



Strengthening teaching practice and psychosocial support

Research report

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Publisher's note

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This document should be attributed as Griffin T, Wibrow B, Andrahannadi U, Ackehurst M, Waugh J and Schueler J 2026, *Strengthening teaching practice and psychosocial support*, NCVER, Adelaide.

This work has been produced by NCVER on behalf of the Australian Government and state and territory governments, with funding provided through the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

COVER IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES

ISBN 978-1-922801-40-1
TD/TNC 166.04

Published by NCVER, ABN 87 007 967 311

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Acknowledgments

This research reflects the contributions of many people who generously shared their time, perspectives and expertise across the research process.

We are particularly grateful to the participants who contributed to the research activities throughout the project. Their experiences and insights helped shape both the direction of the research and the thinking presented in this report.

We also thank the individuals and organisations who helped promote research activities and encouraged participation across the sector. Their support helped ensure a diversity of voices and experiences were represented.

Our appreciation extends to those who hosted workshops and created spaces for meaningful discussion, reflection and collaboration.

Finally, we acknowledge the VET Workforce Team at the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) for their input, engagement and support throughout the project.



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Key Messages



Key Messages

This report presents findings from the research project *Strengthening Teaching Practice and Informing Psychosocial Teaching Methodology*, which examined the changing nature of VET teaching and the increasing psychosocial challenges affecting teaching and learning.

Aligned with Action 3 of the *VET Workforce Blueprint*, the project explored the preparedness of teachers for contemporary VET roles, the adequacy of initial teacher training, and the ongoing development of teaching capability.

The findings provide new insights into the complex environment in which VET teachers operate and identify opportunities to strengthen both teaching practice and psychosocial support across the sector. Eight key messages emerged from the research and are presented below.

1. The challenges facing VET teachers are interconnected, persistent and cumulative

This research shows that the challenges experienced by VET teachers do not occur in isolation. Compliance pressures, workload intensity, workforce constraints, increasing diversity of learner needs, psychosocial support demands and resource limitations interact within a broader teaching ecosystem, shaping the day-to-day realities of teaching. While many of these issues have been identified previously, including through consultation for the *VET Workforce Blueprint*, participants continue to report them as significant and unresolved challenges. Their persistence suggests these are deeply embedded issues within the VET system.

Importantly, teacher strain is not driven by any single factor. Rather, it arises from the cumulative impact of managing multiple, interconnected demands simultaneously. The findings suggest that understanding teacher experiences requires moving beyond viewing challenges as separate issues and recognising how they combine and compound one another in practice. This persistence also highlights a gap between recognising challenges and implementing sustainable solutions that address the complexity of the environment in which VET teachers operate.

2. Psychosocial support is now a core part of the teaching environment

Teachers increasingly support students whose barriers to learning extend beyond course content to include mental health challenges, behavioural regulation difficulties, low motivation, literacy and learning readiness issues, digital exclusion and broader wellbeing concerns. Teachers report a range of behavioural issues in the learning environment, which have significant impacts on teaching and learning, affecting both individual students and the wider learning environment.

3. There is no single solution to psychosocial complexity

Teachers are continually balancing the task of supporting increasingly complex learner needs while maintaining their primary teaching role. Teachers operate in a constant tension between rising student complexity and limited system capacity that often lacks the time, staffing, specialist support, resources, and coordination to respond effectively.

Complex student challenges, including psychosocial impacts, are unlikely to be eliminated from the VET environment. The goal is therefore not to remove this tension entirely, but to better support teachers in navigating it. Effective responses require sustained, coordinated and multi-faceted approaches rather than simple or one-off interventions.

Teachers also want practical tools. This research resulted in the development of a psychosocial support cycle to help teachers navigate supporting the psychosocial needs of their students, but change in the broader system is required to ensure its effectiveness.

Key Messages (cont)

4. Teachers need capability, capacity and clarity

Teachers generally reported confidence in recognising students who require support and responding appropriately. However, many felt overwhelmed by the volume and diversity of needs they encounter. Their ability to effectively support students depends on:

- capability to recognise and respond to learner needs
- capacity through manageable workloads, time and resources
- clarity regarding their role, responsibilities and boundaries.

5. System conditions shape what teachers can achieve

Teacher effectiveness is heavily influenced by factors beyond individual control, including organisational leadership, staffing levels, enrolment processes, workload expectations and access to specialist support. Many teachers reported feeling responsible for student outcomes while experiencing difficulties accessing the support systems required to address underlying issues.

Participants described support systems that can be difficult to access, fragmented and reactive. There was strong support for improved pre-enrolment processes, earlier intervention, clearer referral pathways, better coordination of services and greater investment in both student and teacher support.

6. VET teachers require an educator mindset

The research highlights the importance of developing an educator mindset that extends beyond compliance and industry expertise. Teachers are required to continually adapt their practice in response to changing learner needs, technologies, delivery contexts and workforce demands. In this environment, best practice is never static. Teachers require adaptive intelligence—the ability to continuously adjust, learn and respond to changing circumstances.

The development of teaching skills is a critical enabler of quality outcomes in VET. Alongside industry currency, strong teaching capability supports learner success, teacher confidence and organisational quality. Elevating the status of teaching expertise may require fostering educator identity, professionalising the workforce, strengthening guidance around teaching currency and recognising teaching excellence across the sector.

7. Initial teacher training alone is insufficient to prepare and support VET teachers

Many participants viewed the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment as heavily focused on compliance requirements, suggesting it does not adequately prepare teachers for the realities of contemporary teaching, including classroom management, supporting diverse learners and responding to psychosocial challenges. While the latest version of the qualification was often viewed as an improvement, concerns remain about both its content and delivery.

Given the diversity of pathways into VET teaching, novice teachers enter the profession with varying levels of teaching capability and preparedness. As a result, initial teacher training must be complemented by workplace support. Structured onboarding, mentoring, workload management, meaningful professional development and growth-oriented leadership were identified as useful mechanisms for building teacher capability and confidence. While novice teachers benefit from being proactive regarding their own development, training providers play a central role in creating the conditions that enable teachers to grow and succeed in their roles.

8. The professional development challenge is implementation, not identification

The strategies for developing the skills of teachers are not new. Effective practices for supporting teachers, developing teaching capability and assisting novice educators are well known. The ongoing challenge lies in implementing these practices consistently across diverse training providers. Future efforts may need to focus less on identifying solutions and more on creating mechanisms that support their adoption and sustainability.

Effective professional development extends beyond attendance at training activities. Teachers need opportunities to reflect, share practice, trial new approaches and receive ongoing support as they embed new skills.



Introduction



Introduction

Background

This report presents the findings of the research project *Strengthening Teaching Practice and Informing Psychosocial Teaching Methodology*.

The project investigated the development of effective teaching practices and strategies to support the psychosocial needs of VET learners. It aligns with Action 3 of the VET Workforce Blueprint, which aims to strengthen the evidence base on key workforce issues across the sector (Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council 2024a).

Through a series of interconnected project stages, the research examined:

- effective teaching practices across diverse VET delivery settings and RTO types
- the nature of increasingly complex psychosocial challenges experienced by teachers and students, and their impacts on teaching and learning
- initial teacher development, including perceptions of the extent to which the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) equips teachers with the skills needed for effective teaching and student support
- ongoing teacher development, including the teaching capabilities required in contemporary VET practice and how these can be identified, developed and embedded in practice.

The findings provide insights into the changing nature of the VET teaching role and identify opportunities to strengthen teaching practice and psychosocial support across the sector.

Research approach

The project was undertaken in a series of stages using multiple data collection methods, as illustrated in figure 1 and described briefly below. Further details of the methodology are provided in Appendix A.

Data collected through these activities were analysed and triangulated to form the evidence base for this report. In addition, a suite of additional publications, practical resources and support products was developed, as shown in figure 2.

Literature review

The first stage of the project involved conducting a literature review, which included discussion on:

- The complexity of teaching in VET and the VET educator workforce
- Effective teaching in VET: from competence to excellence
- Teacher training: from initial teaching qualifications to professional development
- Psychosocial impacts: students and teachers.

This literature review (available in the support document) identified gaps in the evidence and was used to inform the subsequent activities in the research project.

National survey of VET teaching experiences

A national survey of current VET teachers and assessors was conducted from October 2025 to January 2026 to collect data on the challenges they face in their teaching roles, their experiences with student behaviour and psychosocial challenges, and the impacts of these on teaching and learning. It also explored teacher confidence in supporting students' learning needs and the use and effectiveness of professional development related to these challenges.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with novice and experienced VET teachers, teachers delivering the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, and other relevant training provider staff, such as RTO managers, teacher professional development managers, education managers and portfolio leaders.

The semi-structured interviews aimed to collect data on career and qualification pathways into VET teaching roles, the effectiveness of initial teacher training in preparing VET teachers for their roles, and how professional development needs are identified and addressed.

Introduction (cont)

National research workshops

The final stage of data collection involved a series of in-person research workshops, held in each state and territory across Australia. Workshop participants included novice and experienced VET teachers, teachers delivering the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, and other relevant training provider staff, such as RTO managers, teacher professional development managers, education managers and portfolio leaders.

Informed by the national survey and semi-structured interviews, the workshops aimed to further explore:

- managing and supporting a diverse learning environment including psychosocial impacts
- supporting educators to build upon their teaching practices
- implementing new teaching skills: moving from theory to practice.

Terminology and definitions

This publication uses the term ‘teacher’ to encompass all the terms, often used interchangeably, that refer to those who deliver training and/or assess competency in VET, including but not limited to ‘VET teacher’, ‘practitioner’, ‘trainer’, ‘educator’, ‘assessor’ and ‘lecturer’ (as used in Misko, Guthrie & Waters 2021).

Teacher experience was considered in different parts of this project. They were defined as:

- ‘novice’ or ‘early career’ – less than five years teaching experience
- ‘mid-career’ – five to nine years teaching experience
- ‘experienced’ – ten or more years teaching experience.

The term ‘classroom’ is used to describe any learning environment in VET, which may include, but not be limited to traditional classrooms, workplaces, workshops, simulated workplace environments, online delivery and on-country training.

Psychosocial factors refer to the emotional, social, psychological, and environmental needs and challenges that influence a learner’s wellbeing, sense of safety, and ability to participate in and successfully engage with vocational education and training¹. These factors include both conditions that support learning and barriers that may impact engagement and progress.

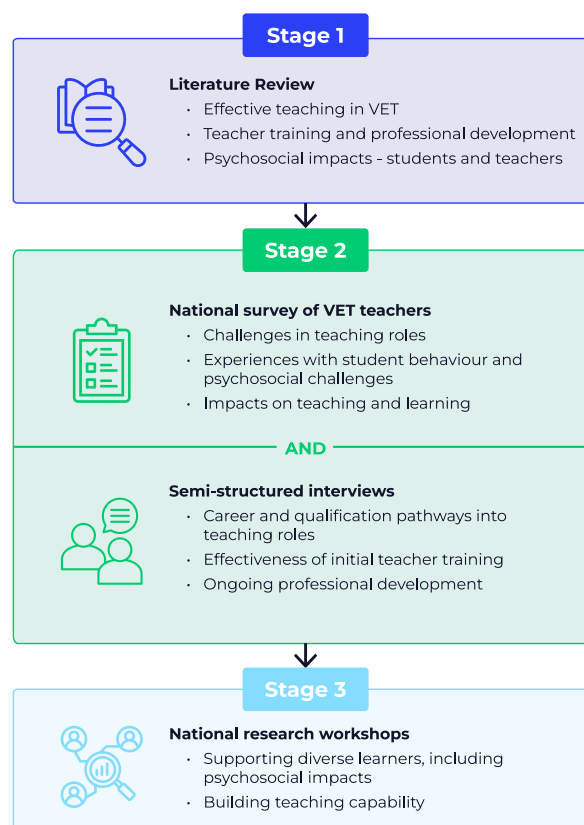
Foundation skills are the core skills or competencies that underpin workforce participation, productivity, and social inclusion (Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council 2024b). They include LLND and employability skills.

Language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills include listening, speaking, reading, writing, numeracy (the use of mathematical ideas) and digital literacy (Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council 2024b).

Employability skills are a set of non-technical skills, knowledge and understandings that underpin successful participation in work, such as initiative and innovation, planning and organising, problem solving and teamwork (Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council 2024b).

‘Registered Training Organisations’ (RTOs) or ‘training providers’ refer to training organisations that are authorised to deliver nationally recognised training. Some interviewees referred to their training providers as ‘institutes’.

Figure 1 Research activities conducted through the project



¹ This definition was developed based on the literature review (see the Support document) and was refined based on the data collected throughout this project.

