

User Choice 2021-23 Policy

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Related policies and documents:	1. <i>Registered Training Organisation User Choice Skills Assure Supplier Policy 2021-23</i> 2. <i>Vocational Education and Training (VET) Skills Assure Supplier Agreement</i> 3. <i>Audit Evidence Requirements (User Choice)</i>
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All documents are available online at: www.desbt.qld.gov.au/training. For definitions, refer to Appendix 2.

1. Policy intent

1.1 Background

The User Choice program supports the delivery of accredited entry-level training to apprentices and trainees.

The program works in conjunction with the Commonwealth Australian Apprenticeships System, under which apprentices and trainees (also known in some jurisdictions as 'Australian apprentices') enter into legally binding training contracts with their employers and receive structured training to achieve a nationally recognised qualification.

The User Choice program provides a public funding contribution towards the cost of training and assessment for eligible Queensland apprentices and trainees, with funding paid directly to the approved training supplier, subject to the conditions set out in the VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement.

The program provides greater flexibility for apprentices, trainees and their employers to select a training supplier of their choice and to negotiate the type of training they require.

Key investment framework and funding model principles include: public funding aligned to the skills needs of industry and government priorities; a network of registered training organisations (RTOs) each approved as a Skills Assure Supplier (SAS) to deliver eligible training and assessment services; published government subsidy levels; and a co-contribution towards the cost of training by individuals, employers and/or industry.

User Choice related policies and documents are available on the department's website at www.desbt.qld.gov.au/training/providers/funded/userchoice.

Information and requirements for supervising registered training organisations (SRTOs) can also be found on the department's website at www.desbt.qld.gov.au/training/apprentices/srto.

1.2 Employment arrangements

The intent of the User Choice program is to provide funding for training and assessment that supports the apprenticeship and traineeship system, as defined by the *Further Education and Training Act 2014* (the Act). User Choice funding is only available when all arrangements, particularly employment arrangements, are consistent with the Act. The employer of an apprentice or trainee must therefore provide or arrange to provide adequate facilities, range of work, supervision and the on-the-job training required by the Act and training plan. The SRTTO is required to assess these employment arrangements and complete an Employer Resource Assessment and develop the training plan in consultation with the employer, apprentice and/or trainee to ensure compliance with the Act.

If the employment arrangements do not comply with the Act, then the SRTTO should not commit to the training plan and must advise the employer, the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network and the Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training immediately.

2. Scope

2.1 User Choice 2021-23 policy framework

The User Choice 2021-23 program will operate under the following policy framework:

- This policy supersedes the *User Choice 2020-21 Policy*, *User Choice 2017-20 Policy*, *User Choice 2016-17 Policy*, *User Choice 2010-16 Policy* and the *Queensland User Choice Program 2006-2010*.
- SAS will be subject to this policy, the department's *Registered Training Organisation User Choice Skills Assure Supplier Policy 2021-23* and the *VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement*.

The three key considerations of the User Choice 2021-23 program are the government's funding priorities, the funding contribution towards qualifications, and the funding strategy used to obtain training and assessment services.

2.1.1 Prioritisation of funding

The User Choice program funds nationally recognised, accredited training and assessment services for apprentices and trainees.

Under the User Choice 2021-23 program, funding will specifically target the occupational outcomes of the apprenticeship or traineeship, and align with the skill outcomes required by industry.

The User Choice funding priorities are determined from national and state data in conjunction with industry input, and are reviewed annually.

The funding priority will determine the level of public funds contributed to training, regardless of whether the qualification is an apprenticeship or traineeship.

The funding priorities under the User Choice 2021-23 program are:

Priority One (100 per cent subsidised)

Priority One qualifications are those which lead to occupations deemed to be critical priorities in Queensland.

Priority Two (87.5 per cent subsidised)

Priority Two qualifications are those which lead to occupations not deemed critical in Queensland but considered as high priorities.

Priority Three (75 per cent subsidised)

Priority Three qualifications are those which lead to occupations not deemed critical in Queensland but considered as medium priorities.

Unfunded

Unfunded qualifications are those which lead to occupations not deemed critical and are not a funding priority. These include qualifications which are not entry-level qualifications identified by industry.

Priority population groups

Individuals identified as belonging to a priority population group (PPG) undertaking a Priority Two or Priority Three qualification will receive 100 per cent of the government contribution.

PPGs are those declared on the national Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract, such as individuals of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, individuals from a non-English speaking background and individuals with disability, impairment or long-term condition.

School-based apprentices and trainees

School-based apprentices and trainees receive funding aligned to the priority level of the qualification.

Existing workers

Existing workers with an active registration number commencement date or recommencement date **from 1 January 2017** are eligible for funding when undertaking Priority One, Priority Two or Priority Three qualifications.

Existing workers with an active registration number commencement date or recommencement date **up to 31 December 2016**, irrespective of whether they belong to a PPG, are eligible for funding only when undertaking Priority One qualifications.

Language, literacy and numeracy support

Limited funding is available from the department for language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) support for eligible apprentices and trainees. Funding will be provided under a separate agreement to approved RTOs.

LLN support for school-based apprentices and trainees will not be funded. LLN support will be provided by the relevant secondary schooling sector. Accordingly, in the case of a school-based apprentice or trainee, contact should be made with the relevant secondary school.

2.1.2 Funding amounts

The User Choice government contribution represents the level of public funding the government will contribute towards the total cost of training for apprentices and trainees, subject to the conditions set out in the Queensland Skills Assure Supplier Agreement.

Other contributions by industry, employers, apprentices and trainees may be required. Contributions made by apprentices and trainees are governed by section 2.6.1 of this policy.

