

FOUNDATION SKILLS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Scoping a foundation skills professional standards
framework

Consultation Paper

August 2013

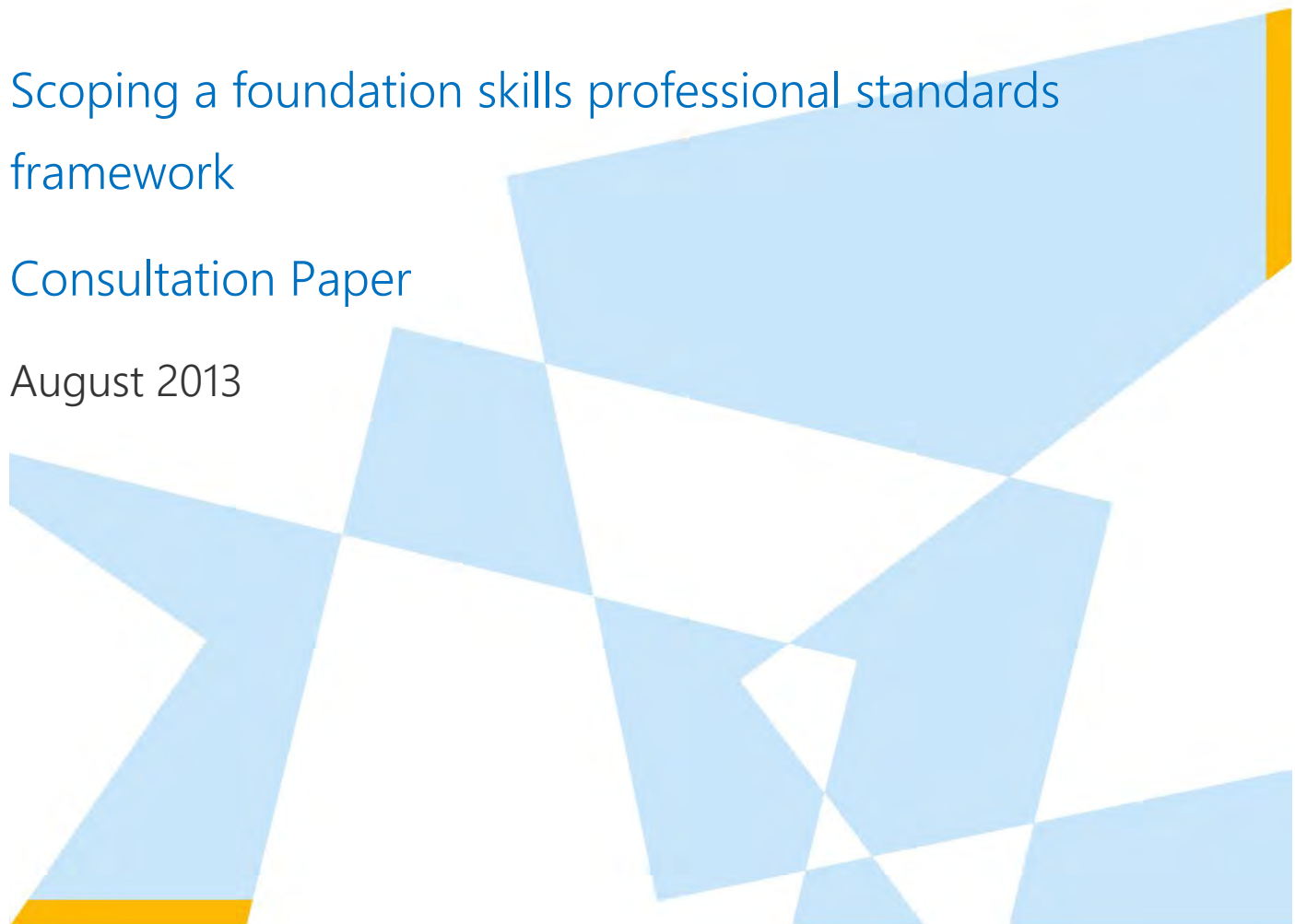


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The Foundation Skills Workforce Development (FSWD) project is a joint initiative of Commonwealth and State and Territory governments to support the objectives of the National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults.

The Scoping of a Foundation Skills Professional Standards Framework is one of the packages of integrated actions of the FSWD project to build the capacity of the education and training workforces to deliver foundation skills.

1. About this project

Through the National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults, Australian governments have committed to explore options for developing professional standards for foundation skills practitioners to strengthen and diversify the identity of the foundation skills field.

To be meaningful and effective, professional standards should be determined by the members of the profession, rather than mandated by an external authority. The aim of this scoping project is therefore to facilitate discussion among individuals and organisations with a commitment to raising the knowledge and skills base of practitioners involved in building the foundation skills of Australian adults.

In the absence of agreed definitions for the terms *foundation skills practitioner* and *foundation skills specialist*, decisions on what constitutes specialist expertise are currently being made by policy makers, program managers and regulators on a case-by-case basis. Appendix A provides a number of examples.

This project provides a starting point for the field itself to define professional standards that will guide decision-makers in future, enabling greater quality and consistency in the implementation of education and training policies and programs. Through the scoping process individuals and organisations operating in the foundation skills space will have the opportunity to define the scope and boundaries of the field and identify options for the establishment of professional standards. The benefits of doing so may include:

- clarifying what foundation skills practitioners need to know, understand and be able to do
- creating professional development structures to support the induction and development of the foundation skills workforce
- establishing benchmarks and common language that can be used to communicate about the foundation skills workforce and advance the status and standing of the profession.

