Training Product Trial Concept Paper

Introduction

This paper outlines the Future Skills Organisation's (FSO) proposed process for supporting the delivery of a Training Product Trial (TPT) to address urgent digital skills needs identified for the Finance, Technology, and Business (FTB) sectors.

Finding ways to upskill learners quicker

FSO's 2024 Workforce Plan identifies that the Australian economy faces rapidly changing skill requirements in many occupations, due to the impact of both emerging and evolving technologies. Research has confirmed that FTB roles are likely to be impacted by technology changes including Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI)[1].

The national system that develops and deploys new VET training products is unable to keep pace with the speed of change. The process to review, design and update national training products can take years, which is too slow for FTB industries. As a result, FTB stakeholders are increasingly turning to non-VET options to meet their skilling needs.

The Training Package Organising Framework (TPOF) has recently been updated, however, there are no immediate plans to refine the TPOF process to enable the development of accredited training products in a timeframe which meets the needs of fast-moving industries.

To ensure the relevance of the national VET system to FTB industries, FSO is considering ways to deliver skilling solutions which are more timely and responsive.

Working in parallel with the TPOF process

Through the proposed TPT process FSO will trial three integrated steps:

- the development of draft training products (specifically limited to units of competency (UoCs) and/or skills sets) using the framework of the TPOF process
- the development of TPT learning and assessment resources for draft training products in conjunction with RTO delivery partners
- the delivery of training using draft training products and TPT learning and assessment resources, to selected cohorts of learners, through the expertise of RTO delivery partners. Completion of training will be badged for learners.

This approach will be independently evaluated to assess the benefits of TPT in getting skills to those who need them as fast as possible, and to inform FSO's approach to the implementation, promotion and monitoring of the final accredited products.

The TPT will run in parallel with the normal TPOF processes for accredited training products, including national public consultation, Senior Responsible Officer consultation and Skills Ministers endorsement.

Diagram 1 provides an overview of the proposed process.

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[1] Report: Impact of generative AI on skills in the workplace — Future Skills Organisation

Key features to note

The TPT runs in parallel with, and does not impact, the TPOF process. This means the TPT training products will be in trial and use by expert RTO training providers whilst the accreditation process is being completed as required. One advantage is that early findings from the use of TPT training products can inform the TPOF process via the standard public consultation process.

The TPT aims to get urgent skills into the market more efficiently (ideally around 6 months after commencement of development).

FSO will work with specific RTO delivery partners. This would ideally include TAFE Centres of Excellence, TAFEs or specific RTOs.

The training will be recognised through the awarding of 'badges', with students informed that these may be awarded in advance of formal national accreditation. FSO will oversee the TPOF process, and will provide guidance for learners seeking RPL once they are accredited.

The priority criteria for Training Product Trial (TPT)

FSO has developed specific criteria for what would be in scope for the initial trial of this approach. The areas chosen do not have licensing requirements, specific physical safety considerations and are not linked to specific awards.

The training products currently in scope for TPT are limited to UoCs and skill sets, and not full qualifications. The TPT will focus on generalist digital skills, which refers to skills required across industries and job roles rather than specialist digital or technical skills which are required for a job role or related job roles within an industry. FSO has consulted with industry around the highest priority skills needs.

The products in scope for this trial are expected to use the new Application of Skills and Knowledge UoC template, as approved by Skills Ministers in December 2024, given TPT products will have a broader cross-industry purpose. More information on this can be found **here**.

Expected benefits of the Training Product Trial (TPT)

1. **Faster response to industry needs:** By developing learning and assessment requirements and trialling delivery of skills more quickly, FSO can address urgent skilling needs in a timely manner.

2. **Flexibility and innovation**: The process allows for more rapid iteration and adaptation of training products to keep pace with technological changes.

3. **Industry relevance**: By involving stakeholders in identifying urgent skills needs, and direct feedback from the TPT, the training products are more likely to be directly applicable to industry and learner requirements.

4. **Complementary to VET system**: While addressing immediate needs, the process still leads to the development of nationally accredited training products, supporting the broader VET system.

5. **Bridging the skills gap**: The faster release of training products can help reduce the gap between industry needs and available skilled workers.

6. **Faster implementation of training products:** Materials developed and refined as part of the Training Product Trial will be made available to all RTOs as part of the implementation support once the training products are accredited.

What Next?

Stakeholders have identified urgent skills needs across:

1. Digital Capability

2. Generalist Gen AI skills

3. Generalist Cyber Security skills.

The first Digital Capability products are scheduled for development in 2025. The digital capability products will be based on Digcomp, which is the Australian Government's preferred digital capability framework for skills and training activities. More information can be found **here**.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q) Is this approach circumventing the national VET system?

A) No. This process acknowledges the benefits of nationally accredited training but works in parallel to also test ways to address skills gaps more quickly. The end point is nationally accredited products. Our industries have been clear that we need to trial ways to be more responsive to urgent skilling needs.

Q) How will quality and consistency of training be supported for learners, given the products are draft?

A) FSO will work with a small number of quality delivery partners such as RTOs, to both develop high-quality learning and assessment materials and deliver the training.

Q) What if the products are not accredited or change significantly through accreditation?

A) FSO is proposing to trial this approach using units of competency / skill sets and focussed on digital capability. As the Training Product Trial runs in parallel with TPOF accreditation, there will be an opportunity for the training to be updated in real time, so learners complete the training with the same skills that will be available in the accredited training products. The early training will be badged by the delivery partner to certify completion and to be used as evidence for RPL.

Q) What happens when the products are accredited?

A) Once accredited products are available FSO will (once learners have completed their learning) focus supporting the implementation of the nationally accredited training products.

Q) Once accredited will the products be 'standalone' as a UoC or skill set, or will they be incorporated into a full VET qualification?

A) The TPT products will be trialled as stand-alone UoC's or skill set. Once accredited these products may be incorporated into qualifications.

Q) What if industry doesn't value the training?

A) Our industry stakeholders have told us that digital capability, generalist AI and generalist cyber security skills are urgent priorities. The proposed digital capability products will be based on Digcomp, an international framework for digital capability. Industry will also be engaged in the development of the draft products.

Q) Who can access the Training Product Trial and how will it be funded?

A) FSO will work with partners to define cohorts of learners for the trial. FSO will work with partners around delivery and may fund aspects of the initial trial.

Diagram 1 – Training Product Trial.