Information regarding qualifications and government contributions under the User Choice 2021-23 program is published on the User Choice funding and pricing webpage on the department's website.

User Choice 2021-23 qualifications and government contributions are available via the Queensland Training Information Service (QTIS).

Restricted qualifications

Information regarding restricted qualifications and their special pricing arrangements under the User Choice 2021-23 program is published on the User Choice funding and pricing webpage on the department's website.

Location loadings

Training delivered in country, remote, Cape York and Torres Strait regions of the state will attract a location loading in addition to the government contribution. A full list of locations and the relevant loadings is published on the User Choice funding and pricing webpage on the department's website.

2.1.3 Funding strategy

To deliver publicly-funded training and assessment services to apprentices and trainees, RTOs must apply for, and be approved by the department as a SAS.

Funding under the 2021-23 User Choice program is only available for eligible students, as per section 2.2.2.

2.2 Eligibility requirements

2.2.1 RTO eligibility

To deliver publicly funded training and assessment services to apprentices and trainees in Queensland, RTOs must apply for, and be approved by the department as a SAS.

If approved, SAS are issued with a *Queensland VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement* for the User Choice 2021-23 program and are eligible to receive payment from the department for delivery of training and assessment services to eligible students (section 2.2.2).

SAS are subject to the terms and conditions of the *Queensland VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement* and must comply with the *Registered Training Organisation User Choice Skills Assure Supplier Policy*.

For information on becoming a SAS in Queensland, visit the department's website, via the [Become a Skills Assure Supplier](#) webpage, which outlines the eligibility and assessment criteria required to become a SAS in Queensland to deliver training under the User Choice program.

SAS status is granted for successful applicants from the start date specified in the department's letter of authority, unless otherwise advised by the department.

SAS details for approved qualifications will be published by the department on QTIS and the [Queensland Skills Gateway](#).

Only RTOs that hold SAS status and are specifically authorised by the department can nominate and deliver publicly funded training and assessment services for restricted qualifications.

The department will automatically remove a qualification from a SAS record on QTIS when the SAS ceases to be registered for that particular qualification.

2.2.2 Student eligibility

To be eligible to receive a government contribution, the apprentice or trainee must:

- have entered into a Training Contract for a qualification that is funded by the department
- be registered on DELTA with a commencement date or recommencement date on or after 1 July 2021
- select a training provider that holds SAS status for their nominated qualification.

The government contribution will be detailed in the apprentice or trainee's Letter of Registration from the department, is subject to student eligibility and selection of an eligible SAS as their SRTO. Payment of funding is subject to the conditions set out in the VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement.

Dual-trade apprenticeship or traineeship

A student undertaking a declared dual trade apprenticeship will receive the government contribution, as specified on the department's User Choice 2021-23 Price List.

School-based apprentices and trainees

School-based apprentices and trainees (SATs) receive funding aligned to the priority level of the qualification. The government contribution for the qualification will be detailed in their Letter of Registration from the department.

SATs are subject to the same policies as apprentices and trainees, with the following exceptions.

School-based apprentices

The maximum institutional training which may be delivered for a school-based apprentice (for the qualification detailed on their Letter of Registration) will be limited to the following delivery levels until such time as the school-based apprentice transfers to full apprenticeship status (full-time or part-time) under the same registration number and qualification:

- (a) Four-year nominal term — 33.3 per cent delivery limit
- (b) Three-year nominal term — 40 per cent delivery limit
- (c) Two-year nominal term — 50 per cent delivery limit.

DESBT Regional Directors can approve an increase in the institutional training delivery on a case-by-case basis, once they receive an application from parties to the apprenticeship. SAS reported data will be validated to ensure compliance with this policy.

On transferring to full apprenticeship status (full-time or part-time) under the same qualification, the school-based apprentice will be able to access the residual value of their government contribution.

The residual value of the government contribution will be calculated by multiplying the remaining number of units of competency or points the apprentice has to complete by the unit of competency or point value applicable to the student when they first commenced their apprenticeship.

School-based trainees

On transferring to full traineeship status (full-time or part-time) under the same registration number and qualification, the school-based trainee will be able to access the residual value of their government contribution.

The residual value of the government contribution will be calculated by multiplying the remaining number of units of competency or points the trainee has to complete by the unit of competency or point value applicable to the student when they first commenced their traineeship.

Free apprenticeships for under 21s

To be eligible, an apprentice or trainee must be under 21 years of age and commence in a Training Contract on or after 1 July 2019 in a designated Free apprenticeship qualification specified on the department's User Choice Price List. Other eligible apprentices or trainees are those:

- enrolled in a qualification under the Year 12 Fee Free initiative prior to 1 July 2019 and will continue their qualification under Free apprenticeships
- under 21 years of age from 30 June 2019 and commenced in a Training Contract prior to 1 July 2019 in a designated Free apprenticeship qualification. Free apprenticeships will apply to units of competency/modules commencing on or after 1 July 2019.

Free apprenticeships for under 25s

To be eligible, an apprentice or trainee must be aged between 21 years and under 25 years of age and commence in a Training Contract on or after 1 January 2021 in a designated Free apprenticeship qualification specified on the department's User Choice Price List. Other eligible apprentices or trainees are those:

- aged between 21 years and under 25 years from 31 December 2020 and commenced in a Training Contract prior to 1 January 2021 in a designated Free apprenticeship qualification. Free apprenticeships will apply to units of competency/modules commencing on or after 1 January 2021. These apprentices must also not be claiming under the Free apprenticeships for under 21s initiative.

