

## Heavy workload a major issue for VET teachers

### Special Interest Group to be established.

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Responses to Federation's survey of vocational education and training (VET) teachers highlighted major concerns over the workload associated with teaching VET subjects.

The survey, developed by VET teachers, focused on the extra administrative tasks, responsibilities and training requirements of VET teachers in addition to their work in non-VET subjects. More than 500 responses were received.

The main contributors to workload identified by the survey responses were:

- administering and supporting the delivery of VET courses and complying with requirements of Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), the Registered Training Organisation and the Board of Studies
- supporting students in work placement
- meeting constant demands for training particularly in areas where teachers have experience and can demonstrate their competency

- maintaining industry currency
  - lack of funds, resources, and support from the Department.
- The survey responses demonstrated different levels of support, expectations, administrative and audit requirements between the Department's 10 Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). One comment reflected many of the responses, "we are continually directed to do more by our RTO the way they want it done, while receiving minimal support."

Some respondents also focused on ASQA requirements as a source of unnecessary additional work which takes time and focus away from students.

The plethora of paperwork VET teachers have to contend with was explained in the following comment: "You still have all the normal paperwork, reports etc. On top of this there is the ASQA paperwork requirements, as well as multiple paper trails for competency achievement, work placement, competency entries on the Board of Studies, regular student notification of competencies achieved, docu-

mentation of practical skills, and constant update of subject content when the framework changes. There is also the annual paperwork around facilities and compliance for courses being delivered."

Many teachers felt demeaned by having to demonstrate very basic and or manual tasks, one survey respondent said.

"The continuous retraining to do the same job is ridiculous as if we, as teachers, can't update programs without redoing the same basic training."

Some respondents with Trade Training Centres or other grants indicated that they had "quite exceptional facilities" while others had to take it in turns with other subjects to buy equipment. Some schools could not continue with particular courses because they could not provide equipment such as stainless steel benches.

Federation met with the Department of Education on September 25 for an initial discussion of the findings. The Departmental officers indicated that the new structure will have four not 10, Registered

Training Organisations. The Department explained that although there may be changes to the role descriptions there would be the same number of positions supporting VET teachers. Federation raised teachers' concerns about differing expectations, workload requirements and support by the existing RTOs. The Department responded that there would be standardised Training and Assessment strategies, assessment tools and marking guides across the four RTOs which would support more consistency.

The Department advised it was establishing a database of teachers' training and qualifications which may assist in reducing the need for some retraining. They noted, however, that ASQA set the training requirements.

Perhaps most importantly the Department agreed to further meetings to discuss issues raised by VET teachers. Federation will establish a VET Teachers Special Interest Group and will pursue any concerns raised by the group with the Department.