STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

INQUIRY INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

SUBMISSION FROM



ACACA – AUSTRALASIAN COMMITTEE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION AUTHORITIES

Australian Capital Territory Board of Senior Secondary Studies

Queensland Studies Authority

Office of the Board of Studies, New South Wales

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Tasmanian Secondary Assessment Board

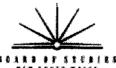
Curriculum Council of Western Australia

Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia

Northern Territory Board of Studies

DATE OF SUBMISSION: 26 May 2003





VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT ANTHORITY





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INTRODUCTION

All State and Territory School Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities are members of ACACA, one of the objects for which is:

... to promote curriculum, assessment and certification in schooling functions within the framework of the Commonwealth of Australia and its states and territories and to better enable the meeting of the needs of society for curriculum, assessment and certification in schooling and for other community service which may appropriately be provided by curriculum, assessment and certification authorities, to provide a means whereby Chief Executive Officers ... may:

- counsel together on matters of concern;
- formulate and forward to appropriate authorities advice on relevant matters including those of national concern;
- collect and disseminate information on matters of collective interest; and
- effectively evaluate the various activities undertaken.

The full list of objects for which the association was established are outlined on the ACACA website – ww.acaca.org.au/memo.htm.

While each agency has its own State/Territory-specific responsibilities, generally the responsibilities of these agencies include:

- responsibility for development and revision of curriculum/curriculum frameworks;
- responsibility for ensuring comparability of assessment and certification of student achievement; and
- responsibility, under the National Agreement for VET in Schools, for reporting all post-compulsory school achievement in VET and for ensuring that the VET data is AVETMISS compliant.

Some of these agencies are also responsible for managing the quality assurance arrangements for schools that have Registered Training Organisation status.

For specific information about the roles and responsibilities of each ACACA agency, the Standing Committee is referred to the ACACA website – www.acaca.org - for State/Territory-specific information, as well as to the websites for each ACACA agency. These can be accessed through links on the ACACA website.

The purpose of this ACACA submission to the Standing Committee on Education and Training Inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools is to highlight:

- some of the issues that are of mutual concern to all ACACA agencies in relation to vocational education in schools;
- the significant role played by the individual curriculum, assessment and certification authorities in each State/Territory in vocational education in schools; and
- the important role that ACACA plays, as a 'collective' or 'national association', in responding to, and debating, relevant issues of national significance.

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Each individual ACACA agency is managed by a Board that is representative of a wide range of stakeholders. As a minimum, membership includes parents, teachers, higher education groups, unions and the government and non-government schooling sectors. Each agency's website includes a list of their Board's specific membership.

In making this submission, ACACA would also draw the Standing Committee's attention to the ANTA *Principles and Guidelines for Improving Outcomes for Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools (2002-2004)*. These principles, originally agreed by Ministers in April 1998 and later updated to reflect the Australian Quality Training Framework, provide the basis for the consistent application of the National Training Framework within secondary schools. The principles are as follows:

Recognising Training

* Boards of Studies, in agreement with State/Territory Recognition Authorities, will recognise VET in Schools only where it is delivered by providers, which meet the registration requirements under the Australian Quality Training Framework, as from 1 July 2002.

Meeting industry and/or enterprise standards

* Boards of Studies, in agreement with State/Territory Recognition Authorities, will recognise as VET in Schools only that which delivers national and/or enterprise competency standards or accredited training where no relevant Training Package qualification/pathway exists, within the National Training Framework.

Pathways through Senior Secondary Certificates

* VET in Schools will contribute to qualifications defined by the AQF, including Senior Secondary Certificates or equivalents, and will provide multiple pathways which will articulate with further training, education and where appropriate, employment.

Ensuring dual outcomes

* VET in Schools studies, undertaken within the Senior Secondary Certificate, should also contribute to a VET qualification defined by the AQF.

Determining priorities for the delivery of VET in Schools

* In determining priority areas for the development of VET in Schools and School-Based New Apprenticeship programs, account will be taken of national and regional/local skill shortages, industry needs and student demand. Opportunities for all groups of students to participate should be maximised, especially those underrepresented in education and training.