2.2.3 Multiple government contributions

An apprentice or trainee can only receive one government contribution for a User Choice funded qualification at any single point in time.

In circumstances where a student undertakes more than one apprenticeship or traineeship at the same time, the student will only receive the government contribution for the qualification nominated in the first Training Contract registered on DELTA, not the Training Contract with the earliest start date.

A maximum of two government contributions will be funded per participant under the User Choice 2021-23 program.

Qualifications which do not contribute to the government contribution count are:

- qualifications funded outside of the User Choice 2010–16, 2016–17, 2017–20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 program
- User Choice funded qualifications which commenced but were not completed
- User Choice funded qualifications undertaken as part of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work – Work Skills Traineeships program
- User Choice funded qualifications undertaken as part of the Group Training Organisation Pre-Apprenticeship Program.

For the purposes of determining multiple government contributions, SATs are treated in the same way as other apprentices and trainees.

A second government contribution is approved for participants who have previously commenced and completed one funded qualification under either the User Choice 2010–16 program/User Choice 2016–17 program/User Choice 2017–20 program/User Choice 2020-21 program or User Choice 2021-22 program, and the second qualification is:

- a Priority One qualification
- a higher priority than the first qualification

- undertaken subsequent to a student having completed a qualification under the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative
- undertaken subsequent to a student having completed a qualification under the Group Training Organisation Pre-Apprenticeship Program.

2.3 Government contribution

The government contribution will be determined by the following business rules (subject to the conditions set out in the VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement):

- The government contribution for User Choice funded qualifications will be the 'Prices — Priority Population Groups' and 'Prices — All other students including SATs', as published on QTIS or specified in the User Choice 2021-23 Price List, available from the User Choice funding and pricing webpage on the department's website.
- Industry and/or employer contributions may be required where the government's contribution of public funding does not meet the cost of training offered by the SAS.
- Specific business rules aligned to the suite of fee-free training programs offered by the Department since 1 January 2014 and inclusive of current programs targeting apprentices aged 25 years and under.
- To identify the high priority apprenticeships and traineeships available under the User Choice program, refer to the User Choice funding and pricing webpage on the department's website.

2.3.1 Location loadings

Training delivered in country, remote, Cape York and Torres Strait regions of the state will attract a location loading in addition to the government contribution. A full list of locations and the relevant loadings is published on the User Choice documents webpage on the department's website.

- **Country:** For training and assessment services delivered in a postcode defined in the User Choice Localities and Location Loadings document as representing 'country', SAS will receive a 15 per cent increase to the government contribution applicable for the qualification being claimed.
- **Remote:** For training and assessment services delivered in a postcode defined in the User Choice Localities and Location Loadings document as representing 'remote', SAS will receive a 75 per cent increase to the government contribution for the qualification being claimed.
- **Cape York and Torres Strait:** For training and assessment services delivered in a postcode defined in the User Choice Localities and Location Loadings document as representing 'Cape York' or 'Torres Strait', suppliers will receive a 150 per cent increase to the government contribution for the qualification being claimed.

For this loading to apply, training and assessment services must not only be delivered in the Cape York or Torres Strait region, but provided to participants that reside in identified Cape York or Torres Strait regions, as defined in the User Choice Localities and Location Loadings document.

Cape York and Torres Strait location loadings are only applicable to the 4871, 4873, 4874, 4875, 4876 and 4895 postcodes, and must meet the following conditions:

- Only 'postcode' and 'region' combinations shown in the User Choice Localities and Location Loadings document as 'Cape York' or 'Torres Strait' will be accepted for Cape York or Torres Strait location loading claims.

- An apprentice or trainee must have a residential address in one of the 'postcodes' and 'regions' shown in the User Choice Localities and Location Loadings document as 'Cape York' or 'Torres Strait'.
- An apprentice or trainee must receive User Choice training and assessment services within one of the 'postcodes' and 'regions' shown in the User Choice Localities and Location Loadings document as 'Cape York' or 'Torres Strait'.
- To claim and receive a location loading payment applicable to Cape York or Torres Strait, SAS must report the 'postcode' and 'locality name' of the apprentice or trainee's residence and for where the training was delivered, accordingly to those in the User Choice Localities and Location Loadings document.

2.3.2 Recommencing apprentice or trainee

The government contribution for a recommencing apprentice or trainee will be determined by the following business rules:

- Recommencing in the same qualification:

An apprentice or trainee who has previously cancelled their Training Contract and then recommences their apprenticeship or traineeship in the same qualification will receive a government contribution equal to the residual value of their government contribution for the qualification at the time of recommencement.

The residual value of the government contribution will be calculated by multiplying the remaining number of units of competency or points the apprentice or trainee has to complete by the unit of competency or point value applicable to the student when they first commenced their apprenticeship.

- Recommencing apprentices or trainees under the Free training for Year 12 graduates initiative:

Only apprentices or trainees who recommence within 12 months of finishing Year 12 (that is, by the end of the calendar year following completion of Year 12) will continue to be eligible for free training. (The Year 12 graduates initiative has been replaced from 1 January 2021 by Free apprenticeships for under 25s.)

- Recommencing apprentices or trainees under Free apprenticeships (including apprentices or trainees accessing the Year 12 graduates initiative) will continue to be eligible for free training if:

- (a) they are under 21 years of age at recommencement and
- (b) recommence in a Training Contract in a designated Free apprenticeship qualification and
- (c) applies to units of competency/modules commencing on or after 1 July 2019.

