



Name: Australian Industry Group

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Improve school student outcomes with the best available tools and resources

What (if anything) needs to be done to improve the use of edtech tools (including GenAI) in schools?

Ai Group believes that improved use of edtech tools in schools cannot be achieved without widespread teacher capability in the application of the tools. With the accelerated introduction of new technologies that young people must learn and that can also enhance teaching quality, continued professional development must be part of new tech introduction and must be provided to teachers consistently – across jurisdictions and ed sectors - to raise teacher confidence.

Quality professional development on edtech tools will encourage more efficient use of teaching time. However the rapid introduction of technologies creates additional pressures on teachers to remain up-to-date. This accelerating tech environment will continue and therefore relates to the acknowledged current and future shortage of teachers. Last year the Department of Education cited previous modelling of teacher demand and supply suggesting that shortages could worsen over the coming years, with the demand for secondary teachers to exceed the supply of new graduate teachers by around 4,100 by 2025. One of several key issues included as contributing to lower uptake of teaching studies and lower retention is workload.

A survey by Samsung in 2024 found that 49% of teachers agree technology has the potential to help teaching staff overcome some of the issues raised by the teacher shortage. Over half of the teachers surveyed said that technology can drive higher engagement with lesson content. The Samsung survey also noted the NSW Department of Education's Schools Digital Strategy states that digitalisation enables teachers to devote more time to one-on-one student support and to be more present in the classroom.

These findings suggest the teacher shortage must be tackled alongside an improvement in the use of tech by the existing cohort of teachers. Mentorship and strong support systems for teachers are included as strategies to help improve usage and teaching efficiency, alleviating workload.

Consistent use of edtech tools requires federal and state government cooperation - to reach a 'harmonised' agreement for consistent introduction of new tools with accompanied teacher support. Some form of collaboration across education sectors, that includes the private system, would achieve the best level of consistency for Australian schools, students and teachers. Notwithstanding the need for widespread use of edtech tools and tech learning in school education, Ai Group strongly believes the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy should remain the cornerstones of education, with the latest tech tools applied to strengthen the learning experience in L&N.

What more (if anything) needs to be done to improve awareness and access to high quality lesson planning and curriculum materials in schools?

The key in achieving high quality lesson planning in all schools is to work towards consistency of access for all Australian teachers, and in turn create consistency in enhanced

learning experiences for all students. The aim must be for equitable access across all cohorts – so that students in rural and remote areas, First Nations students, ethnically and linguistically diverse students, and students from low socio-economic areas are afforded the same opportunities as other mainstream groups through effective teaching. For rural and remote areas digital connectivity is also a factor to be considered to avoid disadvantage.

Across schools, national guidance documents should include benchmarks, leading to better uniformity. Broad access will enable schools to adapt available resources and examples from other schools. Strengthened monitoring through multi-sector committees should follow. Within schools, the guidance could embrace whole school curriculum planning, materials and assessments for units and whole years, in-school discussions, moderation and validation. Industry has a potential role to play in this space. Exposing students to many experiences and opportunities related to an assortment of careers, vocations and enterprises. Tripartite relationships between schools, employers and government can bring about effective enhancements to learning.

Is there anything more you would like to say about edtech, GenAI or lesson planning and curriculum materials?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Which of the following best describes you?

Industry Association

Are you currently using any edtech tools (including learning games and GenAI) to support teaching and learning in the classroom?

No

If yes, what has been your experience with using these tools?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Are there things you would like to do with GenAI or edtech tools that you can't do currently? What's stopping you from doing these things?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you tell us why you are not using any edtech tools?

not relevant

Do you access lesson planning and curriculum materials online?

No

If yes, what has been your experience with using these tools?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you tell us why you are not using online lesson planning and curriculum materials?

Not relevant

Support the workforce through a flexible post-secondary education and training sector

Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning

In your experience, how well does the credit transfer and recognition of prior learning system operate in Australia? Does it adequately support students to move between courses or have their work experience recognised as part of a qualification? Are there ways it could be improved?

Ai Group believes the limited extent and under-use of both credit transfer and recognition of prior learning (RPL) within Australia is hampering the movement of students through the system at a time when appropriate/faster student progress towards qualifications attainment and more flexibility (within quality frameworks) is warranted and will advantage industry as well as learners. Access to the process can suffer from under-promotion, institutional staff can lack assessment capabilities, and funding structures can influence use of the practice.

Notwithstanding that explicit standards and guidance exist for credit transfer and RPL in both tertiary education sectors, stronger mechanisms are needed that will drive conducive cultures and capabilities within institutions, lead to improved systems and processes in each sector, and enhance recognition across the VET and higher education sectors.