Using Training Packages

* Boards of Studies, in agreement with State/Territory Recognition Authorities, will develop recognition procedures consistent with the Australian Quality Training

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Framework and the requirements of Senior Secondary Certificates in each State and Territory, to enable Training Packages to be delivered.

This submission specifically addresses those issues related to accredited VET in Schools. It does not include reference to the significant amount of activity undertaken by ACACA agencies in relation to students' development of broader, generic vocational skills and knowledge, such as general employability skills, enterprise education and career education. ACACA sees both vocational learning and accredited VET as important.

In addition, it would be inappropriate for ACACA to comment on **all** aspects of the Terms of Reference for this inquiry. This submission therefore addresses only selected aspects of the Terms of Reference relevant to the roles and responsibilities of ACACA agencies.

It should also be stressed that this submission does not in any way represent the definitive view of each ACACA agency in relation to issues associated with vocational education in schools. For specific State/Territory issues, the Standing Committee is referred to the individual submissions of each State/Territory government and/or Curriculum, Assessment and Certification authority.

1. THE RANGE, STRUCTURE, RESOURCING AND DELIVERY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS, INCLUDING TEACHER TRAINING AND THE IMPACT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ON OTHER PROGRAMS

Range and structure of vocational education programs in schools

The *Report on VET in Schools* (2003), (Appendix A to this submission), provides an overview of the range and structure of accredited vocational education programs in each State/Territory in 2003. As can be seen from this report, there is a range of ways in which vocational education is offered within each State and Territory, including for example:

- VET offered as stand-alone VET which, in some States/Territories, can contribute to the calculation of the student's tertiary entrance score;
- VET units of competency or full certificates embedded in Curriculum Frameworks or subjects, some of which contribute to the calculation of the student's tertiary entrance score.

Irrespective of the model or framework within which VET in Schools is delivered, delivery and outcomes are in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Training Package. Reporting of the vocational competencies is at the level of the unit of competency and qualifications or statements of attainment are issued as appropriate.

The Boards of Studies believe that discussions about the model or frameworks within which vocational education is delivered can detract from the fact that delivery and outcomes are in accordance with the requirements of the AQTF and of National Training Packages.

Appendix B to this report provides a snapshot of how VET is delivered, assessed and certified in each State/Territory as at April 2003, and should be read as an addendum to the *Report on VET in Schools (2003)*.

Resourcing

The *Report on VET in Schools* (2003) highlights the significant contribution of ACACA agencies in supporting VET in Schools.

As the report highlights, major responsibilities of ACACA agencies, each of which requires the commitment of significant resources, come from two sources - national agreements and State and Territory requirements. They are responsibilities related to:

- providing AVETMISS compliant data for system level reporting;
- developing, maintaining and managing databases;
- providing data for national reporting purposes;
- archiving data;
- developing and revising curriculum and associated support materials;
- collaborating with school sector authorities and planning for professional development;

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- reporting VET qualifications and statements of attainment to unit of competency level; and
- negotiating articulated pathways for students from school to University and to TAFE.

The Standing Committee is asked to note the range and scope of activities undertaken by the Boards of Studies and the associated resource implications, as highlighted in the *Report on VET in Schools (2003)*, attached as Appendix A to this submission.

One common concern in relation to reporting relates to the lack of consistency across States in the application of nominal hours assigned to individual units of competency. Given that nominal hours are used as an index in providing status towards many of the senior secondary certificates around Australia, and that it is likely that nominal hours will play a role in national reporting for VET in Schools, national consistency must be agreed to and applied across States and Territories to the nominal hours assigned to individual units of competency.

2. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND OTHER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND THE RESULTING QUALIFICATIONS, AND THE PATTERN OF INDUSTRY ACCEPTANCE OF SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

All registered training organisations across Australia, including those schools that are RTOs, are required to meet the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and to deliver training in accordance with National Training Packages or accredited courses (if there is no Training Package available).