- Recommencing apprentices or trainees under Free apprenticeships for under 25s (including apprentices or trainees accessing the Year 12 graduates initiative or Free apprenticeships for under 21s initiative) will continue to be eligible for free training if:

- (a) they are under 25 years of age at recommencement and
- (b) recommence in a Training Contract in a designated Free apprenticeship qualification and
- (c) applies to units of competency/modules commencing on or after 1 January 2021.

2.3.3 Superseded qualifications

In the event that a qualification is superseded by a new qualification, an apprentice or trainee will transfer from the original qualification to the new qualification in accordance with the transition and teach out rules prescribed by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

When transitioning an apprentice or trainee from a superseded qualification to the new qualification, and a completed unit of competency is identified during the mapping process as similar but not equivalent between the superseded and new qualification, gap training is required and the Outcome Code 65 (Transitional gap training) is to be used. In this case, when gap training and gap assessment (including additional on-the-job verification from the employer) is required, the SAS must report Outcome Code 65 in order to attract a five (5) per cent payment for additional training delivered. Using Outcome Code 65 will not affect the number of competencies undertaken to date by the apprentice or trainee.

The SAS cannot charge a student contribution fee for an enrolment in a competency, which is awarded a '65 outcome'. The higher government contribution and units of competency or point count between the old and the new qualification will be applied for the apprentice or trainee.

2.4 Payment and reporting

To receive payment from the department, the SAS must:

- provide training and assessment services leading to the attainment of the qualification detailed on the apprentice or trainee's Letter of Registration
- provide administrative and support services and meet all other obligations required by any legislation, regulation or standard
- adhere to the key performance indicators (KPIs), as detailed in Appendix 1 of this policy
- adhere to the terms and conditions detailed in their *VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement*.

All payments to a SAS will be made via electronic funds transfer to a bank account nominated by the SAS.

It is the sole responsibility of the SAS to inform the department of any changes to their bank account details.

2.4.1 Supplier eligibility

To be eligible to receive payment from the department for the delivery of User Choice training and assessment services, a SAS must:

- hold SAS status with the department
- ensure employment arrangements for the apprentice or trainee are compliant with the Act
- meet all SAS reporting requirements, as per sections 2.4.2, 2.4.3 and 2.4.4
- be the SRTTO appearing on the apprentice or trainee's Training Contract at the time of making a claim for payment.

The SAS must also retain evidence to justify a claim for payment as outlined within Table 4 Payment Codes.

2.4.2 SAS reporting

To make a claim for payment for any training and assessment delivery, a SAS must provide an electronic claim report to the department using the latest AVETMISS compliant system.

It is the sole responsibility of the SAS to ensure that their AVETMISS system complies with the relevant and latest AVETMISS release requirements.

It is compulsory SAS use Partner Portal to upload VET activity data. A SAS will only receive payment for data received that is error-free and meets the standard departmental validations for User Choice delivery and payment.

It is the sole responsibility of the SAS to rectify any data errors with the relevant departmental sectors prior to receiving payment.

2.4.3 AVETMISS reporting requirements

In relation to each apprentice or trainee, the supplier must submit electronic AVETMISS data that contains full and correct information against all relevant fields in AVETMISS as superseded, amended or replaced from time to time, including the following:

- (a) the 'Skills Assure supplier number' shown on the letter advising an RTO of their successful application for SAS status and the attached delivery schedule
- (b) a verified Unique Student Identifier (USI)
- (c) relevant 'fund source code' specified in this policy
- (d) 'delivery mode identifier' specified in AVETMISS
- (e) 'predominant delivery mode' specified in AVETMISS
- (f) 'outcome identifier' specified in AVETMISS and this policy
- (g) 'location postcode' where the apprentice or trainee predominantly undertakes training and/or assessment (excluding online delivery), as specified in the User Choice Localities and Location Loadings document, published on the User Choice documents webpage of the department's website. In the case of online delivery, the RTO must report the postcode of where the training is coordinated from
- (h) Training Contract DELTA registration number
- (i) an apprentice or trainee's eligibility as a priority population group
- (j) 'highest school level completed' specified in AVETMISS
- (k) 'year highest school level completed' – not applicable from AVETMISS release 8
- (l) actual hours of training and assessment provided to a participant, where the participant has engaged in the learning activity and withdrawn from a unit of competency prior to completion
- (m) other information specified by the department from time to time.

2.4.4 AVETMISS reporting timelines

- (a) The SAS must submit electronic AVETMISS data on or before the last working day of each month.
- (b) The SAS must ensure all electronic AVETMISS data contains full and correct information against all relevant fields (as stated above in 2.4.3) relating to the provision of services provided, and validate error-free, no later than 90 days from the date of delivery of the training and assessment services.
- (c) For the purposes of national reporting requirements, the supplier must comply with the notified timelines for the submission of electronic AVETMISS data, as identified by the department.

2.4.5 Data validations

In order to verify that training and assessment services are delivered within policy and contractual guidelines, the department will validate data submitted from a SAS before payment is made.

2.4.6 Payment level and value

SAS payments will be based on the following business rules:

- Payments will generally be made monthly.
- No payment will be made for training and assessment not reported within 90 days after the date the training and assessment is delivered.
- All payments will be made at an individual unit of competency or point level.
- All units of competency or points are of equal value, calculated by dividing the government contribution by the designated number of units of competency or points for the particular qualification.
- The actual payment value of an individual unit of competency or point will be influenced by:
 - the postcode and locality name of the location of delivery (as required for a location loading),
 - the postcode and locality name of the apprentice or trainee's residency (as required for a location loading and as reported by the RTO);
 - the predominant delivery mode.
- Claimed units of competency or points over the maximum payable units of competency or points for a particular qualification will not be paid.
- Claims for payment against a unit of competency which has previously been completed by the apprentice or trainee will not be paid.