Introduction (cont)

Structure of this report

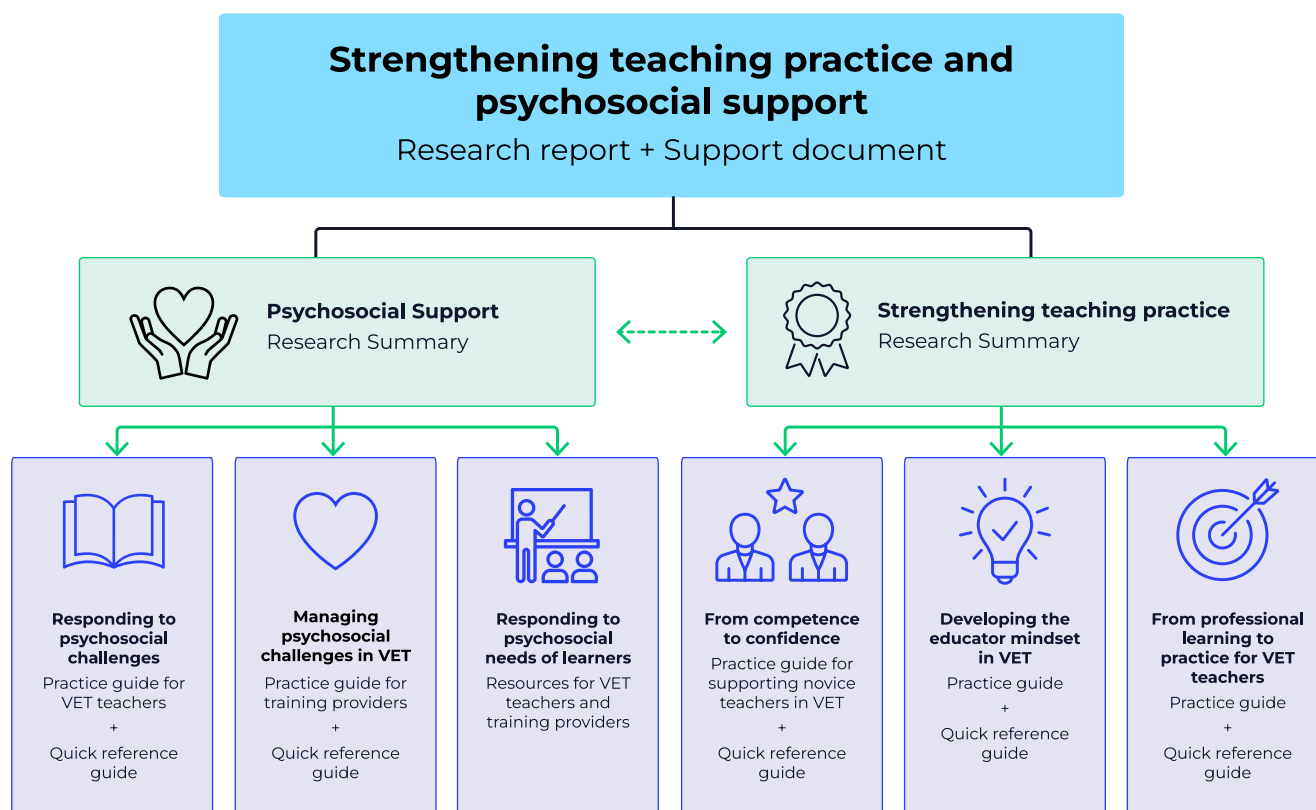
This report contains the following sections:

- **The teaching experience** – explores the challenges teachers experience in their teaching roles, including those due to student behaviour.
- **Providing psychosocial support** – explores the factors influencing teachers' ability to support the psychosocial needs of their students and manage the impacts of psychosocial challenges on teaching and learning. This chapter presents a proposed psychosocial support cycle.

- **Initial teacher development** – explores initial teacher training and supporting novice teachers.
- **Ongoing teacher development** - explores the importance of developing teaching skills and the identification, development and application of these skills.

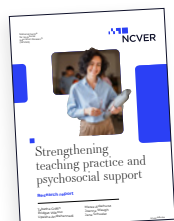
Additional publications developed through this project are shown in figure 2 and described in table 1.

Figure 2 Outputs of the research project



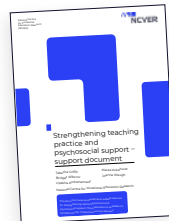
Introduction (cont)

Table 1 The full suite of products from this research project



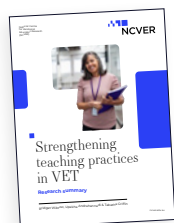
Strengthening teaching practice and psychosocial support: Research report

Research findings on teaching practice and psychosocial challenges in the VET sector.



Strengthening teaching practice and psychosocial support: Support document

Includes some additional supporting evidence related to professional development and the importance of psychosocial support for teachers, as well as the initial literature review.



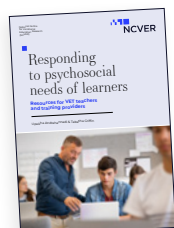
Strengthening teaching practices in VET: Research summary

Summarises the research related to strengthening teaching practices in VET.



Understanding psychosocial challenges and support in VET: Research summary

Summarises the research related to the teacher experience of psychosocial challenges and how teachers can support psychosocial needs.



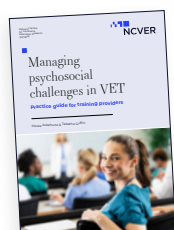
Responding to psychosocial needs of learners: Resources for VET teachers and training providers

Resources to support VET teachers in recognising, responding to and referring learners for specialised support.



From competence to confidence: Practice guide for supporting novice teachers in VET + Quick reference guide

Key conditions and strategies for supporting novice teachers as they develop in their teaching roles.



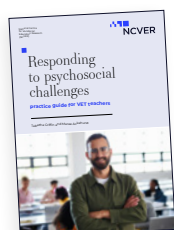
Managing psychosocial challenges in VET: Practice guide for training providers + Quick reference guide

Practical advice for training providers on supporting psychosocial needs in learners and teacher wellbeing.



Developing the educator mindset in VET: Practice guide + Quick reference guide

Explores the importance of developing and sustaining an educator mindset in VET.



Responding to psychosocial challenges: Practice guide for VET teachers + Quick reference guide

A guide for VET teachers on recognising, responding to and supporting learners experiencing psychosocial challenges.



From professional learning to practice for VET teachers: Practice guide + Quick reference guide

Effective approaches for embedding new teaching skills and sustaining improvements in practice.



The teaching experience



The teaching experience

Key findings and implications



- Teachers face increasingly complex and multifaceted roles, compounded by growing student diversity and increasing student support needs, including psychosocial challenges.
- Student behaviours described by teachers commonly related to interconnected aspects of learner participation and engagement, including:
 - » accountability and participation in learning
 - » engagement and motivation
 - » behavioural regulation and classroom conduct
 - » emotional wellbeing and mental health
 - » foundation skill levels and learning readiness
 - » perceptions of VET relevance, support and future opportunities.
- These behaviours do not occur in isolation but are often influenced by a combination of psychosocial, educational and motivational factors that affect learners' capacity to engage, participate and succeed in their studies.
- Psychosocial challenges are having a significant impact on teaching and learning in VET. Teachers report that associated behaviours can disrupt classroom delivery and affect the learning of both the student experiencing the challenge and their peers.
- In response, teachers are increasingly supporting students whose barriers to learning extend beyond course content to include mental health concerns, low motivation, difficulties with behavioural regulation, literacy challenges, limited digital access, and broader wellbeing issues. However, many expressed concern about the limits of their role and their capacity to safely manage these complex needs.
- While teachers generally feel confident in identifying students who require support and providing appropriate assistance, many reported feeling overwhelmed by the volume and diversity of student needs. This suggests that the challenge is less about recognising or responding to individual learning support needs and more about supporting multiple students with complex and diverse needs while balancing the many other demands of their role.

Context

Teaching in the VET sector is a complex role that involves many interconnected responsibilities, including selecting appropriate teaching approaches, responding to learning and support needs, engaging students, conducting assessment, developing content and meeting compliance requirements (Griffin & Davidson 2025). Adding to this complexity, teachers report increasing student diversity and more complex support needs, including those that are psychosocial in nature.



The teaching experience (cont)

There has been limited research into the presence and nature of psychosocial factors in the VET context and their impact on both students and teachers. For this reason, one objective of this project was to gather empirical evidence from teaching staff about their experiences in the teaching role, particularly in relation to psychosocial impacts in the classroom. The concept of psychosocial factors within the VET context, as defined in the terminology section, is explored further below.

The primary source of evidence was the national survey of VET teaching experiences. The survey asked current teachers about the student circumstances, behaviours and attitudes they find challenging to support; their confidence in identifying and responding to students' learning needs; and the extent to which student behaviour associated with psychosocial factors disrupts teaching and learning. Findings from the survey are presented in this chapter and are supplemented by insights from interviews and workshops.

Overall, the findings present a challenging picture. While participating teachers were passionate about teaching and committed to supporting student success, they reported significant pressures across many aspects of their role. This chapter first explores the broader challenges teachers experience and then focuses on challenges related to student behaviour, including those associated with psychosocial factors, and the impacts these have on teaching practice. These issues are considered across all survey respondents, as well as split by:

- experience level of the teacher – early-career (0-4 years experience), mid-career (5-9 years) and experienced (10+ years)
- delivery mode – face-to-face versus online delivery
- four different training packages (Business Services, Community Services, Construction, Plumbing and Services, and Foundation Skills).

Challenges experienced in the VET teaching role

While this project focused on how teachers can build teaching capability and better manage psychosocial impacts in the classroom, it is important to understand the broader range of challenges teachers experience across their roles.

VET teachers who responded to the survey were asked, 'What do you find most challenging about your VET teaching/training job?'. Responses were coded into specific challenges (shown in the 'specific challenges' column in Table 2) and then grouped into five broad challenge categories. Note that many survey respondents provided more than one challenge, and up to four were coded.

These challenges were also reflected in interviews and workshop discussions. Collectively, they suggest that VET teachers are balancing:

- compliance demands
- increasing learner complexity
- administrative workload
- pressure to maintain student engagement and outcomes
- emotional labour.

The need to manage these competing demands highlights the expanding role of the VET teacher. The role is not only educational, but is increasingly behavioural, emotional, technological and administrative. The data suggests that educator strain is not caused by a single issue, but by the cumulative interaction of compliance pressures, workload intensity, learner complexity and growing demands for psychosocial support.

The teaching experience (cont)

Table 2 Teaching role challenges reported by teachers, grouped by challenge type

Challenge type	Specific challenges (n=746 respondents)	Key insight/s	Impact
Student engagement	Disengaged/disinterest (14%) Poor attendance & punctuality (7%) Lack of motivation/apathy (6%) Lack of commitment (6%) Lack of attention/focus (5%)	Indicates growing challenges in learner engagement and self-management. Student readiness is a major pressure point, contributing to engagement issues.	The role of educators is expanding beyond content delivery into motivation, behavioural support, and capability-building.
Administration	Administration (14%) Compliance (12%) Time (11%) Assessment (9%) Workload (7%) Currency (5%) Training Package management (3%)	Teachers report being pulled between education and administration. Teachers may feel they are spending increasing time 'proving' learning rather than delivering learning.	Shows educators are operating in a highly regulated environment where compliance and administration demands compete with quality teaching time.
Organisational support	Management Support & Leadership (10%) Resources (7%) Professional Development (5%)	Organisational support appears critical. Suggests concern whether educators feel adequately supported, trained, equipped and consulted.	Staff capability and morale are strongly linked to leadership quality, resourcing and meaningful professional development.
Student diversity	Diverse learning levels (10%) LLND (9%) Class size (3%)	Increasing student diversity creates complexity in delivery. Highlights the challenge of teaching students with very different abilities, backgrounds, literacy levels and support needs within the same environment.	Suggests a need for the adoption of delivery models that facilitate learning in diverse learners with varied learner capability.
Psychosocial challenges	Student misbehaviour (8%) Diverse learner needs (8%) Student mental health (5%) Poor/bad/negative attitudes (5%)	Psychosocial and wellbeing factors are affecting learning. Shows that classrooms are increasingly shaped by emotional, behavioural and social complexity.	Teaching in VET requires strong relational, emotional and adaptive intelligence alongside technical expertise.

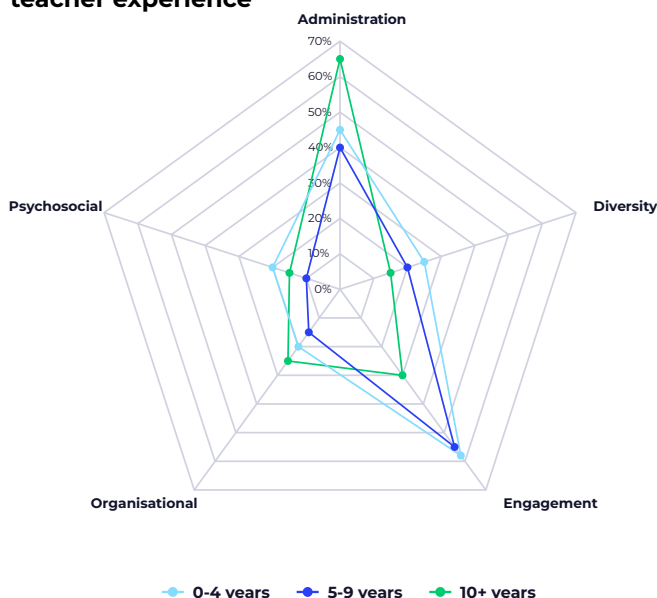
Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Notes: Some survey respondents listed more than one challenge; data for up to four responses included. Some of the specific challenges are not mutually exclusive and can also belong to more than one challenge type.

The teaching experience (cont)

The nature of teacher challenges shifts across career stages. Figure 3 shows that experienced teachers (the green line) are more likely to report administrative and organisational demands, while early- and mid-career teachers (light and dark blue lines, respectively) are more likely to report student engagement and psychosocial-related pressures. This indicates there may be a need for career stage specific support strategies. Further detail is provided in table B1 in Appendix B.

Figure 3 Challenge types experienced by years of teacher experience



Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Notes: Many respondents provided multiple responses to the open-ended question, data for up to four responses included.

The profile of challenges also varied across the four training packages examined (see table B2 in Appendix B). Of note, teachers delivering the Foundation Skills training package were more likely to report challenges related to student diversity, student engagement and psychosocial than those delivering the other three training packages. This may reflect the characteristics of the student cohort accessing foundation skills training.