As pointed out in section 1, irrespective of the model or framework within which VET is delivered in school programs (eg stand-alone VET, embedded VET), VET in Schools programs are delivered and assessed within the same quality framework (AQTF) and to the requirements of the same Training Packages being used by other RTOs. It would therefore be inappropriate if the debate about quality of VET in Schools was to centre on the model/process of delivery.

It is ACACA's view that any debate about the quality of VET, irrespective of the RTO or the sector within which it is offered, should centre more appropriately around industry's level of acceptance of the AQTF as the overarching quality framework and around industry's level of acceptance of Training Packages and the requirements outlined within them. Examples to support this view are shown below.

Debates about institution-based VET viz a vis workplace delivery/assessment

It is ACACA's view that the debate about the quality of VET in Schools may in reality (although not necessarily correctly) be, at least in part, a debate about institutional-based VET viz a vis VET delivered either partially or wholly in the workplace. If industry believes workplace training/assessment is integral to the demonstration of competency, then it is ACACA's view that the relevant National Training Package should specify:

- the amount of workplace training/assessment that should occur; and
- those units of competency which should be delivered and/or assessed in the workplace.

For those units of competency which can be delivered in a simulated environment, advice should be included in Training Packages as to the nature of that simulated environment.

Debates about whether secondary students should be completing AQF Level III or higher qualifications while at school

An associated issue is the debate concerning whether or not secondary students should be completing VET above AQF level II. In many States and Territories, for example, secondary students now have the opportunity to complete a Certificate III in Information Technology. In other industries, however, there is considerable resistance to any VET in Schools programs extending beyond either AQF Level I or II. If schools as RTOs, or in partnership with RTOs, can demonstrate compliance with the AQTF and the Training Packages, then this should not be an issue.

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<u>Reported employer preferences in some industries eg Information Technology for</u> <u>'vendor qualifications' rather than qualifications arising from the IT Training Package</u>

One of the issues which has arisen in relation to the IT Training Package in particular is that industry at the local level in some States and Territories is saying that they prefer young people to have specific 'vendor qualifications' rather than a qualification arising from a Training Package. This matter needs to be addressed at a national level so that schools and other training providers who are being required to use Training Packages can have faith in the acceptance of these qualifications by industry.

Divergence of views and variable levels of acceptance of vocational programs within the same industry area/s in different States and Territories

There also appears to be a divergence of industry views, and therefore level of acceptance of vocational programs, in different States and Territories as to the level of VET that should be offered in specific industry areas in school VET programs. It is critical that there be national consistency in the qualifications that are targeted for delivery in schools and that what is deemed appropriate for delivery in one State or Territory applies equally to other States/Territories. Once again, this becomes a question of acceptance of the AQTF and the Training Packages as the benchmarks/principles for VET in Australia.

Notwithstanding the above, ACACA wishes to point out that the Boards of Studies in each State and Territory actively seek to meet the requirements and wishes of industry, not only through adhering to the AQTF and Training Package requirements, but also through involving industry representation in decisions concerning what VET can and should appropriately be incorporated into vocational education in schools programs. ACACA agencies would also welcome greater input/consultation when Training Packages are being revised, to ensure issues associated with VET in Schools are considered.

To reiterate, ACACA believes that the debate concerning quality of VET in Schools should more realistically be a debate about the level of acceptance by industry, as a whole, of aspects of the AQTF and of Training Packages, for these set the guidelines to which RTOs involved in VET in Schools programs are demonstrating compliance.

3. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NEW AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES

Remaining abreast of opportunities that can be provided for students in VET in Schools programs in new and emerging industries represents a challenge not only for ACACA agencies but also for industry.

Given the AQTF requirement that accredited VET be based on National Training Packages or accredited courses where no Training Package exists, and the likelihood that no Training Package will exist for a new and emerging industry, at least in the early stages of the industry's growth, it is difficult for VET in new and emerging industry areas to be introduced into accredited VET in Schools programs.

The website of the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, for example, provides advice about emerging and high growth industries which it currently lists as:

- biotechnology
- nanotechnology
- medical products
- pharmaceuticals
- space industry.

The nature of these industries, as examples of some emerging industries, suggests that they may have links to both some traditional academic senior secondary subjects while also providing some scope for VET in Schools programs, although most likely at AQF Level III.