SAS are to retain assessment evidence as required by the policy and outlined within Table 4 Payment Codes.

Table 1. Fund source codes

Supplier	School-based apprentices and trainees	Apprentices	Trainees
TAFE User Choice fund source codes:	T21	T01	T02
Private provider fund source codes:	SAT	F3	GK

Table 2. Fund source codes — Free apprenticeships for under 21s (includes Free training for Year 12 graduates)

Fees and charges	Fund source code
Full fee	GS2
Partial exemption	GS3
Full fee exemption	GS4

Table 3. Fund source codes — Free apprenticeships for under 25s

Fees and charges	Fund source code
Full fee	GS6
Partial exemption	GS7
Full fee exemption	GS8

Table 4. Payment codes

Unit of competency/module outcome identifier and payment rates for SAS payment claims:

Outcome identifier national code *	Outcome identifier description	Payment percentage (maximum claimable)	Additional payment applicable for Free apprenticeships
20	Competency achieved/pass User Choice policy requirements: This code is to be applied where: a) sufficient evidence has been gathered that competency has been achieved, as expressed by the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a training package or by the learning outcomes of an accredited course, and b) confirmation has been obtained from the employer that the student has consistently demonstrated competent performance in workplace tasks relevant to the unit of competency/module.	100%	Full fee — calculated at \$1.60 per nominal hour for unit of competency Partial exemption fee — calculated at \$1.60 per nominal hour for unit of competency x 40% Full exemption — no additional payment
30	Competency not achieved/fail	100%	Full fee — calculated at \$1.60 per nominal hour for unit of competency Partial exemption fee — calculated at \$1.60 per nominal hour for unit of competency x 40% Full Exemption — no additional payment
40	Withdrawn/discontinued with participation User Choice policy requirements: This code is to be applied where the Training Contract is cancelled or withdrawn in DELTA or there is a change of SRTO and the change or cancellation is recorded in DELTA.	50%	Full fee — calculated at \$1.60 per actual hours of training and assessment undertaken by participant as reported by SAS Partial exemption fee — calculated at \$1.60 per actual hours of training and assessment undertaken by participant as reported by SAS x 40% Full exemption — no additional payment

Outcome identifier national code *	Outcome identifier description	Payment percentage (maximum claimable)	Additional payment applicable for Free apprenticeships
51 ^{1, 2, 3}	Recognition of prior learning — granted	100%	Full fee — calculated at \$1.60 per nominal hour for unit of competency Partial exemption fee — calculated at \$1.60 per nominal hour for unit of competency x 40% Full exemption — no additional payment
52	Recognition of prior learning — not granted	0%	No additional payment
60	Credit transfer/national recognition	0%	No additional payment
65 (department code)	Transitional gap training This payment code is only to be reported where an apprentice or trainee is transitioning from a superseded qualification into a new qualification or previously completed competencies have been superseded and the new competencies do not directly map, therefore necessitating gap training and assessment (including additional on-the-job verification from the employer) to address the variance in the new competencies. The RTO can report this outcome code in recognition of delivery, to generate payments against the relevant VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement. Use of this code will not affect a participant's competency count (see section 2.3.3)	5%	No additional payment
70	Continuing activity	0%	No additional payment
81	Administration payments	See table below	No additional payment
85	Not yet started	0%	No additional payment

* The use of all outcome identifier codes must be in accordance with the relevant AVETMISS release. This can be found at www.ncver.edu.au/publications.

¹ Recognition of prior learning (RPL) involves the assessment of the previously obtained skills and knowledge an individual has achieved outside the formal education and training system of their apprenticeship or traineeship. RPL cannot be claimed for experience, skills or knowledge gained since commencing the current apprenticeship or traineeship.

² RPL for SATs in sport and recreation qualifications attracts a payment percentage of 0%.

³ If undertaking RPL assessment, the SAS must comply with the requirements outlined in the Department's Audit Evidence Requirements (User Choice).

2.4.7 Administration payments

The department will pay for either the government contribution or the administration payment, calculated as set out in the following table, in relation to a student, but not both. The administration payment will only be made in relation to students:

- (a) who have achieved a qualification through an alternative pathway, enter the corresponding apprenticeship/traineeship for that qualification, and only require a completion certificate to be issued for the apprenticeship/traineeship (SRT01 and SRT02 payment applies)
- (b) who have received all training and assessment required from a different SRT0 under their previous Training Contract, entered into a new Training Contract, and only require a completion certificate to be issued for the apprenticeship/traineeship (SRT01 and SRT02 payment applies)
- (c) who have gained the entire qualification through RPL (the RTO must first confirm with a regional office departmental representative that the student's Training Contract will be approved by the department) (SRT01 and SRT02 payment applies)
- (d) whose Training Contract has been cancelled prior to any training provision commencing (SRT01 payment only applies)
- (e) who have withdrawn within the probationary period prior to any training provision commencing (SRT01 payment only applies)
- (f) who have changed to another SRT0 prior to any training provision commencing (SRT01 payment only applies).

