educational policy reforms.

In phase three, participants use their international network of education leaders to mentor and provide feedback.

Dr Caves works under Professor Dr Ursula Renold, Head of the Education Systems Research Division, KOF/ETHZ whom was also previously Director General of the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology. Dr Renold has played a key role in developing the reputation of the VPET system.

The Swiss Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) model could be thought of as a labour market-oriented education model but it makes sense and clearly works. It is referred to as the Swiss dual track system and is responsible for the strong economic performance of the Swiss industry resulting in a very low youth unemployment rate (about 3 per cent).

The Swiss apprenticeship model is much broader in its coverage, than Australia. For example, Caves estimates that around 80 per cent of Swiss CEOs commence their career as an apprentice in banking or business. These CEOs model the success of the VPET system and act as role models and a voice for enterprises to contribute to the economy by themselves employing apprentices. Apprentices are seen as a 'value-add 'and a way of succession planning for an enterprises workforce.

The role of Industry and employers in ensuring quality teaching and learning outcomes.

Employers play a key role in articulating what the curriculum/competencies should be. Specialist learning designers in each of the 26 Cantons (similar to Australian States and Territories) then develop these competencies suitable for teaching. Through this process, they determine what should be taught in the workplace and what should be taught by the school. Design and innovation is an important aspect of the curriculum and Swiss industry. The workplace has to be approved by the Canton and if employers are unsuitable they can take away their right to employ apprentices. A central exam is held at the end of the apprenticeship and external companies moderate the marking.

The permeability of the VPET model allows a person to commence training as a hairdresser and pathway into zoology. There is a huge emphasis and importance placed on career counselling. Career counselling is mandated. There are a range of online tools as well as face-to-face interviews that form this process.

4. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

VET teacher qualifications

The teacher workforce is similar to the German model. Workplace trainers are employees of the company and designated to teach around two-four days per week to deliver curriculum developed by the Canton. They can teach competencies required by the specific company. Assessment is already developed by the Canton. Workplace trainers can assess against these assessment tools even though they have had minimal 'teacher training' (around a three-day course which is sponsored by the Canton).

Teachers who teach apprentices in schools/colleges are required to hold a Masters-level Teacher qualification.

Key observations

- The name of the system includes the word 'professional', consciously emphasising and elevating the status of VET.
- Participation and completion rates for VET are very high.
- Job outcomes are greater for those who undertake the VET pathway therefore seen as a worthwhile option for parents and learners.
- There are three key success factors in the quality of the VPET system:

1. Employer engagement (with both large companies and small enterprise)
2. Permeability (flexible pathways)
3. Career counselling (legal responsibility).

Visit 6: The 2nd International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training, 'From Skills to Prosperity – Sharing Elements of Success'

Destination: Switzerland

The Fellow attended the second International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training 'From Skills to Prosperity – Sharing Elements of Success' focussed on the successful principles within different international VET systems (particularly the Swiss model).

The Program Presentations

Please refer to Appendix 2 – Conference Program Presentations.

Description

Over 400 delegates from 80 nations attended the Congress providing the opportunity to share and learn from the experiences in different education systems all over the world. This was a real highlight of the Fellow's international experience. Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research provided the opening address. Switzerland recognises and invests in VET to improve innovation. Schneider described the quality of workplace learning suggesting that two thirds of people over the age of 15 years take up an apprenticeship in one of the 230 nationally recognised apprenticeships.

Learners can move laterally (between HE and VPET) and from the bottom up with a commitment to lifelong learning and promotion. No qualification leads to a dead end.

The private sector involvement attends to the needs of the labour market. Ninety-nine per cent of Swiss economy is made up of small to medium business. Three out of four invest in employing apprentices. There is no argument of cost but of long term return on investment in the future of the company and savings to recruitment.

Prominent speakers from both Switzerland and abroad, including political, economic and scientific figures responsible for decision-making on vocational education and training, spoke about the challenges facing their respective systems. Interestingly, they all shared a common theme which was that of a shortage of capable and skilled teachers.