These particular emerging industries have the potential to further expand opportunities for all students to study some VET while at school, in keeping with the *Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the* 21^{st} *Century*, which include:

• In terms of curriculum, students should have participated in programs of vocational learning during the compulsory years and have had access to VET programs as part of their senior secondary studies.

ACACA believes, however, that access to an up-to-date national resource which highlights new and emerging industries and associated possibilities for VET would be essential. Not only would it be useful in assisting with decisions about what VET can or should be included in the school curriculum, but would also support the work of careers advisors working with secondary students.

4. THE ACCESSIBILITY AND EFFECTIVENSS OF VOCATIONAL **EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS**

ACACA believes that VET in Schools programs have assisted in meeting the needs of a wide range of secondary students, including indigenous students.

In some contexts, accredited VET (generally accredited generic VET at AQF I) is being undertaken by students in the junior secondary years, with this VET representing one aspect of their curriculum package. This can provide students with invaluable underpinning skills, knowledge and experience which can assist them with the transition to higher level, industry-specific VET in the senior secondary years.

In addition, some States and Territories have VET in Schools programs that have been designed specifically to meet the needs of indigenous students including in some cases, students in the lower secondary years. The committee is directed to individual State/Territory submissions for specific details.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This submission, together with the two appendices, provides a snapshot of the significant activity undertaken by the Boards of Studies in each State/Territory in relation to accredited VET in Schools. While accredited VET has been the focus of this submission, the point has also been made that ACACA agencies also support a significant amount of activity in relation to students' general vocational learning.

For further information or clarification of any point made in this submission, please contact:

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APPENDIX A: EFFORT DOCUMENT (TO BE APPENDED LATER WHEN UPDATED)

APPENDIX B: VET DELIVERY, ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION IN EACH STATE/TERRITORY – A SNAPSHOT

State/Territory	VET delivery, assessment and certification
Queensland	 QSA is responsible for developing Category A and B subjects. Category B subjects embed VET qualifications and units of competency into the course of study with some VET embedded into Category A subjects. A system of school-based assessment is used to report student achievement with teachers making judgements about student performance based on evidence against a set of criteria and standards. Assessment tasks are developed by teachers which enable them to make judgements against criteria and competency standards. A level of achievement is awarded for the course of study and a competency result for the VET component. A subject result does not automatically credit a student with units of competency or modules. For stand-alone VET the RTO is responsible for assessment and provides a competency-based result only. Work placement is recommended but not mandatory unless stipulated in the curriculum document. A senior secondary certificate is issued if the minimum requirements set by QSA are met. The RTO is responsible for issuing VET qualifications of statements of attainment. VET statements of attainment and qualification gained through SAT arrangements are to be identified in this way on the senior certificate. QSA archive results and offer schools a service, for a fee, to
New South Wales	 print VET qualifications. BOS develops Industry Curriculum Frameworks in consultation with TAFE, school authorities, ITABs, employers
	 and unions. ICFs are drawn from TPs and align with TP qualifications to form courses of study. Each ICF outlines indicative course hours and includes mandatory work placement. VET being delivered within each ICF is stand-alone and consists of 120 to 240 hours courses with 60 and 120 hour extension courses available in some frameworks. Students can include a number of courses fro the same ICF within their suite of courses for the HSC.
	 HSC Board Endorsed Courses are available for industry areas not covered by frameworks; however these do not contribute to tertiary entrance; Successful completion of a HSC VET course will result in:

