

# Business Enterprise Centre

## TAE50111 Diploma of Vocational Education and Training

### Inside the VET Sector

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the new national vocational education and training course offered by the Business Enterprise Centre, NMIT. For over four years the BEC has conducted the Vocational Education and Training Practicum training package – a Victorian accredited course to over 400 teachers and trainers across Victoria and interstate. The new nationally accredited course has 10 Units which is offered via 10 workshops at the Preston Campus including one full day (Saturday) in order to complete assessment tasks. The main feature of the course is the mentoring component to ensure all participants receive the best advice and support from experienced VET facilitators at NMIT.

### VET Thinking and Practice

The VET sector continues to define itself within the higher education system within Australia. TAFE institutes and private providers compete in the education market for students leading to VET qualifications such as the new Vocational Education and Training package TAE 10. There is the need to ensure that the VET sector actually delivers what it claims it can do and doing it in a way that best serves its users. The BEC model has been designed to accommodate a highly capable teaching and training workforce and makes sure that the VET qualification has value and meaning in the tertiary environment.

In June 2011, the *National Quality Council* issued a Paper on the Nature of Vocational Education and Training. Some of its content is worth discussing as an introduction to the VET course and provides an opportunity to show leadership in the VET sector.

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### Group 1—Discuss A to E

- A) “Australian vocational education and training faces a challenge: if VET is not clear what it is, what it is not, and how it can optimise the benefits to its clients, some of the unique education and training benefits that it provides could be weakened or lost.”
- B) “Twenty years ago, the distinction between the school, vocational education and higher education sectors was easier to make, but over time, the boundaries have blurred and the sectors have begun to overlap.”
- C) While VET might traditionally have been considered as having a single-track occupational focus, this could equally be said of professional streams within higher education.”
- D) “Although VET used to be able to be characterised by the focus on work based learning in many of its programs, several universities now have extensive ‘Work integrated Learning’ programs.”
- E) “The assessment of students against standards of work performance defined by industry, leading to nationally-recognised qualifications. This has been part of the rhetoric of VET since the 1990s, and is still one of the features that industry and individuals say they most value.”

	Workshop Activity 1	The Nature of Vocational Education & Training
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All group members make notes on views expressed in the discussion.


## Group 2—Discuss F to I

- F) “Because vocational qualifications are focussed on developing specific skills and competencies that enable people to be ‘job ready’, workplaces are major sites of learning. Work based learning is a key feature of the design of many VET qualifications.”
- G) “VET practitioners have a dual identity: industry expert and trainer. Their capability as a teacher or trainer is underpinned by relevant industry experience and qualifications and by teaching and assessment competencies relevant to the nature of the job with practitioners being assessed against standards which have been carefully defined.”
- H) “VET programs are often designed specifically to cater to a greater diversity of circumstance, culture, ability, skill and prior educational and work experience than other sectors.”
- I) “While the evidence is not conclusive, VET does seem to play a role in engaging and retaining learners who would otherwise be well-served by the school sector.”

	Workshop Activity 2      The Nature of Vocational Education & Training
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All group members make notes on views expressed in the discussion.


### Group 3—Discuss J to M

- J) “ ... as a consequence of national competency standards, VET can offer flexibility for learners moving between qualifications and institutions. Given that work life is not linear, and many will work in multiple careers in our working lives, this is an important characteristic of VET.”
- K) “At its best VET serves its industries extremely well – industries know what they want, the training places are available, and employers have confidence in the quality of assessment and therefore the value of qualifications. But at its worst, this is far from the case.”
- L) “The role of VET, and the value of VET qualification needs to be better understood and valued in the community. Paradoxically, the best protection for VET and its unique family of characteristics might occur if we stop focussing on sectors, and start thinking about ‘one big sector’ and what it needs to achieve.”
- M) “VET requires teaching of a special nature, underpinned by appropriate standards – and VET teachers are unique among educators in that their teaching qualifications are standard-based.”



#### Workshop Activity 3

#### The Nature of Vocational Education & Training

All group members make notes on views expressed in the discussion.