Ai Group sees the success of these improvements being contingent on much broader tertiary sector reform. Credit transfer and RPL are hampered by a lack of connection and collaboration between the two sectors of VET and higher education, including the different frameworks for knowledge and skill acquisition, delivery and assessment (eg learning outcomes vs competency-based). Through Ai Group's higher and degree apprenticeship pilots involving VET, higher education and industry partners, Ai Group has increasingly seen members express a need for combinations of knowledge and skills, whereas the development of knowledge and skills has been artificially separated into VET and higher education.

The necessary environment to enable embedded and widespread application of credit transfer and RPL will only be established by progressing action proposed or underway on:

- Australian Qualifications Framework reforms that recognise skills and knowledge are intertwined and do not exist as a ladder progression. Progressing reform of the Australian Qualifications Framework, as proposed by the Review of the Australian Qualifications Framework, is overdue and would reform the current rigid approach.
- a National Skills Taxonomy that uses a common language for skills, more closely linking VET and higher education spheres and the skills used in the workplace
- the establishment of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission as an independent higher education steward that will drive better pathways for students between the VET and higher education sectors
- Jobs and Skills Australia's Harmonisation recommendations which will bring more coordination and cooperation between tertiary system actors, noting recommendations include working towards a national credit transfer system and incentives for VET-higher education collaboration projects.

Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.

Industry Association

In the past 3 years, have you applied for credit recognition or recognition of prior learning (RPL)?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If yes, what was your experience in applying for credit recognition or RPL like?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you elaborate on why you didn't apply?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Work related training

What are the main reasons individuals and/or businesses do or do not participate in work-related training?

Complex drivers, including technological change, clean economy transitions and demographic shifts mean that businesses provide work-related training to transform their businesses, innovate and remain competitive. Through the 2025 World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report, Australian businesses have acknowledged that their fastest-growing skill needs are AI and big data; networks and cyber security; and technology literacy. They also report their most sought-after core skills are analytical thinking; resilience, flexibility and agility; leadership and social influence; and creative skills. The provision of work-related (non-formal) training can build capability in most of these areas. For example, 92% of Australian companies surveyed said they will reskill and upskill their existing workforce as a result of AI's increasing capability and prevalence. Accordingly, Ai Group's 2025 Industry Outlook found that staff training and development ranks as the top investment priority for businesses. 42% of businesses plan to maintain their investment and 40% plan to increase their investment in staff training. Continued workforce shortages are another reason that employers prioritise work-related training for existing staff.

However, businesses also report pessimism about business conditions, cost pressures and low margins for 2025 which can constrain the provision of work-related training. For many, their necessary time and spend on compliance-related training to meet laws and regulations can be large, must be undertaken as a priority, and puts a squeeze on rolling-out broader work-related training. Ai Group members have indicated this to be a barrier to broader investment in training.

The workplace is an important site for successful, context-driven learning. Ai Group has observed that over the last decade, the focus on workplace training in education and training policy settings and associated funding arrangements in Australia has diminished.

While there are pockets of good practice where training providers – both vocational education and training and universities – work with employers to provide training in a way that reflects business needs, this is not system-wide. For example, block release remains the predominant form of training delivery. This model does not align well with how companies need to conduct their business operations. Delivery models, as well as learning content, need to be aligned to industry need to support a culture of work-related training.

Employers also demonstrate commitment to work-related training, and a culture of

workplace learning, by registering as Enterprise RTOs (ERTOs). Through their registered status such employers fund their own nationally recognised training infrastructure. A 2022 NCVER study cited ERTOs regarding their status as minimal risk to regulatory authorities because poor-quality delivery would, in the end, harm their business. Because delivery is aligned with the ERTO's business policies and expectations, the knowledge, skills and capabilities a student needs to do the job at the required level are identified first and then mapped to fit relevant units of competency. Ai Group understands that in recent years the number of ERTOs in Australia has fallen. Ai Group has heard businesses discuss the pressures of overwhelming RTO compliance and financial costs, with businesses making the decision not to seek initial registration for these reasons or ceasing their ERTO operations. Potentially this is another source of constraint on work-related training.

What role, if any, should businesses be playing to address any barriers and better support the offer of work-related training to employees?

Businesses benefit from future-oriented workforce plans that map the reskilling and upskilling needs of employees. However they need easy access to a broad range of up-to-date, relevant work-related training available to them so they can identify those programs suited to their own employees' reskilling and upskilling needs. A broad range of short courses and microcredentials with flexible options for delivery (on- or off-site, online or in person) should be easily accessible from public and private VET providers and universities, or materials available for in-house trainers.