1.1 Consultation process

Discussion points throughout this paper seek to prompt thinking about the nature of the foundation skills field and the attributes of those working within it. The paper will be used to initiate discussion within and between the diverse groups of providers, practitioners and specialists with an interest in foundation skills.

Peak practitioner bodies, professional associations and networks can play a critical role in this process by raising their constituents' awareness of the consultation process, encouraging engagement with the questions in the paper and developing collective responses to the discussion points. The project team will conduct targeted consultations with peak practitioner bodies and other stakeholder groups between August and October 2013. Broader public discussions will also be initiated through professional development workshops and events conducted for the FSWD project.

Written responses to the paper are encouraged from interested individuals, groups and organisations. It is not necessary to respond individually to every question in the paper. The questions are provided primarily as a basis to prompt thinking and discussion. A consultation kit has been developed to support independent group discussion and input into the consultation process.

Responses to the consultation paper should be submitted to the FSWD Project Team: FSWD@tafesa.edu.au by 11th October 2013.

Findings and recommendations from the consultation process will be reported to the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education in December 2013.

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2. Introduction

The recent Australian focus on ‘foundation skills’ beyond established notions of language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) has, perhaps inadvertently, created a new field of education and training practitioners that is related to, but not necessarily the same as the established LLN field.

The emergence of the terms *foundation skills specialist* and *foundation skills practitioner* has been driven by a number of policy and product developments including:

- development and implementation of the FSK Foundation Skills Training Package
- new Standards for Training Package incorporating information on foundation skills in each unit of competency
- planned future inclusion of a core LLN unit in the Certificate IV in Training and Education
- introduction of a Skill Set for Addressing Foundation Skills in Vocational Practice.

Although the drivers listed above apply specifically to VET sector delivery, the National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults has prioritised foundation skills development and workforce capability building across all adult learning environments.

Increasingly education and training providers, program managers, policy makers, regulators and funding bodies need to identify and use the skills of foundation skills specialists and foundation skills practitioners – but this is not currently possible with any degree of consistency or shared understanding about what is meant by these terms.

3. The foundation skills field

The National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults defines foundation skills as follows:

English language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) – listening, speaking, reading, writing, digital literacy and use of mathematical ideas; and employability skills, such as collaboration, problem solving, self-management, learning and information and communication technology (ICT) skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

Foundation skills development includes both skills acquisition and the critical application of these skills in multiple environments for multiple purposes. Foundation skills are fundamental to participation in the workplace, the community and in adult education and training.¹

Thus, a foundation skills specialist may be expected to have expertise in the acquisition and critical application of language, literacy and numeracy *and* employability skills in a variety of contexts. A foundation skills specialist could perhaps be considered an LLN specialist who also has knowledge and understanding of LLN in relation to employability skills and employment contexts. How an LLN specialist gains and applies this additional knowledge may vary depending on the learner groups they work with and the contexts within which they practice.

As in all professions, the development of specialist knowledge and skills is likely to be achieved through a combination of qualifications, experience and continued

¹ SCOTese, 2012 National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults, p 2.

professional development. A professional standards framework can be a mechanism to articulate the necessary attributes of a specialist in the foundation skills field.

3.1 Defining the field

Defining the adult 'foundation skills' workforce is not straightforward. The continual re-labelling of generic skills has induced a tendency to simply apply new terms to existing frameworks and structures – resulting in assumptions such as: LLN practitioner = foundation skills practitioner.

By starting afresh with the notion of foundation skills as a new field within education and training it should be possible to consider the nature and boundaries of the new field, and also how existing workforce groups relate to it.

Adult education and training delivery contexts draw on a diverse range of practitioners with varying skill specialisations applied in many different contexts. It is likely that some of these practitioners can be described as foundation skills specialists. Establishing clear criteria for identifying foundation skills specialists will allow the purchasers of services to make informed decisions about the quality and suitability of practitioners. It will also be possible to identify further development needs for individuals wanting to take on this professional identity.

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Diagram 1: Possible extent of the foundation skills workforce



Diagram 1 is a rough sketch of the possible extent of the foundation skills workforce. It is created as a starting point for talking about the diverse environments for foundation skills delivery. Currently it depicts seven domains in which the development of foundation skills may take place:

- Settlement
- Community
- Indigenous
- VET in Schools
- VET
- Workplace
- Employment.

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Within these domains, which may overlap, a number of delivery programs have been identified – SEE, WELL, AMEP, vocational preparation and learner support.

The circles within the diagram have been labelled associate, practitioner and specialist as an attempt to reflect the fact that the education and training workforce includes individuals with only a peripheral or secondary interest in foundation skills (associate), individuals who deliver or assess foundation skills in specific contexts or programs (practitioners) and individuals who are able to provide specialist advice on foundation skills in many contexts (specialists). These labels have been included for discussion purposes and should not be considered as fixed or pre-determined.

Within and across the domains of the diagram it is possible to list specific job roles that might be described as being at 'associate', 'practitioner' or 'specialist' level, depending on the extent of expertise in foundation skills. Examples of job roles that may be part of the foundation skills workforce include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Access education teachers
- Case managers
- Career advisors
- Community Support workers
- Employment service providers
- English as an additional language or dialect teacher
- HR/training managers
- Language, literacy and numeracy practitioners
- TESOL Practitioners
- Volunteer tutors
- Vocational Trainers
- WELL practitioners

These occupational groups have vastly different operating environments. Some are governed by specific human resource requirements linked to program guidelines or quality frameworks, for others the knowledge and skill requirements are less defined. Many of these groups have specialist expertise in aspects of LLN skill development,

but it is not clear whether they also can be said to have the skills and experience to also declare themselves to be 'foundation skills specialists'.