Teachers delivering the Construction, Plumbing and Services (CPC) training package were less likely to report administrative challenges, but there may be an interplay between training package and experience, with the participating CPC teachers having less experience than those in the other training packages (noting that early-

career teachers were less likely to report administrative challenges, as described above).

The challenge profile for teachers delivering face-to-face training and online training did not differ markedly (see table B3 in Appendix B). While interviewees and workshop participants reported that student engagement was harder to maintain in the online environment, data from the survey did not reflect this with student engagement-related challenges reported by similar proportions in each group (27% for face-to-face teachers, 23% for online teachers).

Shifting the focus more directly onto the teachers' experience of student behaviour and support, survey participants were asked the question 'What student behaviours, attitudes and/or circumstances do you find challenging to support in your teaching/training?'

Table 3 shows that student disengagement and lack of accountability were major behavioural challenges. Specific behaviours were linked to low motivation to participate in training, including a lack of interest, minimal commitment and attending class for reasons unrelated to personal learning goals. These issues were also raised in interviews and workshops, leading to discussions about enrolment processes and teacher expectations (discussed further in the next chapter). Participants also noted that these behaviours can create frustration among students who are motivated to learn.

I feel frustrated by the lack of determination or interest in completing their qualifications. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, NSW)

Students' attitude towards learning tends to be negative. It takes a lot of energy from me, as a trainer, to motivate and engage students and get them interested. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, Vic.)

Many of my students do not want to be there ... (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

Students that are forced to be at TAFE by school or parents are not motivated to be there and waste everyone's time. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, WA)

I would like, in an ideal world, to have students come to my course wanting to learn and possibly make a career from it, rather than just filling in seats because they think it will be easy just to show up and use everyone else in the classroom to get them through. Because the other students actually want to learn. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

The teaching experience (cont)

Table 3 Student behaviours, attitudes and/or circumstances reported by teachers, grouped by broad category

Broad category	Specific behaviours (n=714)	Key insight/s	Impact
Student engagement	Disengagement/disinterest (22%) Motivation & Apathy (16%) Lack of commitment (8%) Perceived value/Purpose/intent (6%)	Student engagement appears strongly influenced by whether students perceive learning as meaningful, valuable, achievable and connected to their goals (if they have any) or identity. Suggests that many students will not engage if they 'have to be there' (Centrelink benefits, job requirement).	Teachers find it difficult to teach students who do not want to be there.
Student accountability	Non-attendance & lateness (17%) Entitlement/expectations (11%) Distractions – Phones/devices (7%) Accountability/responsibility (6%)	Suggests tension between student autonomy, responsibility, classroom expectations, and engagement behaviours.	Educators are navigating student attitudes toward responsibility, boundaries, participation and learning culture.
Behavioural challenges	Disruptive/poor/immature behaviour (15%) Disrespect (10%) Attitude (10%) Attention (7%) Resistance to feedback/help (5%) Aggression/abuse/violence (4%)	Learning challenges may not solely reflect academic ability, but also psychosocial, neurological and mental health factors that impact concentration, regulation and confidence. Indicates behaviour may often be a visible expression of disengagement, frustration, unmet needs, or emotional dysregulation.	Learning challenges impact teaching effectiveness/ quality and result in uncertainty about role boundaries.
Emotional and mental health	Mental Health (11%) Undiagnosed/undeclared (6%) Disorders (various specified) (5%) Neurodivergence (5%) Student Anxiety (4%)	Indicates that emotional wellbeing and cognitive diversity are major influences on student participation and performance. May result in observable and disruptive behavioural challenges and disengagement.	Emotional and mental health factors are affecting learning capacity.
Foundation skills	LLN (6%) Learning ability (5%) ESL/Language barriers (4%) Needs/difficulties (4%) Digital literacy (4%)	Students are entering education with highly varied language, literacy, numeracy, digital, and cognitive readiness levels, increasing the complexity of teaching and support.	Foundational capability gaps are impacting participation and behaviour.

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Notes: Some survey respondents listed more than one behaviour; data for up to four responses included). Some of the specific behaviours are not mutually exclusive and can also belong to more than one broad category.

The teaching experience (cont)

Disengagement can also reflect additional learning needs including those related to foundation skills. Some workshop participants noted that 'basic literacy and numeracy skills are still the largest challenge in the classroom'. Students with additional learning needs, including foundation skills, may demonstrate embarrassment and shame, low self-esteem, low confidence, frustration, avoidance of participation, assessment anxiety and dependence on teacher support. These learning needs may also reflect broader emotional, social, cognitive and environmental pressures, rather than purely academic challenges.

... basic maths is a major problem. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Qld)

I have found the level of spelling and proper grammar has dropped considerably in the last few years with some students unable to spell even the most basic words. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, SA)

A higher level of basics is required for students entering the trade. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

These findings highlight that teaching practice is impacted by:

- changing complexity of student engagement
- understanding the drivers of student disengagement
- interplay of motivation, behaviour and learning readiness.

Further, student behaviours are interconnected across:

- psychosocial wellbeing
- motivation
- behavioural regulation
- literacy and learning readiness
- perceptions of VET relevance and support.

Educators are increasingly supporting students whose barriers to learning extend beyond course content into mental health, motivation, behavioural regulation, literacy, digital access and personal wellbeing. Workshop participants also acknowledged this broadening of their role and expressed concerns about limitations in their ability to safely manage these complex issues. These challenges are also reflected in the impacts of student behaviour on teaching and teachers, as explored in the survey (table 4).

Table 4 The impacts of student behaviour on teaching and teachers (n=731)

	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
Student behaviour has become more challenging since I started teaching	44	23	15	18
Student behaviour negatively impacts my ability to teach at least once a week	28	29	22	21
I feel overwhelmed by student support needs at least once a week	20	28	25	27
Student behaviour negatively impacts my enjoyment of teaching at least once a week	31	27	21	21
I have thought about leaving VET teaching/training in the last six months	31	18	12	38

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

The teaching experience (cont)

The data shows that around two-thirds of survey respondents believe student behaviour has become more challenging since they began teaching. This perception was more common among teachers with greater experience (72% of those teaching for 5–9 years and 69% of those teaching for 10 years or more), likely reflecting the longer period over which they have observed change (see table B4 in Appendix B for data by teaching experience). However, this view was not limited to experienced teachers. More than half of novice teachers (59%) also reported that student behaviour had become more challenging, despite their shorter time in the role, although around half of these respondents only partly agreed with the statement. This perception was similar across the four training packages examined, except was slightly lower for those delivering foundation skills training (table B8, Appendix B).

The impacts of student behaviour on teaching and providing support are reported to be significant. Almost 60% of the teachers surveyed reported that it impacts their ability to teach, and around half feel overwhelmed by student support needs at least once a week. This did not vary greatly by teaching experience. Perhaps unsurprisingly, teachers delivering face-to-face were more likely to report that student behaviour impacts their ability to teach (59%) compared to those delivering online (46%)(table B12, Appendix B).

Table 4 also shows that student behaviour negatively impacts the enjoyment of teaching for around 60% of teachers. Approximately half of the teachers surveyed reported that they have considered leaving VET teaching in the last six months, although this ranges from 44% for novice teachers to 52% for the most experienced teachers (table B4, Appendix B). The survey did not explore the reasons why teachers have considered this, but discussions with interviewees and workshop participants suggested that the pressure of the many complex challenges faced by teachers is at least partly responsible.

The survey also explored teachers' confidence in supporting students and the impact of student support needs on planned teaching activities (Table 5). The findings indicate that most teachers feel confident in identifying and responding to students' learning needs. This was true for all levels of teaching experience, although the sentiment was stronger for more experienced teachers (table B5, Appendix B). It was also very high across all four training packages (table B9, Appendix B) and for both delivery modes (table B13, Appendix B). When considered alongside the

earlier finding that many teachers feel overwhelmed by student support demands, this suggests that the sense of overwhelm may stem less from a lack of knowledge or capability and more from the time and attention required to support multiple students with diverse needs simultaneously. Workshop participants confirmed the challenge of managing the diverse needs of multiple students, often in the one class.

Most survey respondents reported that they understand why students are not engaged in learning, and that this understanding helps them respond effectively. Novice teachers were slightly less confident in their understanding of why students are disengaged (80%) compared to mid-career and experienced trainers (87% and 89% respectively)(table B2, Appendix B).

Around 80% of the teachers surveyed reported that undeclared student learning needs impact their planned teaching schedule at least once a week (table 5).

This did not vary markedly by teacher experience (table B5, Appendix B) or by training package being delivered (table B9, Appendix B), but appeared slightly higher in those teachers delivering online (78%) compared to face-to-face (69%)(table B13, Appendix B).

Workshop participants noted a desire for information gathered during the pre-enrolment process to be shared with them, to help address the challenges of unknown student needs. However, the usefulness of this is limited if students do not declare their support needs, or where new needs emerge. This highlights a pressure point for teachers, who must be highly adaptive as student support needs evolve.

The teaching experience (cont)

Table 5 Understanding of student support needs (n=752)

	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
I feel confident to identify student learning needs	68	29	3	1
I feel confident to support students' identified needs	51	40	7	2
When students aren't engaged in learning, I understand why	40	46	12	2
Understanding why students may have trouble engaging in learning helps me respond to them effectively	65	31	4	1
Undeclared student learning needs impact my planned teaching/training schedule at least once a week¹	47	32	14	7

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Notes: ¹ Student learning needs' was not defined and therefore probably captures a broad definition, including learning difficulties, foundation skills, behavioural issues, etc.



The teaching experience (cont)

An emerging issue – psychosocial impacts

One aim of this project was to explore how teachers could be supported to manage and respond to psychosocial impacts in the classroom. These impacts arise from a range of underlying factors, which are important to define. Psychosocial factors refer to the emotional, social, psychological, and environmental needs and challenges that influence a learner's wellbeing, sense of safety, and ability to participate in and successfully engage with vocational education and training. These factors include both conditions that support learning and barriers that may impact engagement and progress.

As reported above, psychosocial impacts and challenges in VET appear to centre on the intersection of students' personal circumstances, emotional wellbeing, behaviour, motivation and learning capacity. These impacts can be associated with significant external stressors including trauma, unmet needs, negative educational experiences, exclusion and isolation. Such factors can generate high levels of negative emotion and may trigger anxiety, low mood, fear and stress. The behavioural effects of these can significantly undermine students' engagement with education and participation in learning (Bartušienė et al. 2024; Hughes et al. 2022). In the classroom this can be seen through disengagement, poor attendance, emotional distress, low capacity to cope with demands and increased dropout risk.

Many of the factors affecting them are outside the classroom, cost of living, housing, having to work and study, cost of TAFE courses. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, NSW)

Many of my students do not want to be there, or worse, they are drug-affected or homeless. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

Many learners face personal, academic, or language challenges that can affect their engagement and progress. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Qld)

Increasingly diverse classrooms with varying learning, behavioural and psychosocial support needs are described across the data, visible in the increased anxiety for students struggling to cope and pressure on teachers to individualise learning.

Neuro-diversity is indeed diverse and meeting the nuanced needs of those diversities can be a challenge. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, Vic.)

It's difficult sometimes to know how to provide reasonable adjustments for students who struggle with focus. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, WA)

Managing cohorts with vast differences in capability is a daily challenge. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, SA)

Student needs are so diverse; daily student behaviour has a massive impact and is very broad in range. Adapting to competing needs [...] is very demanding and at times seemingly impossible. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

High proportions of teachers reported that student behaviour arising from psychosocial challenges disrupts their planned teaching (67%), the student's own learning (78%), and other students' learning (71%) at least once a week (table 6). Disruptions to planned teaching and the students' own learning, due to student behaviour, was similar for both online and face-to-face delivery (table B14, Appendix B). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the impact on other students' learning, however, was less for those learning online (55%, compared to 74% for face-to-face).

While the frequency of disruption is high, the magnitude of these impacts is unknown and is likely variable. While directly comparable figures from other education sectors are not available, Thomson & Hillman (2019) reported that in the OECD TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey), teachers in schools with a high concentration of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged homes, in Australia and across the OECD, reported an impact to their teaching and learning time. A substantial impact was also seen in the difficulty teachers had motivating students who had a lack of interest in schoolwork.

The teaching experience (cont)

Table 6 Impacts of student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs (n=752)

	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts my planned teaching at least once a week	38	29	19	13
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts their own learning at least once a week	50	28	13	8
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts other students' learning at least once a week	44	27	17	12

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Teachers describe having to manage growing tension within classrooms including conflict between students and teachers, disruptive conduct, lack of accountability, disrespect, poor focus, and unsafe behaviours and emotional dysregulation.

Behaviour disrupts learning for themselves and others. (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, Qld)

Classroom behaviour was my biggest challenge whilst doing classroom teaching. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, WA)

The challenge is that sometimes it can be low level disruptions on a continual basis. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

Student behaviour - students are addicted to mobile phones and this impacts classes constantly. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, NSW)

Given the broad impacts of psychosocial needs on teaching and learning, teachers are increasingly required to respond to these challenges while (at least partly) recognising the complex factors that shape them. Effective management of these impacts is key to ensuring positive learning outcomes for all students, and involves both proactive and reactive approaches:

- Proactive management – this is important as Standard 2.6 in the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) states that 'The wellbeing needs of the VET student cohort are identified and strategies are put in place to support these needs' (Australian Government 2025a, p.13).
- Reactive management - many teachers will need to respond to behaviours or situations that are psychosocial in nature, as they arise.