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State/Territory	VET delivery, assessment and certification
	- a competency-based qualification
	- HSC recognition
	- A mark for UAI calculation purposes for those
	students who elect to undertake the HSC
	examination available for each 240 hour VET
	framework course.
	BOS is responsible for archiving HSC VET data and print and
	issuing VET credentials (certificates and statements of
	attainment).
	HSC Record of Achievement includes VET documentation
	and Performance Bands for those students who elect to
	undertake the HSC examination.
	• VET courses contribute to HSC requirements. A VET unit
	equates to approx 60 indicative hours for HSC unit credit
	purposes. A minimum of 120 hours is required before units
	can contribute towards the HSC.
ACT	• VET in Schools is all TP based and delivered embedded in
	senior secondary curriculum when delivered by the school, as
	RTO or as stand-alone when delivered by an external RTO.
	• 3 forms of assessment in school courses
	- Competency-based
	- Criterion referenced assessment (Board accredited
	courses)
	- Normative assessment (tertiary recognized subjects
	embedding VET). • Teachers conduct assessment through liaison with workplace
	 Teachers conduct assessment through liaison with workplace trainers.
	 Secondary teachers assessing VET must meet the
	requirements of the relevant TP and standard 7 of the AQTF.
	 Training record book records on and off job learning
	outcomes.
	 Structured Workplace Learning is incorporated in some
	vocational courses; however, is not mandatory for all courses,
	and may contribute towards the completion of ACT Year 12
	Certificate, depending on TP and the local industry
	representative involved in the accreditation process.
	BSSS issue the ACT year 12 Certificate, the VET certificate
	(in partnership with the school as an RTO) for full or partial
	completion of a qualification.
	 ACT Year 12 Certificate records all accredited courses.
	Vocational courses undertaken as part of an approved study
	program and contain TP qualifications also contribute to the
	certificate.
	Some VET courses contribute to the Tertiary Entrance
	Statement which is also issued by the BSSS.
Victoria	 Recognised VET in the VCE programs contain modules or
	units of competence deemed to be equivalent to VCE units and
	therefore contribute towards the successful completion of the
	VCE with the unit value determined by the requirements of the
	training program.
	• VET units may contribute up to half (8 of 16 units) of the

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State/Territory	VET delivery, assessment and certification
-,	minimum qualification requirement for VCE.
	 Schools must enroll students in modules/units of competence
	with the VCAA and record their results along with enrolment
	of students and reporting of results to the training sector.
	 Students can have their coursework tasks for VET
	qualifications scored according to criteria developed by the
	VCAA. The study score is derived from the coursework (66%)
	and an examination (34%) based on the underlying skills and
	knowledge for the units of competence. The examination is set
	by the VCAA.
	 All VCE VET programs with a unit 3-4 recognition contribute
	to the Student's tertiary entrance rank (ENTER).
	Programs with a study score can count directly as part of the
	student's 'best four' subjects. Those at units 3-4 level without
	a score contribute to the 10% increments for fifth or sixth
	subject for the calculation of the ENTER.
	 Assessment of VET within VCEVET programs leads to a
	VET qualification or statement of attainment as well as
	contributing to the VCE.
	 Work placement is strongly recommended but is only
	mandatory if stipulated in the curriculum document relevant to
	the VET qualification.
	• VCAA issue the VCE, VCE Statement of Results with all
	units in the VCE including VET and the VET in the VCE
	Statement of Results which identifies the VET Qualification,
	 modules or units of competence attained in the industry area. VET qualification is issued by the RTO.
Tasmania	 VET qualification is issued by the RTO. Schools are encouraged to deliver all VET as stand-alone
1 asmanna	programs.
	 Schools can embed VET in Secondary Assessment Board
	syllabuses (not a Board preferred option).
	 The Vocational Placement Syllabus is the one remaining
	Board syllabus which specifically relates to VET and used to
	facilitate work placement.
	 Workplace training is mandatory and undertake 240 hours on-
	the-job training.
	• Assessment of VET in Schools is undertaken by the school as
	the RTO or under partnership arrangements with another
	RTO.
	 Students logbooks are completed.
	 No completion requirements for the senior secondary
	certificate with all recognized and accredited components of
	the senior secondary curricula successfully completed,
	recorded on the TCE including VET outcomes (modules/units
	of competency).
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	• VET qualifications and statements of attainment are issued by
	• VET qualifications and statements of attainment are issued by the TASSAB on behalf of school RTOs.
	 VET qualifications and statements of attainment are issued by the TASSAB on behalf of school RTOs. TASSAB under contract from schools provides qualifications
2	 VET qualifications and statements of attainment are issued by the TASSAB on behalf of school RTOs. TASSAB under contract from schools provides qualifications issuing, data storage and archiving services for schools.
South Australia	 VET qualifications and statements of attainment are issued by the TASSAB on behalf of school RTOs. TASSAB under contract from schools provides qualifications