Switzerland's dual-track VET system process - unlike most school-based VET systems found in other countries - places considerable emphasis on practical experience gained in the workplace. Dual-track VET programmes (i.e. part-time classroom instruction at a vocational school, part-time apprenticeship at a host company) are the most common form of vocational education and training in Switzerland. In Switzerland, nearly 95 per cent of young people hold upper-secondary level qualifications.

Features of top performing countries delivering VET

Deborah Rosevears, Head, Skills Beyond School Division Directorate for Education and Skills (OECD) delivered a presentation titled, Best practices and challenges in work-based learning. She observed that OECD reviews have become a global benchmarking standard for vocational education and training systems provided an overview and benchmark for success factors in VET globally.

A critical success factor of VET in top performing countries is that of employer engagement in:

- Setting qualification standards

- Deciding when a qualification update needs to happen
- Setting examination forms.

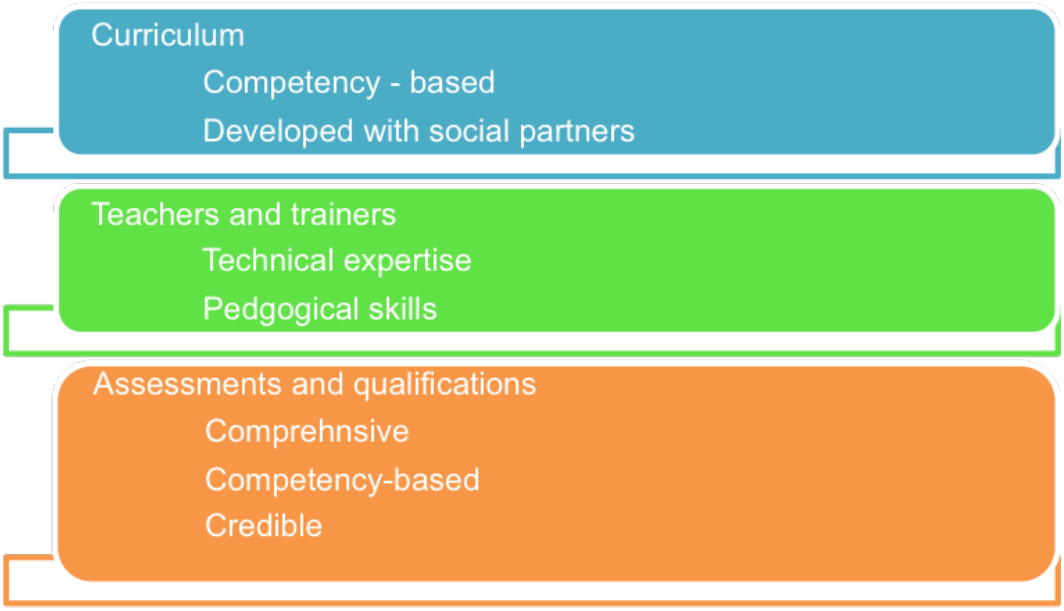
The OECD has conducted over 40 studies across the world identifying key features of effective VET structures and they all share the following characteristics:

- High quality delivery ensuring that teachers have the pedagogical skills and up to date technical skills
- High quality assessments built into qualifications and clear competency based approaches
- Consistent funding across education and training pathways.

Key observations

- The importance of working across policy borders (or need for a national approach).
- Students spend most of their time in the workplace instead of the classroom.
- Students have workplace trainers (minimal teaching qualifications but workplace specialisms).
- Students have specialist educators with vocational qualifications when at school.
- Quality – curriculum, teachers and assessment is central to effective VET.

