

COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING

Competency-based training is a method of training which develops the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to achieve competency.

QUICK FACTS

- Competency is the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace
- Units of competency specify the standards of performance required in the workplace
- Competency-based training was introduced in the late 1980s to improve the skill levels of the Australian workforce.

A SYSTEM BASED ON COMPETENCY

Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system is competency-based. That is, it is based on occupational skills standards which are set out in units of competency within training packages and accredited courses. This distinguishes it from Australia's other education sectors (i.e. schools and higher education).

COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING

Competency-based training is a method of training that focuses on a learner's ability to receive, respond to and process information in order to achieve competency. It is geared towards the attainment and demonstration of skills to meet industry-defined standards, rather than to a learner's achievement relative to that of others.

Learner progress in a competency-based program is not time-based. As soon as a learner achieves a required competency, they can move to the next. In this way, learners can complete training in their own time and at their own pace.

Competency-based training – at a glance

Competency-based training is characterised by the following key features:

- It is based on units of competency (hence the term competency-based)
- It is outcomes-focused, relying less on inputs such as curriculum and more on a learner's ability to consistently apply their knowledge and skills to the standard of performance required in the workplace
- It involves work-based learning
- It is self-paced and flexible.

Competency-based training in action

Units of competency do not prescribe how people should be trained. Vocational trainers employed by registered training organisations (RTOs) use these documents to design learning programs that assist people to gain – or to demonstrate that they possess – the skills and knowledge specified in units of competency.

Competency-based assessment in action

Competency-based assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements about whether a person has achieved competency. It is often described as a *criterion-referenced* process, because it involves people being assessed against fixed criteria or pre-determined benchmarks – such as those expressed in units of competency or accredited modules.

KEY WEBSITES

- Australian Government Department of Education and Training
<https://www.education.gov.au/>
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research
<https://www.ncver.edu.au/>
- VECEDplus.
<http://www.ved.edu.au/>

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