The following chapter explores the complex process of supporting psychosocial needs in VET students.



Providing psychosocial support



Providing psychosocial support

Key findings and implications

- The ability of teachers to support students depends greatly on system conditions that are out of their control: manageable workloads, strong and supportive leadership, adequate staffing and resources, and organisational support. It is also dependent on their own capability, capacity and clarity about their role and responsibilities.
- Many teachers reported feeling insufficiently supported to respond to increasingly complex student needs, particularly where those needs extend beyond their training and core teaching role. As a result, some felt they carried significant responsibility for student outcomes without always having access to the support or resources needed to address the underlying issues.
- Student support services are sometimes difficult to find, access, are often reactive rather than preventative, and many students with significant needs remain unsupported.
- Participants argue that systemic support is needed, including better pre-enrolment assessment, earlier intervention, clearer support pathways, improved coordination of services, better resourcing of staff, tools and more time, and a greater focus on teacher wellbeing and psychological safety.
- Teachers sit in a constant tension between rising student complexity and limited system capacity. Teachers will always work in this space, but the balance needs to be shifted so that teachers are not left carrying the extra weight created by gaps in system capacity.
- Teachers expressed a need for practical guidance to help them to respond to psychosocial challenges in their day-to-day practice. In response, a psychosocial support cycle has been developed.

The cycle outlines a process for responding to psychosocial challenges in the learning environment and is intended to guide teachers in supporting students' learning needs. It comprises five stages:

- » Recognise – noticing signs that something may be affecting a student's learning
- » Respond – exploring the issue through a conversation with the student
- » Refer – connecting the student with appropriate specialised support where required
- » Support – adapting teaching practices to support the student's participation and learning, alongside any specialised support they may be receiving
- » Review – monitoring the student's progress and reflecting on the effectiveness of the response.
- The research highlights the importance of determining what is and what cannot be reasonably expected of VET teachers and ensuring this is communicated to teachers. A key principle underpinning the cycle, therefore, is that teachers are not expected to provide specialised psychosocial support themselves. Rather, their role is to identify when additional support may be needed, facilitate access to appropriate services, and continue supporting the student's learning through their teaching practice. The cycle therefore maintains a clear distinction between the role of the teacher and that of specialised support providers, while promoting a coordinated approach to supporting student success.
- The extent to which the cycle can be successfully implemented in practice, however, is influenced by teacher capability, capacity and role clarity, together with organisational processes, resources and support structures, as discussed above.

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

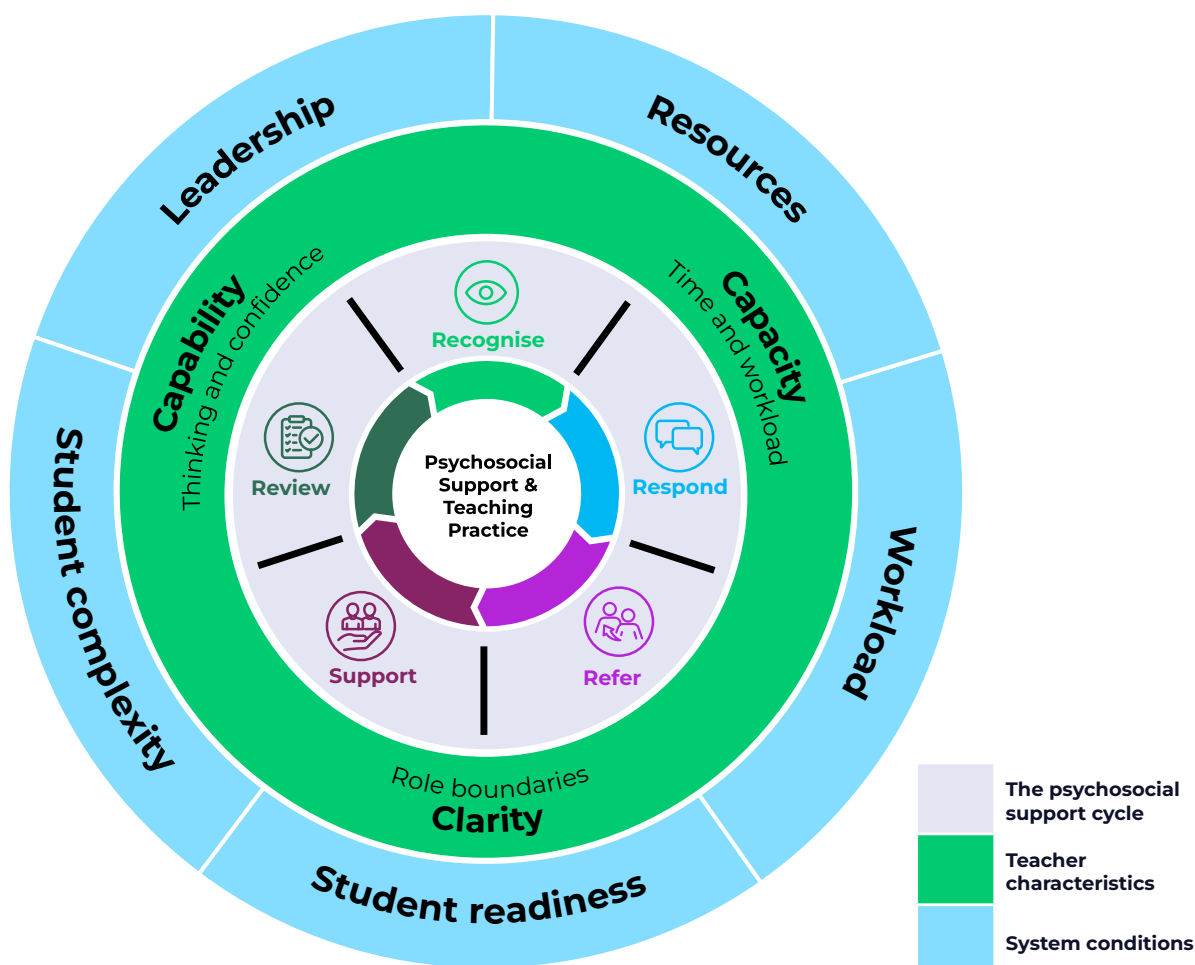
The complexity of providing psychosocial support

In VET, psychosocial factors affect both learners and teachers and have been linked to student disengagement and early withdrawal from training programs (Cedefop 2025). Addressing these factors requires a systemic approach that is multi-faceted, sustained, and involves all stakeholders.

This chapter explores the complexity of identifying and responding to students' psychosocial needs in ways that

support effective teaching and learning. It introduces a psychosocial support cycle that both describes and may help guide teachers' responses to psychosocial challenges encountered in the classroom. The chapter also examines the system conditions and teacher characteristics that influence the effectiveness of this cycle and teachers' capacity to provide support. The relationship between these elements is illustrated in Figure 4 and discussed in detail throughout the chapter.

Figure 4 The psychosocial support cycle, teacher characteristics and system conditions.



Providing psychosocial support (cont)

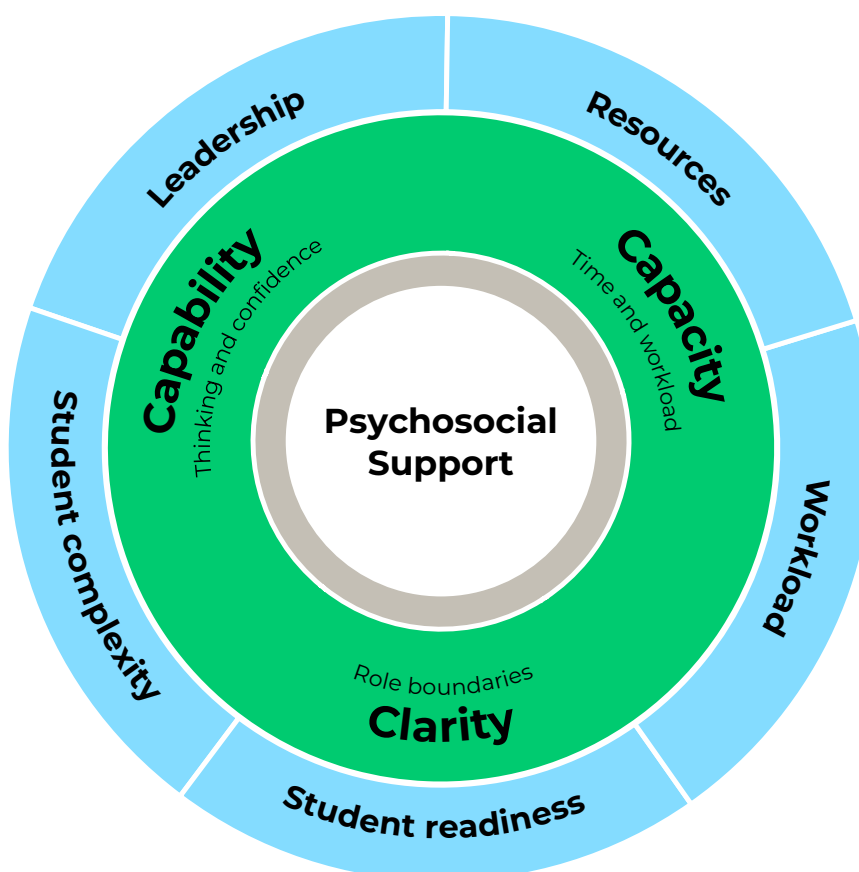
System conditions and teacher characteristics ²

One aim of the workshops was to test the usefulness and validity of a proposed psychosocial support cycle (introduced in the next section) designed to describe and guide teachers' responses to psychosocial challenges in the classroom, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes.

However, findings from both the national survey of VET teaching experiences and the workshops highlighted that teachers' experiences of psychosocial challenges, and their ability to respond effectively, are strongly influenced by the environments in which they work.

Figure 5 illustrates the key message that arose, that the effectiveness of the proposed psychosocial support cycle (next section) does not depend on teacher actions in isolation. Its success is shaped by the broader system conditions in which teachers work (blue ring below) and by the teacher characteristics (green ring below) that enable effective implementation. Strengthening psychosocial support therefore requires attention not only to teachers' practices, but also to the organisational and system-level factors that influence their capacity, capability and clarity to respond to students' psychosocial needs. These system conditions and teacher characteristics are discussed below.

Figure 5 System conditions and teacher characteristics



² Capability, capacity and clarity are not the only characteristics that a teacher has but were identified as being particularly influential on the ability of a teacher to support the psychosocial needs of their students.



Providing psychosocial support (cont)

System conditions

The system conditions described below can influence workload pressure for teachers, professional agency, staff wellbeing and the ability of teachers to support students effectively. These conditions are largely out of the teachers' control and require organisational and sector-wide input.

Leadership and organisational support

Despite their significant impact, psychosocial challenges are frequently overlooked in educational planning and support strategies (Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever 2024). In addition to describing individual student problems that create classroom challenges, our participants reported systemic pressures due to organisational and leadership practices. The types of pressures described included inadequate support, protection (at times), and a lack of understanding about increasing student complexity and the realities teachers face in the classroom.

As a trainer, when faced with supporting student needs, [it] requires lots of time which it is not fully understood by the manager of the workplace. (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, NSW)

Admin need to step in and deal with these handful of students that constantly disrupt and that are being disrespectful to their teachers, instead of leaving the teacher to deal with them as well as the rest of the class. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, Vic.)

Most organisations pay lip service to it [support] because they are required to under the standards, but in a long career across many RTOs, I've yet to see one that does it successfully and proactively. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

Organisational and sector-wide priorities, such as increasing enrolments, compliance requirements, and qualification completion expectations, are reported by participants as lacking the structural support and resourcing needed for effective and successful implementation.

Classroom management, teacher and student welfare and quality educational outcomes are overlooked in the interest of course completions, inflated class sizes ... (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, NSW)

...we also never had this amount of admin work, and my lecturing friends there say they still do not do the level of admin/course development etc that we do [...] if we were allocated more hours to do what needs to be done and not have to work every weekend, night etc to do it. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, WA)

I find delivery is being compromised by the pressure of time/finances and the loss of management that also understands proper educational processes. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, NSW and Vic.)

While this project was focused on how teachers can be supported to manage psychosocial challenges in their classrooms, the psychosocial wellbeing of teachers is also important. Research highlights education institute leadership as a significant predictor of psychological safety within education teams, which is essential for optimal teaching practice and positive student outcomes (Ibrahim et al. 2021). Teacher psychosocial wellbeing is discussed further in the support document.

Resources and system capacity

Teachers reported challenges accessing additional or specialised support for students due to limited service availability, access barriers, and eligibility requirements such as formal diagnoses or referrals from health professionals. Even when support services existed, awareness of available options was often low, and many services were overwhelmed by demand.

There is pressure in some RTOs for students to disclose diagnosed disabilities to access "flexibility" [...] Many impacts on students' lives are not medically diagnosable, these impacts are often as significant on a student's capacity to complete studies. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, WA)

Being able to help the students with no doctor diagnosis, as that is the only way students can get help at [RTO]. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, WA)

Formal/informal diagnosis – need to know how this works in your organisation, formal diagnosis takes a long time and is expensive, some RTOs only provide support if you have formal diagnosis. (Workshop participant, WA)

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

Students in need can't always access the level of support they demand, when they need it. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, NSW)

Access to clear organisational policies, counselling services, and collaboration with student support staff can make a significant difference. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, WA)

Can refer to external services, but they are also at capacity. (Workshop participant, WA)

Waitlist - as student support services is understaffed, can refer to external services, still have waitlists, need to build the networks. (Workshop participant, WA)

Without organisational and leadership accountability, and with specialised support services not always accessible, the responsibility for managing sometimes complex educational, behavioural, and psychosocial demands shifts onto teachers. Indeed, across the workshop and survey data, the dominant narrative is not simply 'lack of resources' but rather that teachers feel responsible for delivering inclusive, high-quality outcomes within systems that are not always capable of supporting these expectations.