The following diagram represents the challenges articulated in OECD research globally:



5. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER: APPLYING THE OUTCOMES

The Fellow has and will undertake a number of activities to ensure the outcomes of this Fellowship are disseminated:

Presentations/Dissemination of information:

1. September 2015, Co-presenter at the National VELG conference in Adelaide 'Reconnecting VET' – Title of Presentation: *'Developing the Skills of VET Practitioners: A real story'*
2. April 2016, Presenter of a four-day workshop for the Chinese Society of Technical and Vocational Education in Beijing – Title of Workshop *'International models of VET teaching practice'*
3. August 2016, Federation University Learning & Teaching Committee
4. September 2016, FedUni TAFE Learning & Teaching Committee
5. October 2016, OctoberVET
6. November 2016 FedUni TAFE Board
7. TBA 2016, relevant government bodies
8. October 2016, OctoberVET event hosted by Victorian TAFE Association and the Centre for Applied Research & Innovation
9. Through the relationships created by the ISSI with other Fellows in their own institutes commencing with the ISS Institute induction for new Fellows.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for 'Improving the quality, capability and status of the VET teacher workforce'.

Background:

Currently, there is no Victorian or Australian Government funding allocated to RTOs for VET teacher professional development. Many years ago, there was a budget allocation directly to TAFEs and separately there was an e-learning specific budget aimed at building online capacity. Budgets are lean and so professional development often comes last in the budget line of priorities and preference for professional development is aimed at compliance rather than learning and teaching.

Recommendations:

- Raising the level of the minimum qualification beyond a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment will address some of the concerns, although additional requirements are also needed to raise the quality of VET practice.

R1 **Based on these observations, the Fellow recommends that raising the level of the minimum qualification beyond a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment will address some of the concerns, although additional requirements are also needed to raise the quality of VET practice.**

R2 **Establish a set of nationally recognised VET learning and teaching standards. These standards must identify levels of capability to develop quality assessments, resources, training and assessment strategies for a broad range of student cohorts.**

R3 **Develop a national strategy to upskill the existing workforce of VET teachers so that they can meet new requirements of training packages and the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.**

R4 **RTOs put their own systems in place to advance the skills of their VET teachers beyond any minimum base level teaching qualification and find solutions to bridge gaps in relation to industry currency, industry experience and vocational competence.**

R5 **Improve the integration of VET provision across the whole education sector ensuring the same priority for initial teacher education, ongoing professional development and importance and emphasis on subject/industry currency.**

Whilst the Australian VET reform address the four key themes below, there is still no recognition in these reforms to consider teaching practice, vocational currency and vocational competency:

1. Industry responsiveness
2. Quality and regulation
3. Funding and governance
4. Data and consumer information.

R6 **State or national funding bodies consider the value add of building capacity and capability of the VET teacher workforce and the contribution and cost saving this will make to reducing:**

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Non-compliance**
- **Low completion rates**
- **Poor quality assessment**
- **Minimal volume of learning in high and low risk qualification areas.**

This could be achieved through re-introduction of a professional learning budget that had specific targets around:

1. Increasing level of teacher qualifications.

2. Increased vocational/industry currency of existing teachers.

3. Quality assessment tool and resource development.

4. Participation in professional learning against a national standard framework.

R7 **That all regulatory bodies undertake a mapping and alignment of reporting requirements in attempt to:**

1. Reduce unnecessary administrative burden on teachers

2. Clarify competing and conflicting language that serves multiple purpose (e.g.: Program Unique Supervised Hours (PUSH), Volume of learning, Amount of training, nominal hours)

3. Develop a national approach so that business and reporting requirements are consistent nationally

4. Reduce turnover of training packages/curriculum as this is resource intensive and smaller regional institutes are not as well-resourced to deal with rapid change as the larger metropolitan RTOs.

Streamlining administrative reporting will allow teachers to focus on core business.

