Submission

IBSA Consultation

Incorporating Innovation & Creativity in BSB07 Qualifications and Manager 2020 Principles

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1. Introduction

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) is the peak, national industry association for independent providers of post-compulsory education and training. ACPET represents more than 1,100 organisations, from schools to higher education institutes, delivering a full range of education, training and English language courses to both domestic and international students.

ACPET welcomes the opportunity to present a submission to the Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) in its role as the national Industry Skills Council (ISC) as part of the project *Incorporating Innovation & Creativity in BSB07 Qualifications and Manager 2020 Principles*.

ACPET supports the direction of the current government to boost productivity and workforce participation through a focus on education and training. The move to encourage and recognise innovation and creativity as integral to the development of management and leadership skills is welcomed.

It is important that Australia develops an internationally competitive education and training sector through significant reform and investment. However, reform of this sector needs to be underpinned by quality and streamlined processes; developed, implemented and maintained by the users of the system - clients and providers.

ACPET is committed to building an education and training system in Australia which helps all individuals to establish rewarding, social and economic lives that contribute to a productive and socially inclusive nation. Investment in human capital through education and training will help Australia’s future prosperity and the well-being of its people.

ACPET’s submission has been developed to address the common items across the scope of the project rather than specific input on the three project areas.

2. Management, leadership and innovation competencies

The world is changing and strong, innovative management and leadership practices are extremely important in today’s globally competitive economy. Today, many individual learners are sophisticated users of service industries including education and training and demand a more tailored and personalised experience that is matched to their learning style and preferences\(^1\).

Secondly, industry is more demanding and employers now require much more than subject expertise from new employees. Employability skills, including technological fluency, communication skills, collaboration and teamwork and leadership and creativity are now in demand\(^2\) and are increasingly

\(^1\) NCVER (2006) *Quality is the key: critical issues in teaching, learning and assessment in vocational education and training*, p. 18

\(^2\) 6 Thornburg, D. (2004), *Education in the Communication Age*, The Thornburg Centre
viewed as important to economic development\textsuperscript{3}. To be successful, education and training providers need to engender these qualities.

ACPET agree that the modern workplace has an increased emphasis on a wide range of broadly-based skills and knowledge. The complexity of skill levels required by workers, and in particular managers and leaders today, is partly due to emerging technologies and progressive workplace practices as well as the need for capacity building of organisations of which workforce development is a central feature. Recognition of levels of cognitive thought used in daily work practices and the value of personal attributes must be considered in all work roles especially when looking at management, leadership and innovation competencies.

It is important that management, leadership and innovation competence is reviewed in the context of modern and futuristic management practices including the areas of:

- Global business awareness;
- Talent management;
- Stakeholder and customer expectations;
- Employee engagement and retention; and
- Technology, information and infrastructure.\textsuperscript{4}

It is also important that increased recognition of cognitive thought processes is given for qualifications above Certificate III level which are suitable for the Para-professional within the industry or the student utilising the VET qualification pathway as a transition to a higher education qualification.

The advanced development of employability skills needed for Para-professional and managerial levels of work and therefore more applied use of cognitive thinking on top of acquired knowledge and skill levels, support the case for the need to review qualifications and Training Packages included in this review. A focus and recognition of cognitive thinking at all levels of qualifications would also provide for a smoother transition between VET and higher education qualifications due to this recognition.

Changes to client-based demand will require that providers of education and training are able to develop a learning environment that is highly customised and individualised. This environment can only be created with the support of quality education and training products which can be utilized to meet the needs of clients. This shift requires a new way of thinking about the business of teaching and learning that gives more responsibility to the learner and changes the role of the provider from one of

\textsuperscript{3} Business Council of Australia New concepts in innovation – the keys to growing Australia, cited in OECD (2007), OECD Thematic review of tertiary education country background report Australia, prepared for DEEWR (then DEST)

predominantly being subject matter expert to one with an emphasis on facilitation, support, critical thinking, guidance and entrepreneurialism.

The focus should be on learning outcomes for the individual, described by the AQF descriptors. The current form and use of competence ‘limits the potential of VET qualifications to prepare learners for new and emerging roles and for further learning in new areas’\(^5\). This point is even more valid for managers and leaders looking to cope with constant change.

3. Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) gives a platform for a single system. The AQF provides for a qualification and outcome capacities framework that should not only enable, but actively promote accreditation of tailored course development to meet the differentiated needs of VET stakeholders, including individual learners. The current prescriptive process of building qualifications is not flexible enough to meet the changing needs of industry or to support individuals to progress through an industry and/or career pathway and therefore needs to be changed.