Discussion point 1: *Scoping the foundation skills field*

- Where are the boundaries of the foundation skills field?
- Does the field include only occupations that are solely focussed on foundation skills development, or should it include the notion of 'associated' job roles that have some responsibility for, or interest in, foundation skills development?
- Are there domains, programs or occupations that are missing from diagram 1 – or some that should be excluded?
- Is there a need to define and agree upon what is meant by a foundation skills practitioner?

4. Professional standards

Professional standards can encompass mechanisms that a profession uses to²:

- Define the profession, its membership and its services
- Recognise and specify the diverse skills and knowledge of practitioners within the profession
- Guide practitioners into the profession
- Provide a basis for designing practitioner training
- Provide quality assurance to the public and other stakeholders in the profession
- Create an agreed terminology for the profession.

To achieve these ends, professional standards may include a number of structures, procedures or systems, such as: qualification frameworks, codes of ethics, membership arrangements, continuing professional development requirements, registration conditions and quality assurance processes. A professional association,

² Adapted from [Canadian] National Steering Committee for Career Development Guidelines and Standards, 2004.

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or similar body, is generally needed to take responsibility for implementing and maintaining these mechanisms.

Practitioners in the foundation skills space are currently represented by a variety of professional associations and networks. The diversity of practitioner groups makes it unlikely that an existing professional association could serve the needs of the whole foundation skills field. In other professions, such as career development and engineering³, member associations and networks have collaborated to form a new representative body with responsibility for implementing professional standards.

A body responsible for implementing professional standards may impose minimum standards for membership and define membership conditions at different levels, e.g. associate or full member status. It may also oversee a continuing professional development scheme, endorsing PD activity that contributes to professional standing and recording participation by members.

A single body with oversight of professional standards can also enhance collegiality within the profession to achieve agreed goals, provide a single point of reference for liaison with stakeholders and take a leadership role in safeguarding professional quality and identity.

Discussion point 2: Considering the development of a professional standards framework

- Should a professional standards framework focus only on foundation skills education specialists or should it also include related occupations where a level of knowledge and skills in foundation skills is an addition to the required core skills and capabilities?

³ Career Industry Council of Australia, Australian Engineers.

- How might the establishment of a professional standards framework strengthen the identity of the foundation skills field and support foundation skills practitioners in their professional practice?
- How can the diversity of the foundation skills field be accommodated in a professional standards framework?
- What components of a professional standards framework will be critical for ensuring that it is useful and sustainable?
- What management mechanisms would need to be put in place to implement and maintain a professional standards framework for the foundation skills field?
- What role could existing membership organisations play in the implementation and maintenance of a professional standards framework?

4.1 Required knowledge and skills

Professional standards can be used to describe minimum, expected or required levels of knowledge and skills. These may be described across a range of domains or specialisations and/or across increasing levels of expertise. Complex matrices of essential and optional knowledge and skills may be identified to accommodate a diversity of specialist applications or contexts.

The VET Practitioner Capability Framework developed by Innovation and Business Skills Australia (refer to Appendix C) provides an example of a descriptive and detailed approach to documenting required knowledge and skills.

Frameworks articulating knowledge and skills requirements can be used as the basis for the development of qualifications and professional development options that specifically target identified workforce needs. Existing qualifications may also be mapped to a knowledge and skills framework to identify minimum qualification standards and areas where qualification holders may need to undertake further development.

Discussion point 3: Identifying knowledge and skills for the foundation skills field

- Could a matrix or framework of knowledge and skills be developed to describe the range of capabilities needed in the foundation skills field?
- Are some areas of knowledge and skills essential for everyone in the field?
- Are there identifiable specialisations that could usefully be described in a matrix or framework?
- Could any or all of these skills be encapsulated within an existing framework such as the VET Capability Framework? (see Appendix C)

4.2 Qualifications

Qualifications can be used to define minimum entry requirements for a profession and to indicate more advanced knowledge and skills requirements. Some government funded programs and accredited courses use qualifications to establish delivery requirements, but this has been a fraught area for many LLN programs because there is no one single qualification that defines specialist expertise. Although they are often used as shorthand to describe what a person knows and can do, qualifications are only one component of professional expertise and need to be considered in combination with on-the-job experience and ongoing professional development.

Currently there is a number of higher education and VET based qualifications at a range of AQF levels that may be relevant to the needs of the foundation skills field. The fact that all of these qualifications focus on LLN, rather than foundation skills, further highlights the fact that qualifications alone cannot describe a foundation skills specialist.

Both current and historic qualifications need to be considered in identifying the requirements of the foundation skills fields, because many of the qualifications held by existing practitioners are no longer offered.

Discussion point 4: Using qualifications to describe professional requirements

- How do historic and currently available qualifications in LLN relate to the needs of foundation skills specialists?
- Do any qualifications fully capture the knowledge and skills required by foundation skills specialists?
- Are there any critical skills and capabilities required by the foundation skills workforce that are not covered by any existing formal qualifications?

