

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Industry engagement is a key element of the Australian vocational education and training (VET) system – so much so that it is a mandatory requirement of nationally approved VET quality standards for registered training organisations (RTOs).

QUICK FACTS

In 2017:

- 54.4% of employers used the Australian VET system to meet their training needs
- 50.8% of employers provided unaccredited training to their employees
- 81.4% of employers provided informal training to their employees
- 8.7% of employers did not provide any training to their employees.

THE RELEVANCE OF VET

The Australian VET system is designed to provide people with work-related knowledge and skills to boost economic growth and business productivity. Training must therefore be relevant to the needs of industry, and this can only be achieved through RTO-employer partnerships.

By engaging with employers, RTOs can accurately align their training and assessment practices to the methods, technologies and products that are being used by industry in Australian workplaces. This is a requirement of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*, which specify that an RTO's training and assessment practices must be informed by industry engagement.

Schools that offer VET are also required to engage with industry, because their students need access to industry-standard equipment and people with relevant and current industry experience.

TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT

The following industry engagement strategies may be useful for RTOs and schools:

- Establish partnerships with local employers, businesses, industry bodies and enterprise RTOs
- Participate on industry advisory committees and reference groups
- Embed training staff within local enterprises
- Attend local industry networking functions
- Invite industry representatives and employers to participate in assessment validation processes
- Exchange knowledge, staff and resources with industry bodies and local employers.

PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS FACTORS

RTO-employer partnerships require a considerable investment of time on both sides, and partnership success is determined by the following key factors:

Success Factor	Description
Values alignment	Both organisations share a set of values which enable them to communicate well and understand each other's expectations.
Trust	Established over time and critical to success.
Personal connections	The establishment of trust is often the result of personal connections between key staff from each organisation.
Communication	Regular communication is a critical success factor for an effective partnership.
Single point of contact	There must be clear channels of communication, and this is enhanced by a single major point of contact within each organisation.
Flexibility	An RTO must be willing to alter its delivery methods and customise its content to suit the specific needs of the employer.
Understanding of business needs	RTO staff must understand the employer's industry and be keen to learn more about the business.
Government funding	Funding facilitates effective RTO-employer partnerships, especially in the initial stages. However, it becomes less important over time.

AUSTRALIAN TRAINING AWARDS

The Australian Training Awards are the peak national awards for the VET sector, recognising individuals, businesses and RTOs for their contribution to skilling Australia. The awards are held annually, and the following categories are available to individuals, RTOs and schools that collaborate with industry:

- Industry Collaboration Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- National Achievement Award
- School Pathways to VET.

More information about the Australian Training Awards can be found on pages 38-39.

KEY WEBSITES

- Australian Training Awards
<https://www.australiantrainingawards.gov.au/>
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research
<https://www.ncver.edu.au/>

RELATED TOPICS

- Awards and Competitions
- Preparing Secondary Students for Work
- Registered Training Organisations
- VET Quality Standards