R8 **Nationally re-assess the VET curriculum, employer responsibility and engagement, funding and permeability. Rather than fix small aspects, it is time to look at the big picture. Too many policies are developed without consideration of the flow on effects on learning and teaching.**

R9 **That a minimum teaching practicum be a mandated part of the Training and Assessment Package of qualification for early career VET teachers and ensure that initial completion of these qualifications can't be obtained through a full recognition of prior learning (RPL).**

R10 **Establish a national registration body that assists RTOs and in achieving full engagement in professional learning and professional standards.**

R11 **Nationally develop a clear set of standards for VET teaching practice that can be considered in workplace agreements and contribute to a well-defined position description for VET teachers. This would include consideration of the benefits of defining the difference between workplace trainers (employed by industry or the workplace) and teachers employed by RTOs.**

R12 **Better promote amongst the CEOs of TAFEs the value chain of ISS Institute Fellows and foster an environment of true VET 'applied research'. Form links with other bodies that work towards this shared goal.**

R13 RTOs invest, collaborate, and remain committed to quality in VET. If collectively we set a quality benchmark, the status of VET will regain confidence within the community and the market. The teaching workforce is the key to successful quality VET practice.

Invitation for further collaboration and conversation with the broader VET Sector

Until professional learning becomes the individual teacher responsibility rather than the responsibility of the RTO, the approach to ensuring that both pedagogical currency and industry currency is kept (and is clear what currency is) then it will be a 'stick' approach.

Not all teachers in VET consider themselves as educators. This must change. We need to establish a benchmark, a language and a clear position description that enables and promotes the importance of the work that VET teachers do.

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8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute) – The Awarding body

The ISS Institute exists to foster an aspirational, skilled and smart Australia by cultivating the mastery and knowledge of talented Australians through international research Fellowships.

The International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute) is proud of its heritage. The organisation was founded over 25 years ago by Sir James Gobbo AC CVO QC, former Governor of Victoria, to encourage investment in the development of Australia's specialised skills. Its international Fellowship program supports a large number of Australians and international leaders across a broad cross-section of industries to undertake applied research that will benefit economic development through vocational training, industry innovation and advancement. To date, over 350 Australian and international Fellows have undertaken Fellowships facilitated through ISS Institute. The program encourages mutual and shared learning, leadership and communities of practice.

At the heart of the ISS Institute are our individual Fellows. Under the International Applied Research Fellowship Program the Fellows travel overseas and upon their return, they are required to pass on what they have learnt by:

- Preparing a detailed report for distribution to government departments, industry and educational institutions
- Recommending improvements to accredited educational courses
- Delivering training activities including workshops, conferences and forums.

The organisation plays a pivotal role in creating value and opportunity, encouraging new thinking and early adoption of ideas and practice. By working with others, ISS Institute invests in individuals who wish to create an aspirational, skilled and smart Australia through innovation, mastery and knowledge cultivation.

For further information on ISS Institute Fellows, refer to www.issinstitute.org.au

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8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fellowship Sponsor - The Higher Education and Skills Group

The Victorian Government, through the Higher Education and Skills Group (HESG) of the Department of Education and Training, is responsible for the administration and coordination of programs for the provision of training and further education, adult education and employment services in Victoria and is a valued sponsor of the ISS Institute. Rasmussen thanks them for providing funding for this Fellowship.

The Fellow would like to thank all those who have supported her to undertake this Fellowship. She has already begun to share her findings and the knowledge and experience and will continue to be inspired to contribute to reforming the VET sector within her organisation, her regional community and more broadly. Rasmussen's views are firmly centered on the contribution vocational education can make to the economy and to the lives of those learners who gain essential skills and knowledge and those who are 'first in family' to commence a pathway to lifelong learning through VET. By empowering and inspiring our teachers to become better teachers we will in turn be able to demonstrate quality VET practice. Her work seeks to challenge the tendency for VET teachers to perceive that their professional lives are being mired in a web of complex and competing regulatory requirements.

Asking teachers to prove what it is that they do daily is tedious. There is no other education environment that has the same administrative expectations as VET. There is confusing and competing terminology which distracts teachers and provides an excuse for not being able to do their job.