4.3 Experience

It must be acknowledged that on-the-job experience is essential for developing the knowledge and skills needed in the foundation skills field. This is in part because qualifications relevant to the field focus on LLN, rather than on more recent notions of foundation skills. More importantly, some current thinking on educator development emphasises the importance of linking on-the-job learning with formal professional development and the acquisition of initial and higher level qualifications. This view has been enshrined in Australian Education Union policy requiring that TAFE teaching qualifications be acquired on the job, during a teacher's employment.⁴

Within a professional standards framework it is possible to specify the nature and extent of on-the-job experience required for different roles or specialisations. It is also possible to identify models for acquiring on-the-job experience, such as internships, practicum requirements and mentoring schemes that are relevant to practitioners at various developmental phases of their careers.

Frameworks can be used to identify and delineate developmental stages for practitioners. This approach helps to indicate that qualifications alone do not define

⁴ *Pathways for VET educators*, Innovation and Business Skills Australia, 2011, p17

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a practitioner and that application, development and enhancement of knowledge and skills within a professional context is critical.

Examples include:

- The *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* outline what teachers should know and be able to do at four professional career stages: *Graduate*, *Proficient*, *Highly Accomplished* and *Lead*, thus recognising that a teacher will deepen and strengthen the application of their skill over time.
- The *VET Capability Framework* contains three distinct levels of experience that cover most practitioner roles in the sector and describe various levels of theoretical knowledge, practical experience and leadership capability.
- The *Australian Council of TESOL Associations' Professional Standards* describe a single level of *Accomplished* practitioner, with the tacit implication that all TESOL practitioners seek to reach this level.

Discussion point 5: *Defining on-the-job requirements*

- Could levels be used to describe developmental stages of foundation skills expertise and experience?
- How much on-the-job experience is needed by foundation skills practitioners working in various roles or contexts?
- Are there, or should there be, established mechanisms for gaining the necessary on-the-job experience?
- Should formal or consistent methods for documenting on-the-job experience be developed?

4.4 Professional development

Continuing professional development is an important component of professional standards in many fields due to its role in maintaining the currency of professional knowledge and skills. Engagement in professional development activities can be encouraged and sustained when it becomes part of building a professional identity and is tied to continued recognition, accreditation or membership.

When skills and knowledge frameworks have been established and requirements for various specialisations have been identified, professional development options can be developed to target the specific needs of the workforce. Professional development options can enable practitioners to build their capability and level of expertise in one area, or to diversify into other specialist areas.

Points systems, individual portfolios and/or annual professional development requirements can be established as part of a professional standards framework and linked to registration or membership conditions.

In Australia the competency based system allows for the formal accrual and recognition of skills and knowledge against units of competency. Both formal and informal professional development are offered through a range of sources including government agencies, commercial organisations, training providers, professional associations and networks. However, the impact of these capability building activities on the professional knowledge and skills of practitioners is not always captured or formalised. A professional development passport, monitored against an agreed points system as part of a professional standards framework, would allow professional development activity to count toward professional capability building or currency.

Discussion point 6: Creating a system for continuing professional development

- Could a system for continuing professional development (CPD) be created that will meet the needs of the foundation skills field?
- How can a highly casualised workforce be accommodated in a CPD system?
- Who would take responsibility for managing a CPD system?
- Should there be one system, or many, to accommodate the diversity of the field?

4.5 Specialisation

The development of expertise in particular skill areas or delivery contexts is a feature of the LLN field and is likely to also be the case for the foundation skills field. The collective term 'LLN teachers' hides the fact that most of these teachers specialise both in their pedagogical underpinning skills and knowledge, and in the delivery contexts in which they practice.

Specialisations arise out of skills and knowledge acquired in initial credentialing, on-the-job experience, the context of delivery and through targeted professional development across a career trajectory. A number of specialisations within the LLN field have particular significance for the skills and knowledge required by practitioners in the foundation skills field, examples include:

- Numeracy – recent research indicates that expertise in the 'N' of LLN is not as well developed as it needs to be to meet the needs of integrated numeracy delivery in VET and workplace contexts, and that further capability building is needed in this area.
- Teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) – past emphasis on TESOL practice has been in settlement or stand-alone language acquisition classroom practice, however all adult education and training involves a proportion of learners from non-English speaking backgrounds. Whilst TESOL is an area of specialisation it is also critical that all foundation skills practitioners are able to deliver to diverse learner groups.
- Provision of learner support – learner support relies on practitioners who can seamlessly apply their teaching techniques within a range of vocational contexts whilst remaining learner-centred. The skills developed in this specialisation are also essential for the implementation of integrated approaches to the delivery of foundation skills within vocational programs.
- Low level literacy – research indicates that those teachers and trainers who mainly teach foundational skills to students who have experienced high levels of educational and social disadvantage will need to be among the most skilled⁵. This reality is at odds with the perceptions of many in the broader community.

⁵ Wheelahan, L & Moodie, G (2010) The quality of teaching in VET: Final report and recommendations, Australian College of Educators, p15.

The establishment of professional standards may build understanding of the knowledge and skills required of this specialisation.

- Work-based learning – this specialisation requires the capacity to recognise the drivers for training from an industry or employer perspective, whilst developing teaching methodologies that a customised to learners' needs. As noted above, the numeracy demands of the workplace can be provide challenges for LLN practitioners.

Discussion point 7: *Establishing requirements for specialist areas*

- Can areas of specialisation be clearly identified within the foundation skills field?
- What is the best way to describe the unique knowledge and skills requirements of specialist areas?
- Does there need to be a distinction between specialists who operate across delivery contexts (e.g. numeracy specialists, NESB specialists) and those who specialise in a particular delivery context (e.g. WELL practitioners)?

