Training Product Translation Project – Breakdown

Skills Insight and Griffith University have completed research into how RTOs interpret and translate training packages into training programs with the aim of supporting best practice and innovation in curriculum development.

Understanding how training package translation works is crucial to improving training delivery across essential industries – not just those represented by the three qualifications investigated.

The concept of translating training packages into training programs can be difficult to grasp and at times cause confusion for those attempting the activity. Training packages describe the required knowledge and task processes for a particular job. They do not prescribe training practices and are not in themselves training programs.

This research was funded by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and examined training package translation processes across three qualifications:

1. *Certificate II in Rural Operations*
2. *Certificate III in Agriculture*
3. *Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing*.

Twelve registered training organisations (RTOs) – four per qualification – were consulted to gain insights into translation and its challenges, and they were asked:

1. How do RTOs develop a new training program based on national qualifications?
2. Who in an RTO is responsible for translating a training package?
3. What do RTOs consider as effective learning and assessment resources?

The providers were all committed to serving students, community and industry yet had to contend with complex, costly and time-consuming demands to remain in the VET system.

Research revealed the complexity faced by RTOs when creating or modifying a training course or resource. This complexity includes determining the **course purpose,** managing **pre-translation, translation** and **mobilisation processes,** and addressing **challenges.**

Research findings informed the recommendations on how to support: **RTOs in streamlining the translation process** and **the VET system in enhancing the overall translation environment,** rather than focussing on particular components of the process.

Findings

The following summarises the contexts, considerations and challenges throughout the translation process.

Course purpose

Translation was driven by the purpose of each course – which varied per qualification yet shared sentiment toward upskilling people for the job as well as the community in the context of the local delivery environment. Therefore, local place based skill needs were also incorporated into course purposes by RTOs. The following illustrates the purposes that drove the translation of each course.

Certificate II in Rural Operations

The Certificate II is seen as flexible and can be easily tailored by RTOs to suit a wide range of rural contexts, across various industries. Its purpose includes:

- Explicit focus on students and community.
- Enable cross-sectoral or foundation skills and knowledge.
- Delivery to secondary school VET students with an educational disadvantage.

Certificate III in Agriculture

The Certificate III is seen as a solid foundation for a career in the agricultural industry, and its purpose includes:

- Produce skilled, flexible graduates for multiple occupations within industry.
- Prepare students for a carefully considered range of agricultural careers.
- Develop enduring capabilities that learners need to navigate work and life.

Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing

The Certificate IV is intended to prepare learners to be confident veterinary nurses, and its purpose includes:

- Strengthen nurses to improve animal care.
- Utilise strong veterinary science foundations and clinical practices.
- Prioritise student learning needs and industry requirements – exceeding the training prescribed in units of competency.

Pre-translation process

The pre-translation process – which varies in decision-making complexity between large and small providers – involves analysing **six key influences** to trigger and inform the decisions around creating or modifying a training course or resource:

1. Government (e.g. funding policy)
2. VET system (e.g. changes to a Training Package)
3. Industry (e.g. demand for units of competency)
4. Context (e.g. local economic conditions)
5. Students (e.g. cohort profile)
6. Provider (e.g. workforce expertise).

Translation process

The translation process is the **key activity** in how training package content is interpreted to create or modify a training course or resource. It involves four stages – **framing, structuring, elaborating** and **organising** content. It highlights the **educator's importance in translation**.

Framing

- Interpreting the rules for selecting elective units of competency.
- Reading units and balancing interpretation against the pre-translation influences, particularly industry, students, and training context.

Structuring

- Grouping and sequencing units to create a cohesive course of learning.
- Careful reading of units of competency to determine delivery order.
- For Certificate II and Certificate III courses with many electives, framing and structuring are more demanding tasks.
- For Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing, structuring is more demanding as there's a need articulate skill and clinical practices by linking units with veterinary nursing knowledge, which supports logical and holistic learning.

Elaborating

- Reading units to determine the content and structure of learning resources.
- Mapping resources back across the unit of competency and assessment.
- Research, review, evaluation, and production of resources.