It is particularly important that the AQF and AQTF explicitly expand vocational recognition of and responsiveness to the urgent occupational need for higher order skill development, including management and innovation capabilities. This is needed to better facilitate advanced level technical training at Certificate IV level and above, in addition to the supervisory and management priorities currently privileged in Training Package qualifications at this level. Such technical training may be discipline specific, but may also be cross-disciplinary where technologies are rapidly converging.

Advanced technical qualifications at this level warrant a degree of customised specificity best developed as innovative accredited courses designed for specific purposes. It is this approach which will help to negotiate change and resolve current and emerging issues with respect to sustainability across all sectors of the Australian economy.

However, the current requirements around Training package qualification packaging and alignment, particularly above AQF Certificate III level are acting as a barrier to the needs of learners, particularly if not yet set on distinct occupational goals, and the need of industries undergoing massive change.

Australia needs to finish the incomplete reform of the AQF so that Vocational Education and Training includes only Certificate I-IV compliance with competency based training via Training Packages. This protects the trades while liberating VET Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas to better aligned, differentiated, professionally-oriented curriculum content. This would enable VET to better equate with higher education outcomes and facilitate articulation arrangements between qualitatively enhanced applied VET qualifications and undergraduate studies.

Currently, there are too many underutilised and patently unsupportable VET qualifications - 80% of publicly funded VET enrolments are in only 180 out of 1,592 Training Package qualifications with 70 qualifications not used at all in 2006\(^6\). This alone is a very serious indictment of the lack of relevance and efficacy of the Training Package strategy to date, despite its mandatory nature, and does not auger well for the future especially when looking at developing and encouraging innovative capabilities of learners and managers for the future.

ACPET support broader statements of learning outcomes based on different levels and combinations of skill development and cognitive thinking underpinned by the employability (soft, core, generic, etc) skills and personal attributes.

The level of prescriptive statements, non-flexible packaging rules and anti-competitive funding regimes has acted to limit local, regional, national and international education and training market contexts. The stringently enforced, legislative prohibitions on the differentiation and specialisation of VET product and service delivery, restricts the ability of providers to meet the range of needs of different clients (employers and individuals) of the system, particularly in a state of constant change.

Independent providers, with their ability to quickly adapt, to be time responsive to the needs of clients (employers and individuals) and flexible in their approach to delivery, would welcome the incorporation of innovation and creativity in Training Packages and qualifications to allow for:

- Qualifications at AQF Level IV and above to be re-designed to provide greater flexibility to cater for individual client needs;
- Accumulation of credits towards higher education qualifications; and
- A system of crediting all types of learning towards the achievement of a qualification level.

There needs to be a broader definition of the purpose, outcomes and assessment strategies permitted so that course design can meet the needs of learners as well as industry employers. High quality VET course accreditation can be readily based on ‘fit for purpose’, market relevance and alignment with Tertiary Education policies, selectively addressing different aspects of government priority for local, regional, national and international application.

ACPET recommends a partial deregulation of the VET system, with revisions made to the AQTF, to permit accreditation on merit of differentiated VET courses especially above Certificate IV level i.e.: AQF Diploma, Advanced Diploma levels and above. Training Package qualifications at Certificate I-IV levels that have and continue to prove useful, particularly where pertinent to trades training with licensing implications, should be retained and maintained.

This is a modification of the existing system that concurs with Federal Government goals for stimulating a more flexible, responsive and professionally self-sustaining Tertiary Education sector. This suggestion for partial deregulation would progressively free up the sector, allowing the

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\(^6\) NCVER Literature Review pp 11-12
educational pendulum to swing back to a more productive and more competitive, middle ground with incentive for providers to innovate and invest in growing VET scope and scale of operations.

Restrictive, complex and cumbersome content and outcomes, resulting from a burdensome, bureaucratic system, has constrained and narrowed the Australian training effort. This has been successful in actively stifling and depleting the Australian training system’s capacity for innovation, diversity and responsive in the face of rapidly changing technological, disciplinary and economic circumstances, not to mention the shifting social, cultural and environmental challenges yet to be overcome.

Training Packages have been enshrined in old, inefficient and often outdated industrial training perceptions, functions and practices that are of increasingly limited relevance in an advanced knowledge economy across all industry sectors that must compete globally to survive.

Naturally the concern of Government will be about quality. Quality can be readily maintained through slight adjustments to the AQF and AQTF.

4. Contact

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