Businesses can play their part by connecting with VET and higher education providers (whichever is relevant to their work-related training needs) to help establish and maintain cooperative relationships and cultures. As well as expressing their training needs, they can assure relevance through involvement in co-design, co-development of content, co-delivery and co-assessment. All of this will increase the quality, relevance and availability of the training. Support for industry engagement is important, particularly for smaller businesses. On the flip-side training providers must facilitate improved collaboration with businesses, including strengthening communication gateways for companies and flexibility in delivery options.

At a broader level, improved connections between businesses, universities and VET providers can strengthen work integrated learning (WIL) and work-based learning (WBL) arrangements, as well as involvement in higher and degree apprenticeships, resulting in graduates in the business with company-specific applied knowledge and skills, and sought-after core employability skills. This provides a stronger skills base in companies from which future work-related training needs will spring.

What, if anything, could government do to address barriers and better support the offer of work-related training to employees?

While a strong skills infrastructure has been built in recent years through Jobs and Skills Australia, the Jobs and Skills Councils, TAFE Centre of Excellence, qualifications reform, and Fee-Free TAFE, the emphasis has been on qualifications over non-formal work-related training (while innovative examples of short courses/microcredentials have been developed). The focus has also increasingly been on institutional delivery and funding, potentially at the expense of the workplace.

The offer of work-related training to employees can be increased through the following government support options:

- funding support to businesses for reskilling and upskilling, including through tax incentives and/or co-funded training. The two public policies most favoured to increase

talent availability among Australian employers surveyed for the 2025 World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report were funding for reskilling and upskilling (49%), and provision of reskilling and upskilling (49%). There are several models that could be considered in the Australian context:

- o For example, the Industry Skills Fund, which existed from around 2015 to 2016, combined co-funded training for employers to provide workplace training linked to business growth opportunities with tailored advice to select the most appropriate training for the specific business need. Ai Group was supportive of this program. Other models include the Productivity Places Program, which was part of the Skilling Australians for the Future initiative.

- o Singapore's SkillsFuture program provides a model that includes subsidies for businesses that sponsor their employees for training.

- o Incentivising education and training providers to develop and provide flexible delivery models that are suited to business needs and operations, as well as innovative short courses and microcredentials, which would necessitate closer relationships with industry and businesses for content and delivery to be relevant and future-focused.

- o Removing barriers/supporting ERTOs to allow more employers to take up registration from which would flow low-risk quality education and work-related training focussed on business and individual employee needs.

- o Reducing the complexity of compliance related requirements to free up more company resources for work-related training.

- o Finally, given the high importance placed on digital literacy and the need for businesses to adopt a human-centric approach to digital technologies, the expansion and continuation of the work-related training Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program is an important workplace-contextualised mechanism for employee development in digital literacy and in foundation skills more broadly. This program can help to support the almost nine in ten employers affected by low levels of literacy and numeracy directly related to productivity measures, as identified in the 2024 Counting the Cost report by the Ai Group Centre for Education and Training. The program should be well promoted amongst employers and their employees. Ai Group has called for a formative evaluation of this program.

Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.

I am a business owner; manager or sole trader

For business owners, managers and sole traders, how many employees do you have?

The participant did not respond to this question.

For employees/individuals, have you participated in any work-related training in the last 12 months that did not relate to general compliance (such as WHS)?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If yes, can you elaborate on the reasons for the training and any benefits you received from doing it?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you elaborate on any challenges or barriers you faced in attempting to undertake work-related training?

The participant did not respond to this question.

For business owners, managers or sole traders, have you provided or supported your employees to participate in work-related training in the past 12 months?

Yes

If yes, can you elaborate on the reasons for the training and any benefits you or your employees received from doing it?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Can you describe whether you accessed any government assistance, what type, and the amount received? If you didn't access any financial assistance, please tell us the reasons why.

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you elaborate on any challenges or barriers you faced in attempting to provide or support your employees to undertake work-related training, such as the time or cost, availability of relevant or high-quality courses, and level of interest from your employees?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Balance service availability and quality through fit-for-purpose occupational entry regulations

What are the effects of occupational entry regulations? Please describe your experience and name the specific occupations you are referring to.

The participant did not respond to this question.

Do you believe current occupational entry regulations are proportionate to the level of risk associated with different professions? Why or why not? If not, do you have any suggested improvements to regulations to better reflect risks? Please name the specific occupations you are referring to.

The participant did not respond to this question.

Which of the following best describes your connection to occupational entry regulations? Please select all that apply.

The participant did not respond to this question.

Which state or territory are you predominantly based in?

The participant did not respond to this question.