Organising

- Arranging learning sites so that appropriate equipment, materials, locations and spaces, people and/or animals are available to support the training and learning processes.
- For Cert IV providers, organising ensures that students are placed or working within appropriately equipped environments.
- For Cert II and III providers, organising ensures resources are procured and the learning site is fit for the learning context.

RTO educators play a highly significant role in the translation process – influencing framing, structuring, elaboration and organisation processes, as well as pre-translation decision-making. In some examples, educators were the primary influence on learning design. **They are thus integral to the translation process for any training provider.**

Mobilisation process

Mobilisation involves **making learning resources available** through a learning management system for online delivery or educator-led programs. Also:

- For Cert II and III, educator-led delivery is commonplace as learners struggle to follow text-based resources and are dependent on the presence of educators.
- For Cert IV, resource-led learning is prominent.

Translation challenges

RTOs highlighted core challenges to translation as the **complex level of specification in units of competency** and **internal resourcing and HR challenges**. In more detail:

- having to puzzle over interrelationships among details in competency and assessment documents

- dealing with requirements to use expensive and/or rarely used equipment and techniques

- performing procedures that graduates are not allowed to undertake in certain workplaces

- training package updating timelines and late notice of package changes

- lengthy and expensive redesign processes following package changes.

Good practices

Despite the challenges, good practices were evident across the providers. Selected examples are discussed in detail in the full report. In summary:

1. Collaborative, educator-led translation
2. Deep roots in community and industry
3. Designing for inclusion
4. Authentic learning using simulation
5. Weaving knowledge into competencies
6. Enhancing qualification outcomes.

Recommendations

Recommendations for JSCs to support RTOs in streamlining the translation process and for the VET system to improve the translation environment include:

JSC and RTO recommendations

1. RTO educators to be more involved as subject matter experts in training package design.
2. JSCs to be funded to promote/sponsor/host RTO educator networking events in each sector.
3. JSCs to make more explicit advice around the use of simulations where appropriate in the rules of training packages, particularly in relation to assessment.
4. JSCs to ensure easily understood language in their training packages.
5. JSCs to ensure Companion Volume content is useful and accessible to providers.

Qualification specific recommendations

6. Certificate II in Rural Operations – Skills Insight to emphasise the purpose of this qualification is for individual/community development in isolated and disadvantaged populations.

7. Certificate III in Agriculture – post-qualification update, Skills Insight, and educators to identify more adaptable specification of tasks and performance to enable delivery of relevant and contextualised learning that builds transferable skills and knowledge.

8. Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing – when this qualification is updated as part of the proposed Qualification Reform program, Skills Insight could work with veterinary nurse educators to identify opportunities to specify the knowledge and general capabilities as well as the skills needed more clearly in veterinary nursing practice.

VET system recommendations

9. At least one national site/agency be established to act as a clearing house, to facilitate the sharing, purchasing, and distribution of learning and assessment resources developed to support the delivery of individual qualifications.

10. Review of funding models to recognise the real costs to providers of high-quality translation of training packages into learning programs and resources.

11. TAE Training and Education Training Package be reviewed to ensure that the capabilities and attributes that VET educators require to perform their translation roles are developed effectively.

12. Expansion of the definition of competency for the Australian VET system that acknowledges the diversity of learner needs and types of work the system addresses.

13. Purpose statements proposed by the Qualification Reform Design Group consider how personal capability can be incorporated.

14. Concept of curriculum be reclaimed and reintroduced as a critical aspect in the VET system to facilitate the process of translation of training packages to resources.

For full details, please view the report.

About the research

A collaboration with Griffith University

The research is the first systematic attempt to describe Training Package translation by VET providers. The project was commissioned by Skills Insight through an industry led activity process approved and funded by a Commonwealth Department of Education and Workplace Relations (DEWR) grant.

The Griffith Institute for Educational Research (GIER) at Griffith University was engaged by Skills Insight to conduct the research, which was undertaken between April and September 2024. The GIER team, comprising Steven Hodge, Anne Jones, Melinda Waters and Hugh Guthrie, worked together with Skills Insight to plan and manage the project. The Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee reviewed and approved the research (Reference: 2024/264).