



Australian Education Union

TAFE Division

Policy on Curriculum and Professional Issues

As adopted at the 2001 National TAFE Council AGM



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Preamble

The AEU believes that all vocational education and training programs need to be underpinned by a comprehensive curriculum approach. VET should teach broad-based skills and knowledge not just a set of narrow skills. Curriculum should also reflect the needs of the diversity of students who study VET courses including those with disabilities and special needs. Curriculum should demonstrate the best principles of access and equity.

The AEU has serious reservations about the quality of vocational education resulting from the implementation of Training Packages, and will seek to ensure significant changes in their development, implementation and review.

The following elements must be included in curriculum and training packages:

Competency standards involving:

- generic/broad vocational knowledge and skills
- defined learning outcomes
- consistency and transferability

Assessment Guides involving:

- equitable and valid assessment procedures
- assessment also relevant to students not currently employed
- specific standards for assessment ie by educational practitioners with industry experience
- capacity for graded assessment

Pedagogy including:

- supporting documentation such as teaching and learning strategies
- underpinning skills and knowledge

Resources for effective delivery including:

- support materials
- assessment guides

The issue of standards is important in any curriculum approach. Delivery standards need to be specified including minimum off-the-job (formal learning) period and minimum work placement (formal learning) period. The length of time expected for an area of study remains significant in defining the level of qualification and must be included in Training Packages. Minimum qualifications and industry experience of educational practitioners are also important in maintaining educational standards.

The development and review of VET programs must include:

Processes involving:

- a regular and transparent process for review and update of Training Packages/curriculum
- benchmarking
- moderation

- continuous improvement

The involvement of the following stakeholders:

- TAFE and other educators
- broad based industry representation
- community and students

The AEU demands that governments fund staff development and retraining for the upgrade of teaching qualifications and industry expertise in line with industry, community and educational standards.

In support of these recommendations, the AEU recommends to Branches/Associated Bodies that the following strategies and actions (among others) be considered:

- organise/educate AEU members around Training Package implementation issues, eg via faculty teacher meetings;
- build strategic alliances with other key stakeholders, including other educational providers, unions, industry associations, community groups;
- promote the benefits of quality, comprehensive vocational education.

Where TAFE educators believe that Training Packages are not in the best interests of students or public vocational education, Branches/Associated Bodies should support members in refusing to implement them.

That the AEU emphasise that national consistency is one of the most critical elements of a national VET system, when negotiating/consulting with governments and government bodies. It is the responsibility of State and Federal governments to ensure adequate funding is available to support a quality public VET system, which will promote this consistency. It is imperative that educationalists be involved in the development and establishment of standards relating to all parts of VET.

There are a number of significant professional issues arising from curriculum considerations that must be addressed by Branches/Associated Bodies, and to which the Federal Office should ensure a co-ordinated approach, including:

- time for TAFE educators to be involved in the development, implementation and review of curriculum
- the registration and establishment of professional standards for TAFE educators
- teaching and teaching-related duties

That the AEU produce a paper which reflects the above policy and explains our serious educational concerns with, and criticism of, current implementation of training packages.

The paper is to assist the AEU and its Branches/Associated Bodies to explain our policy in a unified

way to union members and the community.

That the production of this paper be a high priority for 2001.