

Qualification Reform Design Group Update March 2024

On 8 March 2024, the Qualification Reform Design Group (Design Group) delivered its initial advice to Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council (SWMC) with recommendations for a program of work to modernise Australia's vocational education and training (VET) qualifications.

The models for VET qualifications put forward by the Design Group respond to the skills needs of industry and sets up a revised system of qualifications that will:

- strengthen design focus to improve outcomes from a qualification, especially for graduates with industry-relevant and transferable skills leading to decent work in a rapidly changing environment;
- create incentives for increased enrolments and completions based on wider employment prospects and capacity to contextualise learning to local need;
- bring more participants into vocational education, confident in the future a VET qualification offers through improved knowledge, skills and core capabilities that can be acquired for work and life;
- encourage quality teaching and learning by reducing the overspecification that contributes to compliance overload in delivery and assessment, leading to better learning experiences and outcomes; and
- improve the status and responsiveness of the VET sector by retaining what is working while generating new models for use across sectors, with appropriate oversight to maintain trust.

The Design Group has proposed a revised system that moves from a 'one size fits all' approach to designing qualifications based on their purposes, especially to respond to changing workplaces and industries.

The proposed differentiated qualifications system, supported by Qualification Development Quality Principles, preserves the qualifications that are working well and enables new models that provide flexibility to improve outcomes for learners and industry. Three broad purposes have been identified:

- **Purpose 1** – qualifications leading to a specific occupation (for example a licensed trade), that maintain a level of specificity necessary for safety or licencing requirements, particularly the integrity of the trades, and is unlikely to change substantially from the current approach;
- **Purpose 2** – qualifications that prepare learners for multiple, related occupations while retaining industry relevance; and
- **Purpose 3** – qualifications that develop cross-sectoral or foundation skills and knowledge which may be applied across industries, or lead to tertiary education and training pathways.

Skills Ministers agreed to next steps in testing and designing qualification models in the proposed VET qualification system. During 2024, the Design Group, Jobs and Skills Councils, and state and territory officials will closely work through an action learning approach.

The Design Group, assisted by Jobs and Skills Councils and states and territories, will report back to Skills Ministers on progress of the work, with further advice to be provided by the end of 2024.

The Design Group looks forward to working in partnership with Jobs Skills Councils and states and territories, and drawing on key experts, to test and refine the purpose-led design of qualifications to inform new policy settings for the qualifications system. Further updates will be provided as this work progresses.