

# Skills Assure Supplier framework EOI Stage 1 webinar - transcript

## Introduction and session outline

- The information provided in this webinar is focused on frequently asked questions – to support training providers who would like to submit an Expression of Interest, or EOI.
- First, I will provide a brief overview of the new EOI process.
- It is important to highlight that there will be two separate processes for contracting registered training organisations to deliver funded training through the new Skills Assure Supplier (or SAS) framework.
- This first process is for the Career Start and Career Boost programs, which includes school based apprenticeships and traineeships.
- It does not include VET in Schools delivery.
- A separate Career Ready VET in Schools EOI will open later and information will be communicated at that time.
- This diagram shows how the current EOI process for Career Start and Career Boost programs will work.

For starters, all RTOs must apply – including public providers and current SAS.

- It will be a 2-stage process:
  - **Stage 1 will focus on mandatory eligibility.**
  - **Stage 2 will be formal assessment against pre-determined criteria.**
- RTOs must meet the mandatory eligibility requirements in stage 1 in order to progress to stage 2.
- Stage 2 assessments will be undertaken by an independent panel.
- Advice on outcomes will be issued in writing after both stages.

- Stage 1 will be open for six weeks – it has now been open for just over a week and will close on 8 November 2024 at 5pm.
- RTOs will need a Partner Portal account, with the Purchasing Online (or POL) application enabled, in order to submit an EOI in stage 1.
- If you do not have a Partner Portal account, it is imperative that you apply for one early as it will take several days to enable the account and complete required documents to support this.
- More information, including detailed guidelines and updated frequently asked questions, can be found online at [www.desbt.qld.gov.au/sas-contracting](http://www.desbt.qld.gov.au/sas-contracting).

### Slide 3

## Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

### Programs

- I will now answer some of our most frequently asked questions.
- If you have any questions, please put them in the chat or email us at **SAS.EOI@desbt.qld.gov.au** and – if they have not already been addressed in our frequently asked questions – we will update the frequently asked questions online and let you know when we do.
- We will update our list of frequently asked questions online to ensure everyone has access to the same information. Please check these if you have questions as you progress and, of course, reach out by email if needed.
- One common question relates to our subsidised training programs and VET in schools delivery.
- **What is this EOI process for?  
and  
Does it include delivery in schools?**
- This EOI process is for our new post-school subsidised training programs – Career Start and Career Boost programs – starting 1 July 2025.

- RTOs approved to deliver apprenticeships and traineeships will be able to deliver school-based apprentices and trainees.
- So, if you are seeking to deliver apprenticeship or traineeship training in schools through a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship, you must apply for this now as part of this process.
- A separate process will be undertaken later for a new Career Ready VET in Schools program, with delivery under this program commencing later – at the start of the 2026 school year. The Career Ready process will not include school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

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- **Another program related question is ...  
What will happen to the current subsidised training programs?**
- The department's current Certificate 3 Guarantee, User Choice, Higher Level Skills and VET in Schools programs will be replaced by the new programs.
- Queensland VET Investment programs – Certificate 3 Guarantee and Higher Levels Skills will be replaced by Career Start and Career Boost.
- VETiS will be replaced by Career Ready.
- User Choice, which currently subsidises apprenticeships and traineeships, will be replaced by all three programs as they all include apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Supporting a stable transition for students and training providers is a priority.
- Discontinuing program arrangements will be phased out – or grandfathered – so students are not disadvantaged.
- You can learn more about our new subsidised training programs and how about the transition, as well as information on how we prioritise our investment in training and skills, in our annual Training Priorities Plan.
- Our first Training Priorities Plan – for 2024-25 – is now available online.

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## **Mandatory eligibility**

- The mandatory eligibility criteria listed here on the screen support the key objectives of the Queensland Skills Strategy to:
  - focus on quality training delivered by RTOs that understand the skills and workforce needs of Queensland employers;
  - better target investment in qualifications and the RTOs delivering this training;
  - support students to access the training for jobs in demand at all career stages;
  - strengthen pathways from training to employment;
  - ensure students and employers in regional and remote areas can access the training they need for local jobs;
  - improve student outcomes, including qualification completions and increased student support measures; and
  - partner with industry, employers and unions to deliver a high-performing training system.
  