Table 5. Delivery mode identifier payments

Delivery mode identifier	Descriptor	Outcome identifier	Unit of competency / module code	Payment rule	Payment
N predominant delivery mode (from AVETMISS 8 release)	Prepare for training	81	SRT01	Prepare for training: Paid at completion of participant's induction, including developing a training plan that meets the department's requirements.	\$100
N predominant delivery mode (from AVETMISS 8 release)	Apprentice or trainee completion	81	SRT02	Apprentice or trainee completion: Paid at completion of the Training Contract after the following has occurred: a) Participant has successfully completed the requirements of the training plan, and; b) The SAS has complied with sections 45 and 46 of the Act.	\$400

Table 6. Service provision not funded

Service provision	Exceptional circumstances payment conditions	Special reporting requirements
a) Delivery of any unit of competency or module through RPL where the effect would be that the participant has completed the entire qualification by way of RPL.	No payment unless the supplier is entitled to claim an administration payment.	
b) Provision of training and assessment services to a participant who was enrolled after the final enrolment date specified for the relevant qualification in QTIS.	No payment unless the participant's Training Contract was cancelled prior to the final enrolment date and the participant recommenced in the qualification within three months of the cancellation.	
c) Provision of training and assessment services to a participant beyond the prescribed teach-out or transition period, as specified in ASQA's general direction on 'transition and teach-out' (as superseded, replaced or amended from time to time) for that superseded qualification.	No payment.	
d) Provision of training and assessment services where the supplier has not complied with all of the requirements of the <i>VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement</i> .	No payment.	
e) Provision of training and assessment services to a participant in excess of the competency count, module count or points count specified in QTIS — irrespective of whether or not the participant received training or assessment against the competency count, module count or points count for the relevant qualification from another provider.	No payment.	
f) Provision of services that are not reported within the timeframe specified in this policy.	No payment.	The SAS must still report this provision to the department.
g) Training and assessment services provided to a participant who has been previously assessed as competent for the same unit of competency or module.	No payment.	The SAS must report this provision as: i) Delivery mode identifier in accordance with the relevant AVETMISS release; ii) Predominant delivery mode; iii) Outcome identifier in accordance with the

Service provision	Exceptional circumstances payment conditions	Special reporting requirements
		relevant AVETMISS release.
h) Training and assessment services provided to a participant where the SAS has received funding or payment in relation to those services from any other source.	No payment.	
i) Provision of training and assessment services to a participant for whom the SAS is not nominated as the SRTTO in the participant's Training Contract or through a department-approved amendment.	No payment.	
j) Provision of training and assessment services in a restricted qualification for which the SAS does not hold specific authorisation from the department to deliver against.	No payment.	
k) Provision of training and assessment services for units of competency that are entry requirements for a qualification as specified in the relevant training package.	No payment.	
l) Training and assessment services provided to a participant where the participant's training contract is in 'suspended' status in DELTA.	No payment.	
m) Provision of training and assessment services in Priority Two and Three qualifications to existing workers with an active registration commencement or recommencement date before 1 January 2017.	No payment.	

2.4.8 Final date of enrolment

A SAS will not receive payment for training and assessment services provided to an apprentice or trainee with a Training Contract commencement date after the 'final date of enrolment' for superseded or discontinued qualifications.

The qualification's 'final date of enrolment' will be published on QTIS.

2.4.9 Pre-payments

A SAS will not be provided with a pre-payment for the delivery of User Choice training and assessment services.

2.5 Variations

The *Queensland VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement* may not be varied except by agreement in writing signed by the SAS and the department.

All variations to applications must be applied for online through the department's Variations Online (VOL) system. Skills Assure suppliers can access VOL at <https://rtovariations.desbt.qld.gov.au/VPSONline/framework/security/auth/login.aspx>.

Variations can include but are not limited to adding and removing qualifications, and publishing and un-publishing qualifications on QTIS. It is the SAS' responsibility to ensure their delivery schedule is up-to-date and that information published on QTIS is correct and up-to-date.

The SAS may be required to supply details of delivery history and industry referees to verify student outcomes and industry support for qualifications in new industry areas.

The department does not automatically update a SAS' schedule when a qualification is superseded or the SAS is no longer registered for a qualification.

A SAS can only commence training in a new qualification as at the date approved by the department. Variations will not be backdated.

2.6 Fees and charges

2.6.1 Student contribution fees

- (a) Student contribution fees, as defined in Appendix 2, are the non-government financial contribution to the cost of the training and assessment services provided by the SAS (the fee is paid to the SAS).
- (b) The SAS must detail its fees and charges policy, including full costs, method of collection, refunds, and exemptions prior to enrolment and provide access to this written policy to apprentices and trainees.
- (c) The SAS must retain evidence of student contribution fees charged and collected for all students, except for those students deemed as fully exempt. In addition, evidence must be retained for all students whose circumstances have been deemed as totally or partially exempt from student contribution fees.
- (d) Student contribution fees under the User Choice program are set at **\$1.60** per nominal hour for each unit of competency/module to be calculated at the commencement of the unit of competency/module. Student contribution fees may be adjusted annually and all SAS will be informed by the department of any changes to the student contribution fees.
- (e) The SAS must not charge more than the student contribution fee amounts contained in this policy, except as required periodically by the department.
- (f) The SAS may only charge less than the student contribution fee if in accordance with sections 2.6.2 or 2.6.3 of this policy.
- (g) When the participant converts from a school-based apprentice or trainee to a full-time or part-time apprenticeship or traineeship, student contribution fees must be charged for training and assessment for any units of competency not yet commenced. This does not apply when the participant is undertaking a Free apprenticeship or is a Year 12 graduate and is undertaking a high priority qualification as identified by the department.
- (h) Where the SAS must collect a student contribution fee, it may be paid on behalf of the student by their employer or a third party unrelated to the SAS, but cannot be paid or waived by the SAS (whether directly or indirectly), unless approved in writing by the department.