Many additional hours are spent in an attempt to support students with specific support needs - this is always at the expense of myself, though, and assessing is generally completed on weekends to compensate. I do this because I genuinely care but it is not a sustainable option. (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, WA)

It is yet another thing that is added on to the lecturer's workload. More things get added but never removed. The expectations and workload of all lecturers continues to increase. We are required to parent students as much as educate them, especially without sufficient tools, training, support, or consequences to implement to make the learning environment and experience better for all. (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, WA)

It is often implied that individual teachers are responsible for learning how to manage, moderate and work their way through problems that are fundamentally shaped by broader systemic issues (Karnovsky & Kelly 2025). Participants reinforced

this perspective, describing how they rely on their own strategies and tools to cope with system-level mismatches between available resources and workplace demands, including limited time, insufficient staffing, large class sizes, and lack of additional or specialised support.

I spend most of my day answering student emails and taking phone calls. Any extra time is spent on marking. There is no lesson planning or delivery. I don't feel like I do much teaching at all. My role is more of a tech support person in a call centre. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, NSW)

The extra time that's required to support these students through to success, particularly from trainers and assessors, results in trainers feeling resentful towards students and towards the organisation they work for. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

Workload, compliance and role overload

It is documented internationally, and across all education sectors, that changes to teachers' roles and responsibilities mean they are being pulled away from their main task of teaching. This can reduce the quality of teaching and learning, divide teachers' focus, limit creative and critical thinking in the classroom, and lead to students being exposed to teachers' stress and anxiety (Beames et al. 2023; Gast et al. 2022; Hughes et al. 2022; Ibrahim et al. 2021). VET teachers report that workload is not simply about having 'too much work' but about ongoing changes to the teaching role itself. Teachers describe being expected to take on increasing administrative and support responsibilities beyond teaching, leading to blurred professional boundaries and uncertainty over what their role includes.

Compliance takes up so much time and admin demands affect quality training prep and feedback on assessment. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, NT)

Classroom management can be complex when learners have diverse LLN levels or resist feedback. It requires patience, strong communication skills, and sometimes additional time for one-on-one support. These factors can lead to workload stress, especially when combined with administrative compliance tasks. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, WA)

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

... love the work and would happily continue if we were allocated more hours to do what needs to be done and not have to work every weekend, night, etc, to do it. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, WA)

Teachers report that the elements that comprise their core teaching work, such as pedagogy and relationship building, are being displaced by an ever-increasing compliance and administration burden, intensified lack of time, expectation-capacity mismatch, and increased behavioural management of psychosocial issues and impacts.

... the volume of administrative responsibilities is substantial and significantly impacts the overall enjoyment and effectiveness of teaching. (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, Qld)

Less focus on compliance for educators will allow more time and less pressure for educators so they can focus on practice. (Workshop participant, Vic.)

The demands associated with disengaged learners require considerable time and administrative effort, which can detract from the core focus of teaching and skill development. (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, Qld)

Time and space to build connections above and beyond [students being] just there to learn ... (Workshop participant, Vic.)

We are becoming responsible for everything when more and more students have issues. At some point teaching needs to be the focus and support organised so that it can be. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Tas.)

Student readiness and pre-enrolment

Concerns that pre-enrolment screening is inadequate or not used effectively was a significant theme to emerge from the workshop and survey data. Three main issues with pre-enrolment screening were identified by research participants:

- Pre-enrolment screening is not broad enough (often mostly/only focused on LLND and disability)

- Students not disclosing support needs, for various reasons (fear of not being accepted into the course, embarrassment, not wanting to be singled out, by choice)
- Information received through pre-enrolment screening not being used to inform teaching staff.

When students do not feel psychologically safe, they may be less likely to disclose learning difficulties or disabilities to their training provider, particularly psychosocial disabilities and neurodivergence, which are often invisible or masked (Collins 2024). Non-disclosure of these needs often means that teachers need to respond reactively rather than proactively, which can place additional pressure on teaching capacity, especially if these needs arise during critical periods such as assessment.

Sometimes it is not until we see assessment that realise student is not going as well as they said they were. (Workshop participant, Qld)

Identifying support needs early reduces escalation later, but it relies on learners feeling safe to disclose and teachers having time to follow up. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, NSW and Qld)

More comprehensive pre-enrolment assessment for student and teacher to gauge where the student/person is - face to face. (Workshop participant, Tas.)

There are lots of undiagnosed learning difficulties - it would be interesting to see if there was a way to screen for them during pre-enrolment rather than finding out months in that the learner is severely struggling but has been masking it. (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, Vic.)

People in pre-enrolment need to be engaged more to get answers, [its] just a form currently. (Workshop participant, SA)

Previous research has documented many additional challenges, including personal circumstances, that interfere with readiness and ability to engage in learning (Smith 2021). Indeed, our data is rich with narratives around students being enrolled in courses that they are not suited for, or when they are not ready for study. This can be due to low levels of previous study experience, low levels of LLND skills, psychosocial needs and misunderstandings about the nature of the course (Andrahannadi & Griffin 2025).

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

Some participants suggested that these issues may be due to some training provider business models, where increasing student enrolments is closely tied to revenue generation.

I think students need to be better prepared prior to enrolment to ensure better outcomes for themselves and their peers. Some enrol before they're ready to commit, and then it's too difficult to resolve the issues or remove the student at that stage. It consumes much of my time in attempting to support a student who isn't ready for study. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, SA)

We are required to parent students as much as educate them, especially without sufficient tools, training, support, or consequences to implement to make the learning environment and experience better for all. (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, WA)

I think it is important to not only concentrate on the employment and educational pathways but realise that some cohorts of students we are teaching have major life trauma and challenges that they bring into the classroom, so teachers are not just trying to teach but support the students and reduce any classroom disruptions. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, NSW)

One of the most prevalent student challenges identified by research participants was low LLND skills among students. While the Standards for RTOs require providers to assess prospective students' LLND skills before enrolment and advise whether a course is suitable, some participants questioned how effectively these processes determine whether students are adequately prepared to undertake the qualification.

The public sector [...] needs more mandated LLN & digital screening tests to ensure we are setting the students up for success ... (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, NSW)

It all stems from the LLN entry. Poor English is a main contributor to everyone's stress. This is not picked up often at entry due to cheating on the entry tests. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

It would be nice if students filled out their own LLN pre-testing instead of mum and dad. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Qld)

Our students of 100+ (all First Nations), some are first in their families, some have not even studied since school 20+ years and a lot have low literacy and numeracy. (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, Qld)

Adding LLND support is not always enough for students who have significant gaps in those skills, and this places additional pressure on the teacher.

Participants also suggested some of these issues, such as students being enrolled in a course for which they are not suited, are linked to the way VET courses are funded. Higher-level qualifications are more likely to receive government funding because they lead to better employment outcomes. However, students may be better suited to starting in lower-level qualifications before moving into more advanced study. Some workshop participants suggested that having clear pre-requisites for courses would help alleviate this.

Used to be a privilege to move through courses (i.e. from Cert I upwards), funding influences this, [there are] outcomes for Job Services if people do Cert III or above. (Workshop participant, Tas.)

While workshop participants wanted greater support and resources to help address students' learning needs, they also suggested that learners need to take some responsibility for their own learning. Participants noted that clear guidelines from training providers about the expectations of being a learner, along with conversations during the enrolment process, could help support this.

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

Student complexity (behaviour and engagement)

Previous research highlights the many psychosocial factors impacting student behaviour and engagement, such as trauma, lack of basic needs, negative prior educational experiences, exclusion and isolation due to neurodiversity (Bartušienė et al. 2024; Collins 2024; Davidson 2020; Hughes et al. 2022; McGregor 2024; Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever 2024). Life circumstances also create conditions which often interfere with readiness to study (e.g. refugee status, multi-generational unemployment, young adults with children and no access to reliable childcare). The VET teachers participating in this research reported increasing student complexity driven by growing diversity across many of these psychosocial factors.

Their needs are becoming more and more complex and this is putting a great strain on the teaching staff. Even if they have specified training, some students have an inability to be resilient, be challenged, work hard, change their behaviour for what the workplace will want. We are trying to equip them for the workplace and they struggle to meet those basic needs. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

Students come with varieties of issues and even student support are not able to [help]. (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, WA)

Teachers report that they are increasingly acting as frontline support to complex behavioural, psychosocial and learning needs, many of which originate outside of the current course. This supports previous research which highlights some of the challenges teachers report in the Australian VET context including students being disruptive (Casselson 2024; Smith 2021), and students presenting with challenging learning needs (Smith 2021).

I find student behaviour has changed over the years and we should feel safe in our jobs as teachers, but this can sometimes be a hard line to work within. If a student is on drugs you don't know, you can't check, you really can't even ask it in case of a bad response. This can be scary. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

...expecting the educator to be accountable and babying over 200 students and expecting us to understand all the psychological needs of over 200 students in addition to keeping abreast with our industry and teaching skills. WE ARE NOT PSYCHOLOGISTS - PERIOD! (Survey respondent, Mid-career teacher, WA)

Identifying and responding to student support needs is an ongoing and essential part of my role. Many students face personal, academic, or workplace challenges that affect their learning. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, WA)

Classrooms are being forced to absorb an increasing degree of disruptive and disrespectful impacts stemming from these needs, with teachers reporting that adequate support is not always available to sustain a productive learning environment. Uncertainty regarding their authority to manage disruptive behaviour, and how they will be supported to do so, adds to the pressure.

We need a clearer process for exiting students whose behaviour is disrupting the learning of others and their own. The other thing is there is no follow up by anyone in administration to support the exiting of the student. There is little accountability because they're 'adults'. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

... learners can become frustrated in the classroom too when others take up all the time. (Workshop participant, WA)

... [understanding] What baggage may be in classroom that you can't see. (Workshop participant, WA)

After having been kicked by students this year, having classroom control and management is extremely critical in my role now more than ever before. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, Qld, SA and Vic.)

Students need to be held accountable for their actions. (Survey respondent, Novice teacher, Vic.)

Zero tolerance to bad behaviour and disrespect to instructors and that safety in the workshop overrides all psychological or emotional needs of the student. They cannot be in the workshop if they are unsafe. (Survey respondent, Experienced teacher, WA)

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

Teacher characteristics - capability, capacity and clarity

Capability, capacity and clarity were consistently highlighted by research participants as important elements of their role that enable, or hinder, their ability to manage and support the psychosocial needs of their students. Building capability, rebalancing capacity and ensuring clarity about the boundaries of their role will better enable teachers to act more effectively in their roles, not only managing the psychosocial impacts in the classroom but also across their teaching more generally.

Capability

Issues relating to teacher capability in managing or responding to psychosocial needs centred on:

- ability to recognise the diverse types of psychosocial support needs
- understanding how different psychosocial challenges impact learning, and how it relates to teaching practice
- being unsure of what actions to take (i.e. what the next steps are).

Teachers are concerned that they may not understand the underlying causes of the psychosocial issues they observe in students, expressing the view that 'we don't know what we don't know'. Multiple factors contribute to this concern. Firstly, different psychosocial support needs can present in similar ways, such as student disengagement or poor assessment outcomes. Many teachers felt they lacked the capability to identify the underlying causes of these behaviours. There was also a strong view that teachers should not be expected to 'diagnose' underlying issues, as they are not trained specialists. Secondly, teachers were not confident in their ability to distinguish between psychosocial support needs and other student characteristics, such as behaviours influenced by culture, generational differences, or individual personality differences.

Additional challenges in recognising psychosocial support needs, adding to any capability limitations of teachers, are:

- When students do not disclose known challenges or support needs
- When learning impacts are observed late (e.g. at assessment, or if/when triggered by something)

- Having enough opportunity to observe students and recognise issues (made difficult by large class sizes, short training programs, and online delivery, for example).

Research participants noted that capability in managing and/or supporting psychosocial needs is not developed in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (see the section *Initial teacher training – the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* for more information). They reported that this capability is mostly developed through:

- Experience and previous exposure to diverse psychosocial support needs
- Higher level or targeted qualifications (e.g. Bachelor of Education and Training)
- learnings from professional development activities
- discussions with students about their own needs
- discussions with peers.

What would help build capability?

While some research participants reported that they had already increased their capability through professional development, demand was high for professional development that is delivered by experts, practical, and pitched appropriately. Some reported that the typical activities they had undertaken were not sufficient and/or that they were not at the required depth to be useful. But others countered that it is not realistic for teachers to be experts in all areas related to psychosocial support. Getting this balance right is difficult and likely needs to be tailored to the context in which a teacher is operating.

Given the perceived increase in students experiencing mental health challenges, participants called for training to better support and manage these issues. Mental health first aid training was raised as useful in many of the workshops, and while such training does not cover all the challenges that might fall under the psychosocial supports umbrella, it does provide a useful model for training that is specific enough to be useful, but not unrealistic for teachers to undertake.

Mental health first aid would be the key resource. ... and as such there isn't as much in this space as there could be. (Workshop participant, SA)

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

I'm a new teacher and haven't had much opportunity yet to explore this other than TAE training. I'm hoping to explore more in this area particularly, mental health first aid training. (Workshop participant, Tas.)