The Fellow acknowledges the Federation University Australia, Executive Director of VET and the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic Programs, for realising the importance of investing in the VET workforce despite financial hardship. The Fellow is proud of this bold move and commitment to teaching quality within the university. The Fellow also congratulates the teachers who have embraced change, the imperative and the opportunity that has been granted to them to engage in a broad range of professional development activity at no cost to them. These self-elected champions will continue to prosper as VET teachers in times of rapid change.

Supporters

The following organisations/individuals were involved in and supported the Fellowship application and submission through the provision of recommended international contacts:

- Professor Roger Harris
- Professor Emerita Berwyn Clayton, Victoria University
- Susan Pettigrew, South West TAFE
- Martin Johnson, Cambridge University.

Fellowship mentors

- Associate Professor Barry Wright – Executive Director of VET, Federation University Australia
- Andrew Williamson, Executive Director, Victorian TAFE Association
- Kerrie-Anne Sommerfeld – Director, Rubric Training Solutions

Employer support

Federation University Australia has generously supported this Fellowship by allowing time to travel to undertake the Fellowship.

The Fellow particularly acknowledges:

- Her Manager and Workplace Mentor Associate Professor Barry Wright whom is always encouraging and supportive of initiatives that lead to improved teaching, quality and innovative practice and supports opportunity to engage beyond the Institute
- Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic Programs - Professor Andy Smith
- The VET Practice Unit for continually aspiring to lead best practice in learning and teaching in challenging regulatory environment

Organisations and individuals that participated in this Fellowship

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- University of Huddersfield
- The Education and Training Foundation (UK)
- The University of Konstanz (Germany)
- The ETH Zurich – The Center for Economics and Management of Education and Training Systems - Swiss Federal Institute of Technology
- The international congress which was supported by a broad range of institutions, including the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), different cantons, the Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (ZHAW) and numerous professional organisations.

Organisations impacted by the Fellowship

The following organisations and industry groups should benefit from the findings of this report:

- Federation University Australia – FedUni TAFE
- Management, teachers and students from the Australian VET sector
- Victorian TAFE Association (VTA) – Educator Network
- VET Development Centre
- HESG and ASQA regulatory bodies.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Useful Links provided by Education Training Foundation

An overview of what we do: http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/about-us/areas-of-activity/

The self-assessment tool https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/digital-assets/self-assessment/

The professional standards http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/professional-standards/

The materials on professional updating and developing relationships with employers http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf2325

Report from 'supporting employers' work http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-for-employers/teach/

Further information about the apprenticeship reforms in England http://futureapprenticeships.org.uk/useful-links/

The new apprenticeship standards for teaching professionals

Further Education Learning and Skills Teacher – Level 5

Higher/Further Education - Assessor-Coach – Level 4

Higher/Further Education - Learning Mentor – Level 3

Appendix 2 - Conference Program Presentations

The 2nd International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training,

Welcome Address

Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research. The spoken word prevails.

Skills as a Driver of Jobs and Growth

Marianne Thyssen, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility

From Skills to Prosperity: Best Practices and Challenges on Work-Based Learning

Deborah Roseveare, Head, Skills beyond School Division, Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD (PDF)

The impact of VPET on Economic Success

Luiz Cassiano Rando Rosolen, CEO Indústrias Romi S.A.

Comparative Analysis of Vocational Education and Training (VET): How to Establish Strong Linkages between Actors of the Education and Employment Systems?

Dr. Ursula Renold, Head of Division, Comparative Education System Research, KOF Swiss Economic Institute, ETH Zurich, Switzerland (PDF)

9. APPENDICES

Innovative Partnership Leading to News Higher Vocational Education

Per Byström, Sweden

Young People Want Jobs: Implementing a Swiss-modelled Dual-track VET System in Brussels

Jean-Christophe Vanderhaegen, Belgium (PDF)

One for All? Toolbox for Apprenticeship Development

Jan Reitz Jørgensen, Denmark

Isabelle Le Mouillour, Germany

Franz Gramlinger, Austria (PDF)

Nestlé Global Youth Initiative

Kathryn Rowan, Switzerland

Pedro José Pires, Switzerland (PDF)