4.6 Principles or code of ethics

A code of ethics governs the activities of each profession. Such codes require behaviour and practice beyond the personal moral obligations of an individual. They define and demand high standards of behaviour and respect of services provided to the public and in dealing with professional colleagues. Further, these codes are enforced by the profession and are acknowledged by the community.⁶

In some professions, professional standards encompass general principles that outline ethical practice and expectations for people practicing in the field. An

⁶ Professions Australia, 2004 <www.professions.com.au/defineprofession>

individual seeking to claim the benefits of professional membership agrees to comply with/'signs up to' the profession's code of ethics.

Whilst some ethical issues such as those dealing with equal opportunity, work health safety and grievance procedures are covered within the quality standards for registered training organisations that are already part of the regulation of the Australian VET system, it may be possible to establish a code of ethics, or similar for the foundation skills field that complements this established legislation and regulation without duplicating or contradicting it.

Much of what would be likely to go into such a code would serve as a practical guide for professional behaviour and practice for foundation skill practitioners and provide greater clarity for registered training organisations about what constitutes best practice in foundation skills assessment and delivery. By outlining the agreed set of qualifications, agreed ways of acknowledging specialisation and experience and the individual's commitment to their continued professional development and ethical behaviours; the code would serve to improve regulation of foundation skills in the Australian VET system and broader adult learning environments.

Appendix E provides an example of a Code of Ethics from the Career Industry Council of Australia.

Discussion point 8: Determining the need for a code of practice

- Are there any ethical operating principles for the foundation skills field that are not already established in the broader education and training system?
- What does this mean for practitioners operating outside of accredited VET delivery?

5. Next steps

This consultation paper to scope the development of a national foundation skills professional standards framework is set against a background of unprecedented interest in raising the level of foundation skills of the Australian population, and building the capacity of the education and training workforce to deliver these skills.

Shifts in terminology require new thinking about the skills and knowledge that define foundation skills practitioners. The LLN field has been a potent force within the Australian education and training system and will remain so, but to achieve the targets identified in the National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults there is a need to strengthen the identity of the foundation skills field.

Many diverse organisations and individuals will need to work together to agree on what constitutes professionalism in this new field. The challenge is to set the bar at a level that does not compromise quality but allows sufficient support for diverse practitioners to plot a course to comply with the definition of 'specialist foundation skills practitioner'.

6. Appendices

A: Examples of practitioner capability requirements

Advice on who can deliver and assess from the FSK Foundation Skills Training Package⁷

RTOs are responsible for ensuring training and assessment is conducted by appropriately qualified practitioners and complies with the relevant requirements in the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations or AQTF 2010.

In some cases RTOs may need to use team-based or collaborative approaches to bring together all the necessary skills and knowledge to train and assess the full range of skills within a program of vocational training.

Although the FSK Foundation Skills Training Package does not relate to a particular industry, users are advised that the requirement 4.4 (c) of the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations (AQTF 2010 Essential Standards for RTOs 1.4 (c)) is relevant to trainer and assessor requirements for this training package. Trainers and assessors working with the FSK Foundation Skills Training Package are required to:

- demonstrate current industry skills directly relevant to the training/assessment being undertaken.

Trainers and assessors delivering and assessing units and qualifications from the FSK Foundation Skills Training Package will require recognised expertise in the delivery and assessment of foundation skills. This expertise will vary according to the training context and the needs of the learners.

For example, many learners who undertake qualifications from the FSK Foundation Skills Training Package will need considerable support from LLN specialists with the pedagogical knowledge and experience to address and overcome severe barriers to

⁷ Innovation and Business Skills Australia, Foundation Skills Training Package Implementation Guide, 2013

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learning. However, some learners accessing individual units or skill sets from the FSK Foundation Skills Training Package may require only modelling of good practice in foundation skills relevant to their vocational context and opportunities to practise and build confidence. Most groups of learners will be somewhere in between these two extremes and will be using the FSK Foundation Skills Training Package to develop or enhance vocationally relevant foundation skills in one or more areas of:

- learning
- reading
- writing
- oral communication
- numeracy
- digital technology.

RTOs will need to determine the most appropriate delivery approach (or combination of approaches) for their target learners. IBSA's online resource provides examples of possible approaches – each of which includes shared roles for practitioners – including:

- delivery and assessment of foundation skills pathway qualifications by specialist LLN teachers in consultation with relevant industry specialists
- team teaching approaches to delivery and assessment of integrated vocational and foundation skills programs combining LLN specialist and vocational practitioner
- delivery of contextualised foundation skills within a vocational program by vocational practitioner with assistance from LLN specialist for pre-training assessment and program design.

In each case the vocational practitioner would be expected to have undertaken professional development or training in understanding and awareness of foundation skills, such as the skills and knowledge covered by the units TAELLN401 and TAELLN501.

WELL program trainer requirements⁸

As required of RTOs, trainers must adhere to the National Skills Standards Council (formerly the National Quality Council) policy regarding the training and assessment competencies of individuals delivering VET training. Refer to the AQTF Users' Guide to the Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration available at www.training.com.au.

NB: vocational competencies required in the NSSC policy are interpreted to include relevant LLN qualifications and experience delivering adult LLN training. Alternatively, extensive experience in the field may be considered on a case by case basis.