Youth Mental Health First Aid should be run as a mandatory PD, face to face, section by section. ... This course was the best course I have been to ... (Survey respondent).

The research highlights the importance of determining what is and what cannot be reasonably expected of VET teachers and ensuring this is communicated to teachers. The opinion that teachers cannot be expected to know how to support the wide array of issues that underly psychosocial impacts in the learning environment was widespread (it is perceived to be a complex, growing list). It was agreed that it is more realistic for teachers to build their capability in understanding how various challenges impact learning and knowing how to respond to (not fix) challenges that present most often, especially through how they can respond with their own delivery. Knowing where to find appropriate support and resources, for the student and/or for themselves, is an important element of this.

Building capability should, therefore, focus on understanding how different student characteristics and challenges can affect learning and be perceived in the classroom; it is about raising awareness regarding things like cultural differences, neurodiversity, and how trauma can manifest. Developing emotional intelligence was also suggested.

In addition to using reasonable adjustment and other targeted means to address learning difficulties due to psychosocial challenges, there was support amongst research participants for Universal Design for Learning (UDL), to ensure that delivery is accessible to diverse learners. Building capability in UDL practices was welcome, with support to ensure it could be adapted to the specific teaching and learning contexts in which teachers were working (for example, how to use UDL in the workplace, and how it can work with whatever Learning Management System is in place).

Unsurprisingly, while there were some common themes in what teachers said would help build their capability in managing and/or supporting psychosocial needs, individual objectives and preferences differed. Table 7 shows a selection of mechanisms and topics that teachers reported would be useful.

Table 7 Suggested tools/resources to build teacher capability in managing psychosocial impacts, and suggested topic

Tools and resources	Topics of interest
• Additional relevant content in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (core, or elective) • Training that sits outside the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, for example: » Bachelor of Education and Training » Something like a first aid certificate that they could renew periodically » Trainer workshops¹ • A learning hub » Online resources • Community of practice • Networks • AI tools	• Knowing the questions to ask • How to empower students » Emotional self-regulation » Building healthy relationships » Self-healing » Creative expression » Mindful reflection » Self-agency

Notes: ¹ The *Responding to psychosocial needs of learners: Resources for VET teachers and training providers* publication lists some available resources and training opportunities that could be considered by teachers and RTOs.

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

Capacity

The demands of the VET teacher role have been well documented in the literature (Beames et al. 2023; Gast et al. 2022; Ibrahim et al. 2021) and were discussed in the previous section on workload. Competing responsibilities create considerable time pressure, with teachers required to balance compliance and reporting requirements alongside teaching, assessment and responding to the diverse needs of their students. Workshop participants spoke of scope creep within their roles, and that there is more expected of teachers than ever before. Some teachers expressed the sentiment that managing psychosocial impacts in the classroom and addressing these psychosocial support needs was 'yet another thing' that was being expected of teachers.

In addition to heavy workloads and time pressures, the emotional bandwidth required to manage the volume and diversity of student support needs is high. The survey revealed that some of the student challenges that teachers are faced with are 'heavy' and can take a toll on teachers' own wellbeing (also see the support document). Similarly, trying to adapt their approaches to the sheer array of student needs can be emotionally exhausting, and can leave teachers feeling that meeting the needs of everyone means being unable to meet anyone's needs fully. Some also reported that heavy support requirements for some students meant there was no time for other students, or for 'teaching', more generally. This was exacerbated when limited support services for students were available.

The various issues described above reflect the reported problem of being 'spread too thin', and not being able to focus on what many participants believed was their most important job—to teach.

What would help teacher capacity?

Some of the identified system conditions that were described previously, impact teacher capacity. Specifically, managing teacher workload by re-evaluating the scope of responsibilities of the teacher role and ensuring that resources are available to free up teacher time so they can create and/or implement systemic approaches to supporting students may help (leadership in the RTO has a role to play here).

Many of the suggestions made by research participants revolved around alleviating the need for teachers to provide all support by ensuring that additional and dedicated support services were available and accessible. Other suggestions included having additional in-classroom support, such as an additional trainer (especially for larger classes) and dedicated learning support staff.

Clarity

Participants in this research identified three areas requiring greater clarity:

- the role (and boundaries) of teachers, including what authority they have when managing classrooms
- appropriate actions when supporting students (what to do, and not do)
- the supports available for both students and teachers.

Increased clarity in these areas will help teachers understand how to balance their responsibilities and duty of care with their capability and capacity.

Teachers expressed a fear of doing more harm than good, usually because they felt unsure about how to support or manage sensitive support needs. The concept of teachers becoming 'accidental councillors' was raised by research participants. As discussed above, many teachers felt that the weight of responsibility was falling on them, rather than on support staff or the RTO. It is unsurprising that teachers find themselves in this position due to the rapport and trust they have built with their students. Even when dedicated support staff are available, it is often the teachers who students feel comfortable talking to, and support needs often come to the fore in the classroom environment, or during assessment, where the teacher is present and involved.

For those teachers who have students accessing specialised student support services, they want to understand where their role ends and where the specialist takes over.

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

What would help bring clarity?

It is important that the sector does not place unrealistic expectations on VET teachers. Teachers should not be expected to “diagnose” or “solve” psychosocial challenges. Their role should focus on the impacts these challenges have on teaching and learning, and on providing support that enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

At the same time, many teachers find it difficult to separate themselves from a sense of responsibility to help students with personal challenges. In some cases, students may struggle to succeed in training unless underlying psychosocial issues are addressed. However, it is unrealistic to expect teachers to have expertise across the full range of psychosocial challenges students may experience. As a result, the focus should remain on teaching and learning impacts. This is the approach underpinning the psychosocial support cycle proposed in this report (see next section).

Clarifying the boundaries of the teaching role would benefit from a sector-wide approach, especially given that the Standards for RTOs apply across the sector, as do the minimum teaching qualification requirements. Clear and consistent expectations would support the development of appropriate professional learning resources and teacher supports. At a minimum, though, training provider leaders should establish, communicate, and manage these expectations within

their organisations. Participants in this research called for clear policies and procedures outlining teachers’ responsibilities and the actions they should take when psychosocial challenges arise. This includes clear advice about what authority teachers have in the classroom when psychosocial impacts are disruptive, unsafe or affecting other students’ learning.

Strong communication between teachers and specialist support staff would also help clarify the boundaries between teaching responsibilities and support service responsibilities. In addition to defining the legal and ethical boundaries of the teaching role, teachers should be provided with practical strategies to help them avoid overstepping those boundaries.

Teachers also need clear information about the support services available to students and how students can access them. Some participants reported that some services require formal diagnoses or referrals, leaving teachers uncertain about how to obtain support for students who do not have these in place (noting that in some cases, teachers may be unaware of formal diagnoses due to privacy constraints).

Participants also wanted clearer information about the supports available to teachers themselves. In particular, they wanted to know where they could seek advice on classroom challenges, and the extent of flexibility they have in making reasonable adjustments for students.



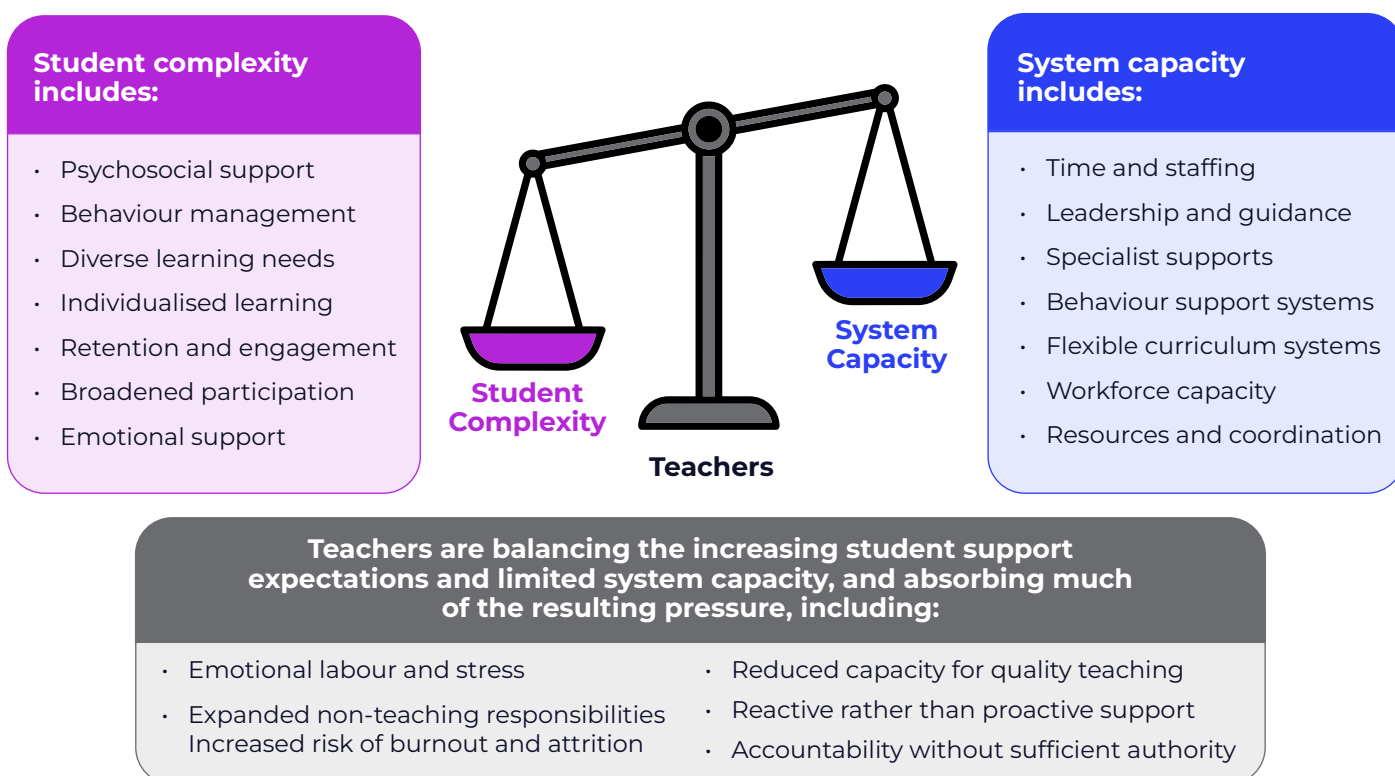
Providing psychosocial support (cont)

A central tension

These three teacher characteristics - capability, capacity, and clarity - and the way they are shaped by system conditions, create a persistent tension between increasing student complexity and the limits of system capacity, as described by teachers and highlighted in figure 6. Teachers are positioned in the middle of this tension, working to manage the imbalance between

students' needs (growing heavier) and systems that often lack the time, staffing, specialist support, resources, and coordination to respond effectively. Teachers will always work in this space, but the balance needs to be shifted so that teachers are not left carrying the extra weight created by gaps in system capacity.

Figure 6 The balance between student complexity and system capacity



Providing psychosocial support (cont)

Teachers describe their classrooms, and themselves, as absorbing much of the pressure created by this imbalance. Many reported their roles expanding to include more non-teaching responsibilities, increased emotional labour, and reduced capacity to focus on core/quality teaching. A key aspect to this is a feeling of increased responsibility and accountability for student outcomes.

The findings also point to another aspect of this tension, between reactive and proactive support. Research into psychosocial safety in further education and higher education similarly emphasises the importance of preventative approaches, including early identification, strong peer and teacher relationships, and environments that support help-seeking (Dickinson & Connolly 2022; Ling et al. 2024).

Teachers regularly described systems responding once issues had escalated rather than intervening early, leaving teachers managing crisis points instead of having time for prevention, rapport/relationship building and proactive support.

Participants consistently identified earlier intervention, even as early as pre-enrolment, stronger communication and coordination across organisations (such as schools, workplaces), and better access to specialist supports and services as opportunities to reduce the central tension.



Providing psychosocial support (cont)

A proposed psychosocial support cycle

Purpose and development

The national survey and interviews indicated that teachers are seeking guidance on how to respond to and manage the psychosocial challenges they encounter in their learning environments. To explore potential solutions, workshop participants were invited to discuss whether a framework, or similar resource, would be beneficial. Table 8 summarises the arguments raised both for and against the development of a framework. Views were mixed: some participants saw value in the consistency, clarity and guidance that a framework could provide, while others expressed concern about introducing ‘another’ framework into practice, especially if it became compliance focused.

Despite these differing views, workshop discussions reinforced the findings from the survey and interviews, consistently emphasising the need for practical guidance that teachers can apply in their day-to-day work. Teachers are seeking a clear starting point for navigating the complex and reportedly increasing psychosocial challenges they face, including guidance on appropriate responses, available supports and the boundaries of their role.

Data from the research were used to develop a draft psychosocial support cycle that describes the process of responding to psychosocial impacts in the

learning environment and that can be used to guide teachers’ responses to better support their students’ learning needs. The draft psychosocial support cycle was presented to workshop participants, who were invited to discuss the validity and practicality of the different elements. The cycle was then refined based on participant feedback (figure 7).

It should be noted that the usefulness of the psychosocial support cycle is dependent on the further development of the teacher characteristics and system conditions, as discussed in the previous section. Effective student support, including that for psychosocial needs and impacts, requires input from all stakeholders in VET – the system, training providers (and leadership), teachers and dedicated support staff, and the students.