2.6.2 Partial exemption — tuition fees

The SAS must charge 40 per cent of the student contribution fee where the participant falls into one or more of the following exemption categories:

- (a) The participant was or will be under 17 years of age at the end of February in the year in which the SAS provides training, and the participant is not at school and has not completed year 12.
- (b) The participant holds a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card issued under Commonwealth law, or is the partner or a dependant of a person who holds a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card, and is named on the card.

- (c) The participant issues the SAS with an official form under Commonwealth law confirming that the participant, his or her partner or the person of whom the participant is a dependant, is entitled to concessions under a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card.
- (d) The participant is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person. Acceptable evidence is as stated on the Training Contract and AVETMISS VET Enrolment Form.

2.6.3 Full exemption — tuition fees

The SAS may apply full exemption from the student contribution fee where the participant falls into one or more of the following exemption categories:

- (a) Where payment of the student contribution fee would cause extreme financial hardship, then the SAS may waive these fees.
 - i. The fee waiver process should be in place at the time of the participant's enrolment.
 - ii. For 2.6.3(a) of this *Fees and Charges* section, the SAS must have a reasonable internal process to manage an appeal about the outcome of an application under financial hardship.
- (b) Where the Queensland Government, as represented by the departmental officer responsible for the User Choice budget, advises in writing that fees are optional. On receipt of such advice, the SAS may choose not to collect the student contribution fee. In this circumstance, any decision by the SAS not to collect fees does not create a liability for the department. The SAS may not apply for reimbursement by the department of fee revenue foregone. Refer to the User Choice Price List, as published on the department's website, for information on where fee exemptions are applicable.

The SAS must apply full exemption from the student contribution fee where the participant falls into one or more of the following exemption categories:

- (a) where credit transfer/national recognition has been applied to a unit of competency/module
- (b) the participant is a school-based apprentice or trainee
- (c) the participant is undertaking a qualification as part of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work – Work Skills Traineeship program.

2.6.4 Free apprenticeships for under 21s and under 25s

The SAS must not charge a student contribution fee to a student who:

- (a) meets the participant eligibility in 2.2.2, to receive a government contribution and is eligible either under the Free apprenticeships for under 21s initiative or the Free apprenticeships for under 25s initiative
- (b) enrolls in a high priority qualification identified by the department for Free apprenticeships on the current User Choice Price List.

The student contribution fee for the Free apprenticeships for under 21s initiative and the Free apprenticeships for under 25s initiative will now be met by the department as outlined in Table 4 — payment codes.

The SAS must retain evidence of student's eligibility for Free apprenticeships. It is important to note that the reporting requirements for the two initiatives are different i.e. different fund source codes.

Apprentices who have commenced under the Free apprenticeships for under 21s initiative are to continue to be reported under this initiative until the end of their Training Contract.

2.6.5 Additional charges

Employer/industry

The SAS may seek additional charges from the employer/industry. Any additional charges must be negotiated up-front and disclosed to the employer/industry prior to the participant's enrolment.

2.6.6 Refund policy

The SAS must have a refund policy that meets the requirements of the Standards for NVR RTOs. This policy must also include:

- (a) the provision for full refunds to participants for student contribution fees charged for training delivery that has not commenced at the time of the cancellation of enrolment
- (b) the provision of proportionate refunds where the participant has withdrawn from a unit of competency/module
- (c) the provision of refunds to employers/industry for additional charges paid beyond the participant and government contributions.

2.6.7 No charges

The SAS must not charge participants for:

- (a) the provision of materials essential to achieving competence
- (b) the development and supply of a training plan
- (c) the development and supply of the initial training record.

2.6.8 No claim against the department

The SAS must not claim and will not be paid by the department in respect of the fees and charges under this policy.

2.6.9 Withholding of results, statement of attainment or qualification due to non-payment of fees.

When the SAS has claimed payment for the relevant units of competency through the User Choice funding program, the SAS must not withhold the results, statement of attainment or qualification from an apprentice or trainee due to the non-payment of fees.

2.7 Skills Assure Supplier refusal to provide services

The SAS may only refuse to become an SRTTO, or enrol or provide the training and assessment services to an apprentice/trainee if one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- the SAS has the department's written consent not to enrol apprentices/trainees
- the employer of the apprentice/trainee is a prohibited employer under the *Act*
- the SAS is prevented pursuant to the *Act* from enrolling apprentices/trainees
- a student contribution fee is not paid despite the SAS providing its fees policy prior to enrolment
- the employer does not pay, or agree to pay, any additional SAS charges associated with the provision of training and assessment services.

3. Supplier performance

- A SAS will be subject to the terms and conditions of their *VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement*.
- A SAS will be subject to the performance measures (key performance indicators) under the User Choice 2021-23 Policy (program), as specified in Appendix 1.
- Failure to meet the standard of performance under the program key performance indicators may result in agreement termination.

The department will undertake performance monitoring and evaluation activities, including but not limited to SAS compliance audits, to assess SAS' compliance with this policy, the Queensland VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement, the *Act*, and any other guidelines or documents as published by the

department. The selection of Skills Assure suppliers for audits may be done randomly, target SAS perceived to be higher risk, or be initiated in response to complaints made to the department or the Queensland Training Ombudsman. Evidence requirements to be met are stated in the Department's *Audit Evidence Requirements (User Choice)*, including those requirements which will result in a recovery of funds and other action if non-compliances are identified during audit activities.