Assessor requirements for the Certificates in General Education for Adults (CGEA)⁹

In the context of the delivery and assessment of the Core Skills Reading, Writing units, relevant vocational competencies refers to demonstrable expertise in teaching literacy. This can include holding an AQF level 7 or above teaching Qualification with a relevant method. Where a teacher/assessor does not hold a formal relevant Qualification he/she would need to demonstrate relevant knowledge of the theory of literacy development and its application. This can include adult literacy pedagogy and the socio-cultural factors affecting literacy learning, including language as a social and cultural phenomenon and the importance of context.

In the context of the delivery and assessment of the Core Skills Numeracy and Mathematics units, relevant vocational competencies refer to demonstrable expertise in teaching numeracy. This can include holding an AQF level 7 or above teaching Qualification with a relevant method. Where a teacher/assessor does not hold a formal relevant Qualification they would need to demonstrate knowledge of

⁸ DIICSRTE, Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Program Guidelines, August 2013

⁹ DEECD, Victorian Training Guarantee, Literacy and Numeracy Support Implementation Guide, August 2013

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the theory of numeracy development and its application. This can include adult numeracy pedagogy and the importance of context.

B: Canada's Essential Skills practitioner competencies project

Canada's Essential Skills – a mix of traditional literacy and numeracy areas and broader employability skills – are the closest fit to the Australian notion of foundation skills and Canada faces the same need for a training labour market that can deliver these skills in an integrated way to adults.

Essential skills are defined as:

the foundation skills required to successfully participate in the Canadian labour market. They help people perform the tasks required by their occupation, provide people with a foundation for learning other skills, and enhance people's ability to innovate and adapt to workplace change.

A project to develop competencies for Canadian adult literacy practitioners has been completed but not yet released publicly. Within the call for tender documentation the qualities required of the adult literacy practitioner bear a strong resemblance to those that form the basis of skills and knowledge requirements of many of the IBSA units and qualifications designed for the LLN/foundation skills workforce:

- The quality of teaching/facilitating makes a significant difference to learners' literacy outcomes across all phases of learning.
- Working with adults is different than working with children (andragogy versus pedagogy), requiring different knowledge and skill sets in some areas.
- It is important that the existing knowledge and skills of adult learners is respected, valued and built upon and equally important that the content of the learning program is challenging and relevant to the learners' expectations.
- Adult literacy and essential skills professionals need to be able to monitor progress with the learner and adapt their training programs accordingly.
- There is a need for adult literacy and essential skills teachers/facilitators to develop balanced approaches to teaching/learning that take into account individual learning styles, the context of individual learning, and learning goals.
- This implies a broad understanding of different teaching strategies, the ability to practice in environments other than a classroom and to work with alternative forms of skills recognition such as prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) and competency-based accreditation.

C: VET Practitioner Capability Framework

This framework developed by Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA), describes the skills and behaviours that people will demonstrate if they are doing high quality work. It provides an over-arching list of the skills required in particular work settings or contexts. They are broad descriptions, against which specific skills, professional development activities, formal and informal learning can be mapped.

The Capability Framework has three levels of practitioner capability.

IBSA has undertaken this work to develop a framework to assist in professional development – RTOs need to show that they are continually developing the capabilities of their staff in both their VET and vocational skills.

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VET Practitioner Capability Framework – Domains

Teaching				
	learning theories	design	facilitation	evaluation
First Level Practitioner	Demonstrates awareness of basic educational theories; determines applicability of theories to the learning needs of individuals and groups	Contributes to development of resources and programs that generate authentic learning experiences; contributes to the design of flexible learning strategies	Uses strategies and skills to ensure learner engagement and achievement of learning outcomes; creates supportive learner inter-relationships; uses a range of technologies effectively	Contributes to program evaluation; seeks regular feedback to evaluate own performance and plan for improvements
Second Level Practitioner	Investigates a range of learning theories to expand and improve teaching repertoire for a range of learners	Designs learning programs that meet industry expectations and provide meaningful learning experiences	Develops and implements models for learner connectedness; demonstrates a range of facilitation strategies to respond to diverse learner groups and contexts; guides others in the use of alternative delivery methods	Evaluates program outcomes using established tools and techniques; modifies program design in response to evaluation outcomes
Third Level Practitioner	Reviews relevant theoretical frameworks about learning and teaching in VET and applies and models the use of theories in VET teaching practice	Provides leadership and recognised expertise in learning design, across varying contexts and a range of delivery methods	Applies and models a broad range of facilitation techniques; leads others to develop their facilitation approaches across a range of delivery contexts	Negotiates with clients and stakeholders to identify measures of success and evaluation strategy; develops and implements tools and techniques to evaluate program outcomes; reports on evaluation outcomes and recommends system improvements
Assessment				
	assessment theories	products	processes	validation
First Level Practitioner	Demonstrates understanding of the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence	Contributes to the development of assessment tools, or modifies existing ones, to suit client needs and specified context	Employs a range of methods to ensure validity and reliability in assessment decisions	Participates in assessment validation processes