A Practice Guide for VET teachers, and an accompanying Quick Reference Guide, have been developed based on this psychosocial support cycle, and are designed as practical documents that are accessible to teachers, but which can be modified by training providers to incorporate, or align with, their own policies, practices and information sources. A Practice Guide and Quick Reference Guide for training providers have also been developed to provide advice on how training providers can support students and teachers in this space. These additional resources are available from the NCVER website.



Providing psychosocial support (cont)

Table 8 Participant arguments for and against a psychosocial framework

Arguments for a framework	Arguments against a framework
• Articulating 'best practice' in supporting students and managing psychosocial challenges • Providing clear information about available support pathways and referral options • Guiding teacher responses through a structured process • Promoting or mandating a holistic and coordinated approach to student support • Enabling establishment of organisational expectations, culture and shared values • Providing consistency and structure in practice • Setting benchmarks and standards for practice • Supporting accountability and performance monitoring • Informing the development of organisational policies, processes and procedures • Encouraging greater consistency across RTOs at a national level • Providing clear definitions of key terms and concepts • Supporting implementation of, and alignment with, the 2025 Standards for RTOs.	• The VET sector already has too many frameworks, standards, and compliance requirements • Risks becoming a 'tick and flick' compliance exercise • Large organisations already have existing capability frameworks and specialist staff • Frameworks are often too complex, impractical or inaccessible, and end up 'sitting on shelves', unused. • Might be too broad or 'one size fits all' to suit different jurisdictions, provider types and circumstances or too rigid for local contexts or individual needs • Effective implementation requires organisational support, resources, and funding • Regulatory bodies may interpret and have different standards/expectations • Practical/applied training, tools, PD - may be better • A need for existing resources to be improved first • Could quickly become dated

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

Figure 7 The psychosocial support cycle



Providing psychosocial support (cont)

Elements of the psychosocial support cycle

It is important that the boundaries of the teaching role are clearly defined and maintained. Teachers should focus on how psychosocial challenges affect teaching and learning, rather than on identifying or diagnosing the underlying causes.

Diagnosing psychosocial issues requires specialised knowledge and is the responsibility of appropriately qualified professionals. In addition, student medical information and professional diagnoses are subject to privacy requirements and are generally outside the scope of a teacher's role.

For this reason, the psychosocial support cycle is centred on the educational impacts of psychosocial challenges. It guides teachers to recognise when a learner may be experiencing difficulties that are affecting their participation, engagement or learning, respond appropriately within their teaching role, and connect learners with specialised support when needed, without requiring teachers to diagnose or know the details of the underlying issue.

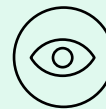
The psychosocial support cycle consists of five stages that describe how teachers may recognise and respond to psychosocial challenges affecting their students.



1. Recognise

The cycle begins when a teacher notices signs that something may be affecting a student's learning.

These concerns may or may not be related to any support needs identified during the pre-enrolment process.



What teachers may notice

- Missed classes or assessments
- Withdrawal or disengagement
- Stress, anxiety or distress
- Changes in behaviour or challenging/disruptive behaviour
- Repeated extension requests
- Difficulty concentrating
- Workplace or personal pressures

These signs may represent a change in a student's behaviour or engagement, or they may have been present from the beginning of the course. Some may relate to the student's motivation for enrolment. Such scenarios highlight the need for more effective pre-enrolment processes that identify a broader range of support needs early and assess student suitability and motivation for enrolment.

Some signs are more noticeable than others. For example, difficulties with concentration may be far less visible than disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Some students may openly discuss the challenges they are experiencing with their teachers, while others may try to conceal them.

The context of the training can also impact how easily some of these signs are observed. For example, some can be more difficult to observe when training is delivered online, especially if delivery is asynchronous and teachers have little contact time with students.

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

In such situations, teachers are reliant on 'observable' signs, such as levels of engagement with the training materials and submission of assessment tasks.

Workshop participants identified a range of factors that influence teachers' ability to recognise signs of psychosocial challenges (table 9). Many of these factors relate to the teacher characteristics discussed previously. Participants also identified resources, supports, and information that would help teachers at this stage of the process (table 10).

Teachers reported that they want clarity about the authority and options available to them when psychosocial challenges are disrupting the learning environment or affecting other students. Training provider leadership has an important role in supporting teachers in such situations.

If there is an immediate or high risk to the teacher or other students, the situation should be escalated immediately. Where there is no immediate safety risk, but other students' learning is being affected, teachers need clear guidance from their RTO about the actions they can take to minimise the broader impact.

At this stage of the cycle, teachers begin considering how the student's learning may be affected and how they could be supported. Depending on the nature of the psychosocial challenge and the teacher's experience, it may already be clear what supports or teaching strategies are needed. However, this will not always be the case, and the next stage—having a safe and supportive conversation with the student—may provide further insight. Regardless, progressing to the next stage and speaking with the student is important.

Where the student initiates the conversation by approaching the teacher to discuss the challenges they are experiencing, the process naturally moves directly to the second stage of the cycle.

Table 9 Factors that influence a teacher's ability to recognise psychosocial challenges in their students

Capability

- Potential lack of awareness regarding student diversity (e.g. different generations, cultural diversity, and behaviours or body language that might be misinterpreted)
- Teachers' understanding of different ways that students' learning can be impacted by diverse challenges
- Previous experience of the teacher, and exposure to diverse student support needs
- Lack of confidence (not feeling equipped by the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment)

Capacity

- Class size
- Time spent with students (perhaps due to the structure of the program) – inability to build personal connection
- Delivery mode (online reported to be more difficult, students may prefer to be anonymous)
- Teacher workload and/or emotional overwhelm

Clarity

- Uncertainty around responsibility if it is unclear how teaching and learning are impacted
- Uncertainty around the training provider's responsibility in responding to psychosocial needs

Other

- When behaviour is inconsistent
- Students using masking strategies to hide challenges

Note: As reported by research participants; not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

Table 10 Resources, supports and information that would help teachers recognise psychosocial challenges

• Clear guidance from the training provider about organisational responsibilities and the role of teachers in responding to psychosocial needs and impacts • Strengthening of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, or providing additional training, to include content about psychosocial challenges and their impact on learning • Professional development to build awareness of common psychosocial challenges, their impact on learning, and how it relates to teaching practice, including: » Mental health training » Understanding neurodiversity in students » Emotional intelligence training » Access to mentors who can help teachers manage challenges and support problem-solving	• Reduced class sizes or additional in-class support, such as an extra teacher or teacher's aide, particularly in larger classes • A glossary, dictionary, or language guide to support understanding of relevant terminology • Practical communication tools, such as scripts or conversation starters, to help teachers respond to challenging situations, including: » tension or conflict » students arguing back » stonewalling or disengagement » gaslighting » rudeness or passive aggression » put downs or disrespectful behaviour » undermining or contradictory behaviour » complaining
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Note: As suggested by research participants.



Providing psychosocial support (cont)



2. Respond

The second stage of the psychosocial support cycle involves responding to the initial observation through a safe and supportive conversation with the student.

Including the student in the process of identifying support needs is important, as it gives them agency and promotes accountability for their own learning journey.

The goals of this stage are to:

- better understand the impact on the student's learning
- identify appropriate support needs.

Research participants highlighted several concerns that teachers may experience at this stage (table 11). These concerns reflect considerable uncertainty about how to initiate discussions with students, including the potential risks for both the student and the teacher.

How teachers approach these discussions requires professional judgement. Considerations include:

- the suspected complexity of the issue, whether it is likely to be addressed through adjustments to teaching and/or assessment (or require specialised support)
- the existing relationship between the teacher and the student.

Where the challenge appears to be more complex, or there is a risk that the situation could escalate, teachers should arrange a more formal discussion involving appropriate support staff, such as a counsellor or case manager. To support teachers in these situations, RTOs should have clear procedures outlining how discussions should be conducted, who should be involved, and the boundaries around the information that may be sought from students.

Capability

- Not knowing the right questions to ask
- Fear of doing more harm than good

Capacity

- Concerns it will lead to increased work when already at capacity
- Lack of opportunity for discussion with the student

Clarity

- Uncertainty around privacy and confidentiality
- Uncertainty around what to do with the information
- Uncertainty around boundaries of role and responsibilities

Other

- Student unwillingness to disclose/share/discuss (cultural reasons, embarrassment, fear, other)
- Concerns about student response (especially for sensitive topics, substance abuse)
- Safety concerns

Note: As reported by research participants, not an exhaustive list.

Providing psychosocial support (cont)

This stage presents a significant risk of teachers moving beyond the boundaries of their role, which should remain focused on teaching and learning. Conversations with students can easily shift into the teacher becoming an 'accidental counsellor' or attempting to help resolve personal challenges. Many workshop participants felt they needed a greater understanding of psychosocial challenges to feel confident having these conversations and to avoid causing unintended harm. However, rather than expecting teachers to become experts in psychosocial issues; it is more important that they are equipped with the skills to have supportive conversations while remaining within the scope of their professional role.

At the same time, participants noted that teachers would feel more confident if they had training in areas such as mental health and neurodivergence.

Participants suggested that teachers could be better supported at this stage through access to:

- strategies for asking appropriate questions
- strategies for maintaining professional boundaries
- a support person or service for teachers, or an independent liaison person, who could help them have these discussions and identify appropriate support needs for students.



Providing psychosocial support (cont)



3. Refer

The third stage of the psychosocial support cycle involves referring the student to appropriate specialised support services, where needed.

This stage applies when the student's needs cannot be addressed solely through teaching practices or reasonable adjustments implemented by the teacher.

Support services may be internal (within the training provider) or external. The research suggests that RTO-provided supports for psychosocial challenges are generally less established than supports for language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students, First Nations students, or disability-related needs, although this varies across training providers.

It is important that teachers do not attempt to provide specialised support themselves. Training providers, and the broader system, need to support teachers to maintain clear professional boundaries and remain focused on their teaching role.

Workshop participants discussed a range of challenges associated with referring students to specialised support services (table 12).

Table 12 Challenges teachers face when referring students to specialised support

- Teachers are unclear about what type of support is needed
- Limited awareness of available support services
- Lack of appropriate referral pathways
- Students choosing not to engage with referred services
- Difficulties accessing support without a formal diagnosis
- Specialised support services being unavailable or inaccessible due to limited funding, long waitlists, or costs to the student

Note: As reported by research participants. Not an exhaustive list.

Many of these challenges are outside the teacher's control and do not relate directly to teacher capability, capacity, or role clarity. Instead, they reflect broader system-level issues that require additional resourcing and support.

A recurring message from workshop participants was that specialised support services are often under-resourced, underfunded, or difficult for students to access. Although it is important that teachers do not take on the role of providing specialised support themselves, participants noted that it can be difficult for teachers not to feel responsible when other supports are unavailable. RTOs should help teachers to understand what actions they can take when accessing/providing specialised support is either not possible or insufficient.

Participants identified several changes that could improve this stage of the cycle (table 13).

Table 13 Suggested changes to enable referral of students to specialised support services

- Online/AI tools to help teachers know where to refer students (e.g. Ask Izzy)
- External supports available from within the training provider (may not be practical for all training providers), or capacity for teacher to refer to external supports
- Adequately funded support services
- Wellbeing support advertised and available for students (24/7), to enable self-access
- Student counsellors available
- Scalable support – not everything requires the 'full treatment'

Note: As suggested by research participants.

Providing psychosocial support (cont)



4. Support

The fourth stage of the psychosocial support cycle involves the teacher continuing to support the student's participation and learning alongside any specialised support services the student may be accessing.

Where possible, regular communication between the teacher, the student, and specialised support services can help support collaboration and monitor progress. Participants noted that this is generally easier when support is provided internally rather than externally, but that communication may be limited by privacy requirements.

Workshop participants identified two key aspects of teaching practice that are particularly important at this stage of the cycle:

- ensuring teaching practices support and engage diverse learners
- implementing reasonable adjustments where appropriate and required.

Teachers reported wanting a better understanding of how different psychosocial needs relate to teaching practice and what strategies they can implement to support learners and reduce the impact of psychosocial challenges on learning. Participants emphasised the importance of using teaching practices that support and engage diverse learners, including evidence-based, high-impact teaching strategies and approaches such as Universal Design for Learning. They also suggested reviewing course and lesson design to improve

inclusivity, as well as identifying better ways to engage and support students in online delivery environments. Participants acknowledged that these approaches will not necessarily resolve the psychosocial challenges but may help reduce their impact on learning.

These teaching-related skills can be strengthened through the development of an educator mindset (discussed further in the next chapter) and through building teaching capability more broadly. In addition to formal professional development, teachers suggested that peer mentoring and greater access to practical resources, including web-based resources on supporting different types of learners, would be valuable at this stage.

Workshop participants also reported wanting a better understanding of reasonable adjustment processes, including how to collect sufficient supporting evidence. The challenges of implementing reasonable adjustments in online delivery settings were raised specifically. There are resources available that provide information on reasonable adjustment (for example, Australian Government 2026), but teachers may need to seek advice from their RTO if they are unsure about how to implement it.

As with the previous stages of the cycle, participants emphasised the importance of maintaining professional boundaries. Teachers should not be expected to provide specialised support and, as one participant noted, must 'acknowledge they are not counsellors or psychologists'. The teacher's role at this stage is to support the student's participation and learning.



Providing psychosocial support (cont)



5. Review

The fifth and final stage of the psychosocial support cycle is a review and reflect element.

This stage can be conducted alongside the previous 'support' stage and involves the teacher monitoring the progress of the student. It enables the review of any adjustments made, as well as further intervention, case management or escalation if learning progress is not improved or if the student further disengages.