- The mandatory eligibility criteria will provide the Department with information on your RTO's experience delivering in Queensland, quality and compliance history and connections to local employers.

### **Slide 6**

## **The department has received a number of questions about the Mandatory Criteria**

### **Will there be exemptions to the mandatory eligibility criteria?**

- These are mandatory eligibility criteria, therefore conforming responses will be prioritised in the assessment process for progression to Stage 2 EOI.
- Schedule B (Terms and Conditions) reserves the Department's right to "consider an EOI STAGE 1 response submitted other than in accordance with the requirements of this EOI STAGE 1 document". In accordance with these, the Department may exercise its right to accept a response that does not conform with all of the requirements where it is considered necessary to ensure adequate training supply for example in regional, rural and remote locations or for niche industry areas.
- The decision of whether an exemption will be granted will be made during the assessment process depending on whether there are sufficient conforming offers to adequately meet the requirements.

- As such the Department is unable to provide any prior indication as to whether an exception will be granted. This decision will be undertaken in accordance with the probity requirements.

### **How do I get qualifications added to the list?**

- The annual Training Priorities Plan outlines how the Queensland Government will target its investment in qualifications to deliver high-quality job outcomes - drawing on data, analysis and industry advice.
- The Queensland Subsidised Training List is informed by and supports the objectives identified in the Training Priorities Plan. The list is dynamic and will change as industry identifies new and emerging training needs that require the addition of new qualifications or the phasing out of training that is no longer required or deemed a priority as industry workforce needs evolve.
- RTOs are not able to request the addition of qualifications to the Queensland Subsidised Training List.

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### **Employer Referees**

#### **How many employer referees do I need to provide?**

- RTOs must provide a minimum of 3 employer referees per qualification or Industry Training Group.
- The ITGs are listed on the proposed Queensland Subsidised Training List. Looking at the excerpt below, you will see that there can be multiple ITGs in a specific industry area, for example:
  - Primary Industry – Agriculture
  - Primary Industry – Forestry
  - Primary Industry – General
  - Primary Industry – Horticulture
  - Primary Industry – Land Management.
- If you were applying to deliver a qualification in each of these 5 ITGs, you would need to submit a minimum of 15 employer referees (3 from each ITG).
- If you were applying to deliver 4 qualifications from the Agriculture ITG and 2 qualifications in Horticulture, you would need to submit a minimum of 3 referees for each ITG (minimum of 6 in total).

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## Employer Referees

### What if I am unable to provide employer referee contacts?

- Employer referee contacts are a key part of the mandatory eligibility criteria, relating to RTO quality and ability to meet the needs of Queensland employers.
- For this reason, the referee contacts must:
  - be independent from the RTO and RTO legal entity
  - Aware that they have been nominated as a referee and that they will be contacted by the Department
  - be available to speak directly with a departmental officer
  - have engaged the RTO's services for training and assessment services and / or employed students who completed training with the RTO.
- If you submit an application that does not list referee contacts or that contains ineligible referees, your application will be assessed as non-conforming.

### Can I provide schools as employer referees?

- The application guidelines specify that referee contacts **must not** be from schools or labour hire companies.
- Schools will only be accepted as an employer referee for a qualification with a specific school-based employment outcome e.g., Certificate III in School Based Education Support or Diploma of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education.

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## Training History

### What evidence of training activity do I need to provide?

- Section 9 of the Application Guidelines details the required documents and information to be submitted through Partner Portal for the EOI Stage 1.
- Twelve months of your Queensland AVETMISS training activity (calendar data of 2024, 2023 or 2022) to Queensland residents, including qualification

completions for the same time period, must be uploaded electronically as part of your EOI Stage 1 Response.

