



Feedback on the Industry Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work for the Education IRC.

The Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback in the ISFPSW produced by the SSO in consultation with the Education IRC.

ACAL has a wide membership which includes many practitioners who hold Training and Assessment (TAE) qualifications in addition to specialised Literacy and Numeracy education qualifications. The community of educators who work within the LLN field are conscious of a landscape that is constantly changing and evolving. It is important that changes are underpinned by research informs such change. Careful planning and an eye to future implications will be essential in the work that is done with the TAE.

The ACAL committee have looked particularly at some of the issues around the Foundation Skills Training Package (FSK). The plan needs a more substantial analysis of the issues impacting on the Foundation Skills Training Package. Dealing with this critical skill area in a brief Appendix does not send the right signal about the importance of foundation skills. The three week consultation period extended through term breaks in many parts of Australia, limiting the input for this draft ISFPSW. ACAL would welcome the opportunity to provide further clarification and advice regarding the issues apparent with the Appendix relating to the FSK.

Specific concerns within the document are outlined below

Response to page 42:

1. ACAL agree with the statement 'The foundation skills of Australian adults still need improvement'. This is best addressed through a range of course options that provide robust learning opportunities, in addition to FSK TP, which is useful for assisting those requiring additional support with their vocational studies. Sufficient hours and repeated opportunities to engage need to be offered, as evidenced by Australian and international research (see Reder, S. (2012). [The Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning: Challenging Assumptions](#). Montreal, QC: The Centre for Literacy. (Research Brief). 1-6.).

2. In response to the statement 'There has been poor uptake of the Package', ACAL believe the uptake reflects the restrictions imposed by the training package model, including the hours that do not allow for adequate skills development (i.e. teaching, followed by repeated practice over time to enable skills consolidation), and the inability to repeat a unit in a different context when competency is achieved. For example if a learner completes FSKWRT05 in a childcare context but changes career, it may need to be redone to align to the new vocational context e.g. hospitality.

3. ACAL strongly disagrees with the proposal to absorb accredited courses into the FSK training package as they reach reaccreditation dates because:

a) The FSK training package should remain focused on vocational support in order to retain its rigour. The units should be rewritten to strengthen the outcomes and provide a viable means of supporting work-focused learners.

b) Accredited courses should remain, as they provide a variety of learning opportunities that contribute to a robust field.

c) The legal implications of absorbing accredited courses is unclear, particularly given commercial agreements, licensing and established industry pathways that are linked to many accredited courses. Rather than pursue this course of action, ACAL advises PwC as the SSO working with the IRC to focus on strengthening the FSK to better serve its original purpose - which is to provide a useful mechanism for supporting vocational students who require literacy and numeracy development.

d) ACAL questions the link made between FSK and accredited courses. In many cases, accredited course developers have been forced to include FSK units, even where these are not meeting the intention of the course. For example, ASQA and PwC map units because they are broadly literacy units, without recognizing a work-focused literacy unit is significantly different to a socially, culturally or personally focused literacy unit. The link between FSK and accredited courses is tenuous at best.

e) Accredited courses contain a range of units that cannot be delivered by trainers and assessors with **only** a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, as required by the FSK. For example, some accredited units require unique cultural understanding, qualifications in disability support, high level English language teaching qualifications, and STEM qualifications. Absorbing accredited courses into the training package will complicate the package and make it less usable.

f) Currently, units from other training packages and accredited courses are able to be utilised as electives within FSK delivery. This option allows customisation for particular learner cohorts to meet their needs and the ability to do this should remain.