HISTORICAL DOCUMENT



Appendix 1. Key performance indicators

Key performance indicators	Standard of performance	Method of calculation Performance determined by the department reviewing:
(a) Client satisfaction	(1) Satisfactory resolution of any complaint received by the department (2) Satisfactory management of student training progression (3) Maintain satisfactory training services to apprentices and trainees	(1) Advice and/or recommendations from departmental officers and/or industry representatives (2) Recorded outcomes collected and through investigation of the results from targeted workplace visits (3) Change of supervising registered training organisation, as recorded on DELTA
(b) Reported outcomes	(1) Achieve and report a minimum of 90 per cent successful completion of units of competency of the annual payable training delivery (completed units of competency)	(1) Performance calculated as the percentage of successfully completed units of competency against all units of competency assessed

Appendix 2. Definitions that apply

Act means the Further Education and Training Act 2014.

apprentice means an employee being trained in an apprenticeship under a Training Contract registered by the department on DELTA and issued with a registration number.

apprenticeship means employment-based training declared by the department to be an apprenticeship.

ASQA means the Australian Skills Quality Authority, the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training sector.

competency count means the minimum number of units of competency specified by the training package that are needed to achieve the qualification outcome. The minimum number of units of competency will be the maximum number of competencies payable for a qualification. **Note:** Competency count may be replaced by points count or module count for certain qualifications or accredited courses.

DELTA means the department's Direct Entry Level Training Administration database system.

department means the Queensland Government Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

employer means the employer identified in the Training Contract.

Evidence Guide for Supervising RTOs or Evidence Guide(s) means the Department's Audit Evidence Requirements (User Choice).

existing worker means a person who has:

- (a) worked three months full-time for the employer identified in the Training Contract, or
- (a) worked 12 months part-time or casual for the employer identified in the Training Contract and as defined in the department's *Existing Workers in Apprenticeships and Traineeships Policy*.

government contribution means the amount of public funding the Queensland Government will contribute towards the cost of training and assessment services for an eligible apprentice or trainee to attain the qualification which leads to the occupational outcome of their choice.

Letter of Registration means the letter issued by the department to advise an apprentice or trainee of their registration on DELTA.

module count means the minimum number of modules specified by the department that are needed to achieve an apprenticeship/traineeship outcome. The module count in relation to the relevant qualification is specified in QTIS.

new student means a student:

- (a) recorded on DELTA as having an active registration number commencement date on or after 1 July 2020, or
- (b) who recommences an apprenticeship or traineeship on or after 1 July 2020.

NVR RTO means a training organisation that is registered by the National VET Regulator as a registered training organisation under the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

parent means and includes guardian and each person who is liable to maintain, or has the care and control of, a minor.

participant means a Queensland registered apprentice/trainee who is enrolled with the SAS and the SAS is their SRTO.

point count means the minimum number of points specified by the department that are needed to achieve an apprenticeship/traineeship outcome. The point count in relation to the relevant qualification is specified in QTIS.

points means the points assigned to an apprenticeship or traineeship program by the department, from certain endorsed training package qualifications, which is used as a means to establish the industrial outcome and as a basis for payment.

QTIS means the Queensland Training Information Service.

registration means registration of a Training Contract on DELTA.

registration number means the Training Contract registration number on DELTA for an apprentice or trainee.

restricted qualifications means qualifications, such as those considered as thin markets, which are managed under special arrangements by the department.

RTO means a registered training organisation, as defined in the Act.

school-based apprentice or trainee or **SAT** means an apprentice or trainee who is a school student — typically Years 10, 11 or 12 — in an approved arrangement that allows them to study for their senior certificate or equivalent, while at the same time undertaking government approved and accredited training qualifications as paid employees. Students generally would not enter SAT arrangements after the end of semester one of their Year 12 studies.

Skills Assure Supplier or **SAS** or **supplier** means an RTO approved by the department as a Skills Assure Supplier to deliver publicly-funded User Choice training and assessment services.

SRTO means supervising registered training organisation, as defined in the Act.

Standards for NVR RTOs means the *Standards for National VET Regulator Registered Training Organisations*.

student contribution fee means the non-government financial contribution to the cost of the training and assessment services provided by the SAS — the fee is paid to the SAS.

suspended Training Contract means a student's Training Contract that is in suspended status in DELTA. The apprentice or trainee is not undertaking training or employment in the capacity of an apprentice or trainee and is not undertaking training as per the training plan. A suspended Training Contract is effectively deactivated for the period of the approved suspension period.

traineeship means employment-based training declared by the department to be a traineeship.

training and assessment means:

training is the process used by the Skills Assure Supplier to facilitate learning.

assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed by the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a training package or by the learning outcomes of an accredited course.

Assessment must include confirmation from the employer as to whether the student has consistently demonstrated competent performance in the workplace tasks relevant to the unit of competency/module.

Assessment must be conducted in accordance with the Training Contract and a training plan developed for the student.

Training Contract means a national apprenticeship/traineeship Training Contract, which forms a legally binding agreement between an employer and employee for the training of apprentices and trainees leading to a nationally recognised qualification.

Unique Student Identifier (USI) means an account or reference number issued by the USI Registrar that uniquely identifies an individual undertaking nationally recognised training over their lifetime. The USI allows collation of an individual's educational attainments for analysis and research purposes while protecting individual privacy.

unit of competency means the specification of knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance expected in the workplace.

VET means vocational education and training.

VET Skills Assure Supplier Agreement means the Queensland Vocational Education and Training (VET) Skills Assure Supplier Agreement.

Work Skills Traineeships means the unique entry-level traineeships restricted to participants being employed as trainees on a work placement project under the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative.

Year 12 graduate means the participant has completed Year 12 in Queensland and holds a Senior Statement issued by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority up to 30 June 2019.