- The "How to use the POL application to submit a EOI Stage 1 response" instructions provides details of how to attach your training and assessment activity.
- Qualification completion must be indicated through the Qualification Issued flag – for probity purposes the Department cannot infer completion from the data submitted.

### **Can I include skill clusters/ skill set outcome in my data?**

- The department will consider all Total VET Activity data submitted, not just government subsidised training data.
- RTO applicants can submit outcomes including skill clusters/skill sets however, RTOs must also be able to meet the Queensland training and assessment delivery history as set out in the Application Guidelines to be assessed as a conforming response.

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### **Partner Portal**

- EOIs must be submitted through the Purchasing Online (POL) application in Partner Portal.

### **RTOs with an existing Partner Portal account**

- Check your account has access to the POL application (we may have already enabled it knowing you are interested in contracting as a SAS).
- If you don't have access, your organisation's Partner Portal Administrator can request access to POL. Contact the Partner Portal team if you have any issues.
- RTOs approved as SAS will need access to POL throughout their agreement.

### **RTOs without a Partner Portal account**

- Your organisation will need to create one, and request access to the POL application, prior to submitting your EOI. The process may take some time so request access after you have read the EOI documentation and you are eligible to apply.
- Do not select any other apps in Partner Portal – only POL.

## Partner Portal – Help and support

### For Partner Portal help:

- refer to our manuals – some steps of setting up a Partner Portal account may be supported by Australian Government agencies.
- email [PartnerPortal@desbt.qld.gov.au](mailto:PartnerPortal@desbt.qld.gov.au)
- phone (07) 3025 6692.

For all other EOI questions, email us at [SAS.EOI@desbt.qld.gov.au](mailto:SAS.EOI@desbt.qld.gov.au).

## Partner Portal Questions

### Why am I getting an error message when applying for Partner Portal access?

- The Partner Portal team can assist with issues relating to Partner Portal access.
- Our systems draw RTO registration, scope and delivery information from Training.gov.au to validate RTO eligibility to deliver training and assessment services in Queensland.
- If your RTO's TGA records do not show current approval to deliver training and assessment in specific qualifications in Queensland our systems may generate an error message for your application.
- If you believe there is an error in your TGA records you will need to raise this directly with ASQA to get this rectified.

### When should I apply for Partner Portal access?

- Please read the EOI documentation, particularly the mandatory eligibility requirements. If your RTO is eligible to apply and does not have a Partner Portal account please request Partner Portal and POL access now.
- The application questions are available on the *Skills Assure Supplier contracting* webpage
- It can take up to 2 weeks to enable Partner Portal access, so do not wait until closer to the closing date.



**Slide 13****Submitted applications****My application is showing as Applied Already. Can this be reset?**

- You need to check the status of the application if it is draft or lodged.
- Applicants cannot amend their applications once they are submitted and the status becomes lodged.
- If after this session or reading the FAQs or other information, you find that the application you have submitted may be non-conforming, you may consider reapplying.
- If this occurs, you must email [SAS.EOI@desbt.qld.gov.au](mailto:SAS.EOI@desbt.qld.gov.au) requesting to withdraw your application.
- We recommend that you take a copy of the information in your current application first before sending the withdrawal request.
- After the application is withdrawn, you will be able to start a new application.
- It is important to review your application before submitting and ensure that all of the required supporting information is attached. A checklist has been uploaded to the website with the Application Guidelines.

**Slide 14****Learn more – website and enquiries**

- To learn more, please visit the department's website – at **[desbt.qld.gov.au/sas-contracting](http://desbt.qld.gov.au/sas-contracting)** – to:
- Learn about the EOI process, including:
  - how to submit
  - help to access Partner Portal and
  - help to access the POL application
- Download and read stage 1 guidelines
- Check frequently asked questions, which are updated regularly.

Also, find links to learn more about the Queensland Skills Strategy, Training Priorities Plan and new SAS framework.

Of course, please also email us at [SAS.EOI@desbt.qld.gov.au](mailto:SAS.EOI@desbt.qld.gov.au) if you have any questions about the process.

While we cannot provide help you compile your response, we can assist with process questions.

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