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Second Level Practitioner	Uses contemporary assessment research and theory to inform and expand practice	Designs, develops and evaluates assessment tools for purposes including RPL and assessment of training outcomes; uses a variety of technologies to develop and implement the tools	Adapts assessment approaches as required for different contexts and candidates; reviews assessment processes and identifies improvements; provides assessment feedback to support continued learning	Actively contributes to assessment validation processes; uses validation outcomes to improve practice
Third Level Practitioner	Leads others to interpret and apply relevant theory to improve assessment practice; undertakes research to inform assessment practice	Designs and implements continuous improvement strategies to ensure assessment tools meet industry and system requirements	Consults with stakeholders to design holistic assessment approaches; leads quality assessment practices; explores opportunities for innovation and improvements in assessment processes	Coordinates industry validation; critically evaluates validation outcomes and implements improvements to assessment strategies
Industry and community collaboration				
	engagement	networks	vocational competence	workforce development
First Level Practitioner	Liaises with enterprises to ensure teaching and assessment reflects current industry practices	Participates in enterprise networks to enhance own knowledge and skills	Maintains vocational competency relevant to own subject area and works with others to maintain that competency; uses a range of methods to keep up-to-date with industry changes	Contextualises program content and adapts teaching practices to suit specified enterprise needs
Second Level Practitioner	Builds relationships with enterprises and stakeholders to ensure learning programs, and related assessment, meet the client's needs	Engages in networks to support sharing of vocational, and learning and assessment, knowledge and skills	Implements approaches to build vocational competence; leading to industry credibility	Designs training and other solutions to meet identified workforce development needs

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Third Level Practitioner	Negotiates with industry bodies and stakeholders to ensure that learning programs meet or exceed expectations and that teaching and assessment practices reflect current industry trends	Demonstrates leadership in professional networks and provides advice and guidance about industry developments and changes	Develops and implements approaches to build team vocational competence	Work with enterprises to design learning and development strategies that address strategic direction.
Systems and compliance				
	system standards	system stakeholders	products	processes
First Level Practitioner	Understands National VET Quality standards and relevant legislation and ensures compliance in own work practices	Develops own knowledge of key stakeholders such as state training authorities, industry skills councils, VET regulators and licensing bodies	Uses current training packages and accredited courses, and supporting tools and resources, to support training and assessment practices	Ensures work practices comply with organisational policies and procedures; maintains accurate and up-to-date records
Second Level Practitioner	Develops approaches to meet compliance requirements and continually improve practice	Monitors activities of VET system stakeholders and uses this knowledge in program design	Contextualises training packages and accredited courses to source and select best products to meet learner needs	Supports policy development and generates ideas for improvements
Third Level Practitioner	Ensures team compliance with National VET Quality standards, and relevant legislation and regulations	Builds sustainable relationships with key stakeholders to improve teaching and assessment practice and build practitioner capability	Provides leadership about training packages and accredited courses, and guides implementation	Reviews and creates policies to guide practice and ensure compliance; ensures team members keep up-to-date records of learner progress and outcomes

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VET Practitioner Capability Framework – Skill Areas

	Teamwork and Communication	Leadership	Ethics	Cultural competence	Innovation	Evidence based practice and research
First Level Practitioner	Adapts communication style to suit audience and context; builds constructive relationships with colleagues and generates ideas for improvements	Identifies own learning needs and obtains support for professional development;	Demonstrates ethical behaviour and regard for confidentiality	Interacts effectively with learners from a variety of cultures; respects and values difference; identifies LLN issues and seeks advice where required to meet learner needs	Contributes ideas to enhance and improve work practices	Accesses and utilises information and research sources about VET practice and the VET sector as appropriate to teaching level and industry area
Second Level Practitioner	Seeks professional development opportunities and assists team to identify and address their learning needs	Shares knowledge and experience with team; demonstrates self awareness; provides a positive role model for learners	Supports colleagues in ethical decision-making; respects confidences	Demonstrates awareness of cultural differences and develops strategies to ensure culturally appropriate teaching methods	Generates ideas to provide new and creative ways of working	Seeks out and critically analyses information and research sources about VET practice and the VET sector; undertakes role-appropriate research into own practice and within own environment
Third Level Practitioner	Mentors team to foster learner engagement, retention and success; communicates persuasive messages to a range of audiences	Focuses on achieving priorities and team goals; fosters structured approaches, including reflective practice, to develop team members' skills	Inspires trust and confidence; demonstrates values, attitudes and behaviours that command respect of colleagues and with learners	Models cross cultural understanding and encourages cultural competence in teaching team	Encourages staff to generate and share new and different approaches; advocates for change	Identifies issues that need further investigation, and works with others to carry out research beyond own immediate environment

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D: Australian Council of TESOL Associations – Standards for TESOL Practitioners

	Dispositions What do accomplished TESOL teachers need to 'be'? Accomplished TESOL teachers	Understandings What do accomplished TESOL teachers need to 'know'? Accomplished TESOL teachers	Skills What do accomplished TESOL teachers need to 'do'? Accomplished TESOL teachers
Orientation to education in a multicultural society	<p>espouse the values of cultural inclusivity, multiculturalism, multilingualism, reconciliation and anti-racism</p> <p>are informed by social and educational trends, stakeholder expectations and institutional priorities</p> <p>are sensitive to students' cultural and community experiences, including migration and colonisation, and the effects of these on personal and social development</p>	<p>identify the features and understand the implications of multi-cultural Australian society</p> <p>are familiar with and can critique existing provisions, policies, and curriculum and assessment frameworks</p> <p>understand how students' experiences, knowledge and prior learning shape their present learning and development</p>	<p>advocate for and create a positive environment for cultural diversity, inclusive practice and English language learning</p> <p>identify issues or concerns in current provisions and work collaboratively within the educational setting and wider community to address them</p> <p>respond to and incorporate students' experiences and aspirations by developing appropriate educational provisions</p>