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State/Territory	VET delivery, assessment and certification
	towards the SACE in three ways:
	1. VET embedded within SSABSA accredited subjects —
	i.e. VET outcomes related to endorsed national
	competency standards are embedded and assessed within
	subjects;
	 VET recognized as SACE units — i.e. VET outcomes related to endorsed national competency standards are recognized towards completion of the SACE (stand alone VET); Students will be credited up to eight SACE units, or a third of the SACE qualification, can be achieved in this way. VET approved as SSABSA subjects — i.e. Students will be credited with a SACE unit by SSABSA (reported on the SACE) and will receive a statement of attainment issued by an RTO. Work placement is required if mandated by the curriculum documentation for the relevant VET qualification or Training
	Package.
	 SSABSA issues the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), a Record of Achievement, and a Statement of Results. SSABSA issues a list of the VET units of competency that a student has undertaken if requested by the student. The RTO issues the VET qualifications and Statements of
	Attainment.
	 All SSABSA Stage 2 (Year 12) subjects, that produce a score out of 20, contribute either indirectly or directly towards the calculation of the Tertiary Entrance Rank. Some Stage 2 subjects allow for considerable number of units of competency to be embedded within them. Two examples are Vocational Studies and Agricultural and Horticultural Studies. For these subjects, the VET can be said to contribute indirectly towards the calculation of the TER. Thirteen SSABSA-VET subjects, e.g. Hospitality (VET), Seafood (VET), and Metals and Engineering (VET), are selections of units of competency from the relevant training packages. One of the subjects can count towards the calculation of a student's university aggregate, and therefore, contributes directly towards the TER.
Western Australia	 Schools with Registered Training Provider status will be able to deliver VET but cannot work in partnership or auspicing arrangements with non-registered schools. VET in Schools is either embedded in WA Curriculum Council accredited subjects (66%) or delivered as stand-alone (34%). Embedding decisions are made at school level. This may include embedding in subjects scored for university admission.
	 VET assessment tasks aim to minimize duplication by producing a criteria-based result and a competency-based result. Stand-alone VET is recognized as subject equivalent for WACE purpose. The maximum credit allowed for stand-alone VET is four full-year subjects ie 40% of WACE completion requirement.
	 Work placement is not mandatory but is a requirement for

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State/Territory	VET delivery, assessment and certification
	 funding. Work placement contributes towards completion of the WACE through Structured Workplace Learning subjects with maximum credit of two full-year subjects ie 20% of WACE completion requirements. Structured Workplace Learning is based on CC accredited skills lists. Schools offering VET as Registered Training Providers are required to have an industry representative in each industry area of scope who can be contacted by the CC to monitor the schools progress. Student record books and assessor records books are to be maintained as evidence. The Curriculum Council issues VET qualifications, VET Statements of attainment for schools that are Registered Training providers and includes on the WACE Statement of Results. RTOs in partnership with schools are responsible for issuing the VET qualification and VET statement of attainment while the Curriculum Council records achievement of competencies on the WACE Statement of Results. VET achievement is currently not scored directly for university admission but will be included in new courses of study.
Northern Territory	 NT offer the SSABSA Stage 1 & 2 subjects. Assessment instruments could be competency based in where VET is embedded in curriculum, assessment can also yield criteria based results. Assessment is conducted by the school as the RTO. Work placement is not mandatory unless stipulated. 120 hours of Work Placement is strongly recommended with 100 hours of work placement granted status of 1 NTCE unit. VET is packaged in 50 nominal hour units (off job) equaling 1 unit of credit towards the NTCE. NTCE requires successful completion of a minimum of 22 units of study – VET may contribute up to 12 and are recorded on the NT Certificate of Education Record of Achievement. VET qualifications are issued by the school as RTO (CEO issue qualifications for its schools). VET does not contribute to the TER.