FOUNDATION SKILLS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

	Dispositions What do accomplished TESOL teachers need to 'be'? Accomplished TESOL teachers	Understandings What do accomplished TESOL teachers need to 'know'? Accomplished TESOL teachers	Skills What do accomplished TESOL teachers need to 'do'? Accomplished TESOL teachers
Orientation to second language education	<p>appreciate the pivotal role of language and culture in learning, teaching and socialisation</p> <p>are informed by coherent theories of language and culture, and the acquisition of English as an additional language</p> <p>are sensitive to student learning needs and interests in relation to language and culture</p>	<p>know how language and culture function in spoken, written and multimodal texts</p> <p>understand the linguistic, cultural and contextual factors and processes involved in the development of English as an additional language</p> <p>understand the important relationship between content selection and students' needs and aspirations for meaning making</p>	<p>identify achievable outcomes for the development of English as an additional language relevant to socialisation and learning</p> <p>design courses and activities to teach and assess relevant features of the systems of language and culture, including their integration in diverse subject areas</p> <p>appropriately select and sequence language and culture content to provide for and critique meaning-making in diverse texts and contexts</p>
Orientation to TESOL practice	<p>commit to reflective practice and program evaluation that is responsive to students' cultural and linguistic history and environment</p> <p>value diverse and relevant methodologies, resources, technologies and classroom investigation</p>	<p>understand the complexity of the linguistic and cultural relationship between colleagues, students, teachers, community and curriculum</p> <p>know a range of teaching and assessment practices and resources, and can evaluate them in terms of the context</p>	<p>use learners, families, communities and the educational setting as resources for classroom activity</p> <p>select and implement teaching and assessment practices appropriate for the learners and educational setting</p> <p>scaffold students' learning and English language development through appropriate classroom</p>

FOUNDATION SKILLS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

	Dispositions What do accomplished TESOL teachers need to 'be'?	Understandings What do accomplished TESOL teachers need to 'know'?	Skills What do accomplished TESOL teachers need to 'do'?
	Accomplished TESOL teachers	Accomplished TESOL teachers	Accomplished TESOL teachers
	are sensitive to the opportunities and limitations of the particular learning and teaching environment, including students' English language proficiencies	know how to adapt teaching to respond to features of the learning environment	interaction, negotiation, teaching strategies, activities, materials and assessment

E: Code of Ethics from Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners¹⁰

3.3.1 Ethical principles for professional competency and conduct

Career development practitioners

- Obtain qualifications necessary to provide career development services, including those qualifications required to undertake specialised tasks or roles and/or work with specialised populations
- Conduct career development services in accordance with the Code of Ethics contained in the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners and also the Code of Ethics of the CICA member association to which they belong
- respect their professional competencies, training and experience accurately
- function within the boundaries of their training and experience
- refrain from consciously dictating to, judging or coercing client choices, values, lifestyles, plans or beliefs
- explain the content, purposes, potential benefits and results of tests and interventions in language that is easily understood by the person or persons for who it is intended
- monitor, maintain and enhance professional competencies
- seek and participate in continuing professional development (CPD) in order to remain current with innovations and trends in the contexts, processes and content of career development
- ensure that material contained in web-based programs, resource materials and career development programs is current and accurate
- conduct research and report findings using procedures that are consistent with the accepted ethical and scientific standards of educational, psychological and social research practices.

¹⁰ Excerpt from Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners: www.cica.org.au/uploads/cica_prof_standards_booklet.pdf

3.3.2 Ethical principles for career development practitioner – client relationships

3.3.2.a Equity and diversity

Career development practitioners

- respect the dignity of each person for whom career development services are rendered
- ensure that each individual's feelings and cultural customs are respected
- inform individuals, orally or in writing, of the purposes, goals, techniques, policies and ethical standards as appropriate to the service being provided
- accept the rights of the individual to make independent choices and to take responsibility for those choices and their consequences
- deal with each person fairly, equitably and without prejudice, respecting their values, beliefs and life experiences and those of their families and communities to which they belong
- avoid all form of discrimination
- ensure that the services provided are culturally appropriate and relevant to the individuals' needs, and valid and reliable concerning the information they provide
- take into consideration the career development stage that their clients are at, and their career/ life experiences
- use non-discriminatory, current and accurate information within whatever medium is used

3.3.2.b Confidentiality, disclose and informed consent

Career development practitioners

- maintain a current understanding of laws, policies and professional ethics that pertain to client rights
- inform individuals of the limits of confidentiality
- preserve confidentiality
- preserve the individual's right to privacy
- seek clients' expressed consent before disclosure of client information
- avoid or disclose conflicts of interest which compromise the best interests of their clients

3.3.2.c Scope of practice

Career development practitioners

- conduct career development services for which they are appropriately trained and currently qualified
- make appropriate referral when their own competency does not meet the individual's need or when their own competency does not meet the individual's need or when their professional assistance cannot be provided or continued
- contextualise career development theory and practice according to work setting, clientele and societal context

3.3.3 Ethical principles for professional relationships

Career development practitioners

- avoid conflicts of interest
- resolve conflict between professional ethical standards and directives or practices within the workplace through ethical decision-making and appropriate consultation
- advocate for and assist in the development of career development services that are ethically rendered and relevant to client needs in cooperation with policy-makers, organisations, administrative personnel and community agencies
- respect and acknowledge the contribution of other professionals
- cooperate with other professionals and/or colleagues according to the ethical practices and procedures relevant to the situation

3.3.4 Breaches of the Code of Ethics

Career development practitioner associations will

- Develop and implement procedures whereby breaches of the Code of Ethics may be reported and appropriately followed up (e.g., where appropriate through educative processes).