This stage also provides the opportunity for the teacher to reflect on how well the psychosocial support cycle has worked, building their knowledge and capability, and potentially identifying additional supports or changes that would improve the process. Conversations with line-managers and training provider leadership could be valuable, potentially improving processes more broadly.

It is important in this stage, as well as in the previous stages, that observations, interventions and progress are recorded in some way.

This psychosocial support cycle was developed both to describe the process of responding to psychosocial challenges, and to guide the response to such challenges. Putting this cycle into practice is not easy. Teachers are under increasing pressure in their roles and often do not have much time to contemplate how to respond to challenges that arise. And these are often complex challenges.

While this cycle has been depicted as a neat flow, teachers described that their reality is that they often have many students with different support needs, all presenting at different times throughout the training journey.

Workshop participants suggested a system that could be used alongside this psychosocial support cycle, to help them implement it. They reported they would value an easy-to-access system where they can:

- record observations and/or challenges
- find information about available support services, that relate to the observations they have made
- see information that is tailored for students in their specific subject areas, as well as more broadly
- record their review and reflection notes.

It was suggested that such data, especially on the challenges observed, could be useful internally to inform practice, and externally to inform research, policy development and funding models.





Initial teacher development



Initial teacher development

Key findings and implications

- Pathways into VET teaching roles are diverse, both in terms of qualification and career trajectories. This variability results in considerable diversity in the skills, work experience and life experience of novice VET teachers.
- Research participants had mixed views about how well the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment prepares VET teachers for their roles. A dominant theme was that the qualification has a strong compliance focus and does not adequately develop teaching practices.
- Novice VET teachers therefore face significant gaps from initial teacher training, particularly in how to teach, manage diverse classrooms and respond to diverse learning and psychosocial needs of learners. They need to develop these skills to become confident teachers.
- Novice teachers need additional support to enable them in their teaching roles. Research participants suggested this support includes:
 - » Structured and staged onboarding, with a holistic focus
 - » Workload management, to enable time to further develop their skills
 - » Ongoing support (providing formal support and enabling informal support)
 - » Supportive leadership that provides a growth-focused culture
 - » Ongoing needs-based and meaningful professional development
- Novice teachers who are proactive and take responsibility for their own development build their capability and resilience quickly. Developing agency in teachers is key to this.
- The professional development strategies identified are not new, but there is a persistent gap between knowing what works and implementing it consistently across diverse training providers. Attention needs to shift from identifying effective practices to creating mechanisms for implementation.
- Given the diversity of VET teaching roles, it is unsurprising that individuals and employers — including training providers, enterprises, and community organisations — require different things from the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. This diversity likely contributes to the wide range of views about the adequacy of the qualification.
- How the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is delivered also influences the experiences and satisfaction with the qualification. Research participants raised concerns that included the qualification being delivered too quickly, not being taught well, the delivery mode and other structural issues.
- Teachers believed that the latest version of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment was improved and addressed some of their concerns about the qualification, but this was dependent on how it was being packaged and the units being offered.

Initial teacher development (cont)

A diverse workforce, with diverse pathways

It is well established that the VET teaching workforce is diverse and includes a wide range of roles. Jobs and Skills Australia (2024) identified the many roles that can be considered teaching roles within the sector. The responsibilities associated with these roles vary depending on the training provider and may also be influenced by the provider's type and size. The career and qualification pathways into these diverse roles are also varied.

Becoming a VET teacher

Pathways into teaching

There are multiple pathways into VET teaching roles, both in terms of qualifications and career trajectories. The Jobs and Skills Australia VET Workforce Study provides a comprehensive overview of the qualification pathways and employment arrangements associated with the many different teaching roles in the sector (Jobs and Skills Australia 2024). For many individuals, the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (the TAE) is the main pathway into teaching, as it is the minimum requirement for delivering and assessing nationally recognised training.

For many VET teachers, the pathway into teaching involves working in industry followed by a transition into teaching, often supported by completion of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. For others, teaching (perhaps in other education sectors) may have been their initial career goal. These individuals may begin with a higher education teaching degree before moving into the VET sector, sometimes through VET delivered in secondary schools. Depending on their pathway, they may complete the full Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or the skill sets required to deliver VET.

Interviews conducted for this research suggest that pathways into VET teaching can be more complex than these examples imply. Careers in VET can be non-linear, with individuals moving in and out of teaching and industry roles over time, sometimes completing additional qualifications or skill sets along the way. Recent changes introduced through the Credential Policy are also likely to have further diversified entry pathways into VET teaching.

This variability in career and qualification pathways contributes to considerable diversity in the skills, work experience, and life experience of VET teachers. As a result, novice trainers can differ substantially in their backgrounds and capabilities.

The following section examines VET teachers' perceptions of how well the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment—the most commonly completed entry qualification for VET teachers—prepares them for teaching and assessment in the VET sector.

Initial teacher training – the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

Although a formal review of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment was not a specific aim of this research, both the content of the qualification and participants' experiences of completing it were relevant to the study. Questions about the qualification were therefore included in the interviews, particularly in relation to teacher capability and the professional development and support needs of novice teachers. In the workshops, participants also raised the qualification without prompting from facilitators.

The following sections explore the key themes that emerged from the interviews and workshops.

Satisfaction with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

Interviewees were asked to comment on how well the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment prepares VET teachers for their role. Responses focused on both the content of the qualification and how it is delivered.

A dominant theme across the interviews was the perception that the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment has a strong compliance focus. Interviewees commonly expressed the view that the qualification prepares teachers to meet the Standards for RTOs but does not develop effective teaching practice.

Table 14 summarises the skills that interviewees believed were not adequately developed through the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, grouped broadly into training, assessment, and other skill areas. By far the most common concern was that the qualification does not sufficiently develop teaching skills.



Initial teacher development (cont)

Interviewees often used the term ‘teaching skills’ broadly, referring not only to teaching practice and delivery, but also to the theoretical foundations of teaching, such as adult learning theory. Others identified more specific skills, including student engagement, classroom management, supporting diverse learners, and working effectively with training packages. These views are consistent with previous research (Simons & Smith 2008; Clayton et al. 2010; Francisco 2020; Smith & Tuck 2023).

The central importance of teaching and classroom management skills was highlighted in the interviews,

... because at the end of the day, classroom management and teaching, they're the two things that they're gonna be doing day in, day out, for their careers. And if they can't do those things, then it doesn't matter how good you are at your assessments and your compliance. If you can't do those two things, then you're probably not going to be super successful or very happy as a lecturer (ID55, A/Manager-Staff capability, WA)

Table 14 Perceived gaps in skill development within the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, as identified by interviewees

Perceived skill development gaps	
Teaching & training - teaching and delivery skills - pedagogy - two-way learning - facilitation - designing learning activities - student engagement - classroom (and behaviour) management - digital skills (for online delivery) - curriculum design - mapping	- understanding and supporting diverse learners - cultural diversity - mental health - neurodivergence - learning difficulties - barriers to learning - LLND assessment and support - Reasonable adjustment - creating an inclusive learning environment - interpreting training packages - unpacking units of competency - managing psychosocial challenges
Assessment - putting into practice - designing and writing assessments - marking strategies and determining competence	Other - communication skills (including generational differences) - time management - risk assessment and hazard identification

Note: As suggested by research participants.

Initial teacher development (cont)

Some interviewees acknowledged that the latest version of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment may better prepare individuals for teaching, particularly through the teaching stream. However, it was noted that uptake of the practicum unit (TAEDEL415) appears to be low, and there was a perception that many training providers focus more heavily on delivering the assessment units than the teaching units.

Teachers reported that they did not feel adequately prepared by the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to manage diverse student learning and support needs. It was not surprising, then, that workshop discussions highlighted that teachers also viewed the management of psychosocial challenges in the classroom, and how to appropriately support students experiencing these challenges, as a significant gap in the qualification.

Some participants believed that assessment-related skills were not sufficiently developed. While a few comments related to the design of assessment tools, most reflected difficulties applying assessment skills in practice, including making assessment judgements, marking strategies and determining competence. More broadly, this echoed a common sentiment that applying the knowledge and skills gained through the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in real teaching environments was challenging.

And it really doesn't prepare you in any way, shape or form for that first day standing in front of a classroom of students, and knowing what to do (ID54, Manager-Teacher Capability, Vic.)

Interviewees attributed these challenges to limited opportunities to practise skills authentically while completing the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment qualification. As a result, many viewed the qualification as not fit for purpose.

Some interviewees expressed contrasting views, suggesting that the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment placed too much emphasis on delivery, assessment, and validation. Further discussion revealed that these opinions were largely based on the belief that many teachers are unlikely to develop training plans or assessment strategies or be involved in pre- and post-validation processes. From this perspective, some participants questioned whether this content was necessary within the qualification.

For example, this week I've done all the pre- and post-validation stuff that we have to do and most of the people that I train are never going to do pre- and post-validations. They're working for TAFE, they're working for larger organisations, they're going to work on mine sites, and to them it is almost three wasted days covering the information they're never going to use. But they have to do it. They understand why they have to do it. I personally think that it's not necessary for your average trainer. (ID24, TAE trainer, Qld)

We've tried to fit so much into that poor qualification that it becomes a nightmare for any person who's not in the VET sector to come in and successfully complete it and then walk into the job and say, oh, I learned all that. But 95% of the things, I'm not even using them or it doesn't make sense. (ID81, Education Manager, Vic.)

While this may have reflected the experience of some interviewees, what this really highlights is the diversity of training providers and the varied expectations of teachers and the tasks they need to undertake:

And yeah, lots of RTOS don't expect lecturers to do that [develop assessment activities], but we do (ID4, Chief Executive Officer, SA)

Participants also acknowledged that, even when teachers are not directly responsible for these activities, having an understanding of them can be valuable. However, questions remained about how much of this content should be included in the qualification, and the depth to which it needs to be taught for all teachers.

Initial teacher development (cont)

What shapes satisfaction of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment?

In addition to a general feeling of mismatch between the content of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and the skills required in teaching, there were two main themes raised by participants that appear to shape satisfaction with the qualification: the expectations of teaching and the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, and how the qualification is delivered.

Expectations of teaching and the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

Interviewees suggested that people's expectations of teaching in VET, and of what the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment involves, can shape their views of the qualification. Some participants felt that individuals entering VET teaching can underestimate both the complexity of the role and the breadth of sector requirements and responsibilities, which in turn influences what they expect the Certificate IV qualification should cover.

I think the expectation is that it's going to be easy ... they think it's going to be easy and it's not. My experience is that the student cohorts are getting more and more difficult. (ID53, Program Leader, Vic.)

Some interviewees also discussed the level of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, noting that it is often a higher-level qualification than those previously completed by participants. For example, individuals moving from the trades into teaching may hold a Certificate III as their highest qualification, often obtained many years earlier. In some cases, these individuals may also have left school early or experience language, literacy, and numeracy challenges, which can add to the difficulty of undertaking the Certificate IV qualification.

So the trainer has to learn the training package and a lot of them, being trades based people that probably weren't the best at school, struggle with it. It might not be hard for yourself or myself because we've got higher training, but for them, it's hard work. A lot of them are sitting at AQF 3, they're sitting on that peg, and a lot of this stuff is above that. (ID4, Chief Executive Officer, SA)

As the minimum required qualification required to teach in VET, it was noted by some interviewees that the qualification was not as thorough as those required to teach in other sectors. At the same time, though, it was considered 'too high level' for some, and as 'unnecessarily difficult', having 'challenging language', and being 'jargonistic'.

The motivation of students undertaking the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment can also influence their attitude and satisfaction with the qualification. For some, the intention is not to 'become a VET teacher' but is something they've been requested to do by their employer:

We have a lot of students who come to us at [RTO], where they say 'I don't really want to do this course, but the boss is making me. I've been driving buses for 25 years and I know everything there is to know about driving buses, and the boss wants me to teach the new staff how to drive the buses. I don't really want to do this course. I like driving buses. I don't really want to train people in driving buses. I don't think it's my sweet spot, but I'm going to have to be doing it. And so, I have to do this course'. And so, they're looking for the easiest road possible and not necessarily looking to enhance their skills. (ID43, TAE teacher, Qld)

Similarly, the understanding of industry people that are shifting into a teaching role, and what their new role is going to involve was raised:

We needed to make that explicit to say that, 'OK, we understand that you've got 15-20-30 years as a trade professional, but as a teacher, we need you to understand the practices, the requirements of a teacher, and you can bring your trade with you in these new professions'. (ID36, Education Manager-Teacher Development, Vic.)

Initial teacher development (cont)

How the TAE is delivered, and studied, matters

The interviews highlighted that, in addition to content, how the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is delivered and studied has a bearing on the experience of undertaking the qualification and how effective it is in preparing teachers for their role. Both positive and negative experiences and issues were shared by interviewees and are discussed below.

It should be noted that some of the issues described by participants are things that could be true for any qualification and are not necessarily unique to delivery of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Additionally, it is not easy to distinguish between issues related to qualification content (discussed above) and delivery. For example, the language used in the qualification and opportunities to practise or demonstrate teaching skills relate to both. These elements are included here to reflect how interviewees discussed them.

Four main themes regarding issues with how the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is delivered were identified:

- The time taken to deliver/undertake the qualification
- Issues with the delivery of the qualification
- The delivery mode or conditions of delivery
- Structural and other issues

Table 15 summarises the reported detail of these four themes, and they are discussed below.

Time taken to deliver the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

A commonly reported concern among interviewees, particularly those who deliver the qualification themselves, was that the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is often delivered too quickly. Interviewees reported delivery timeframes ranging from as little as two weeks to more than 12 months.

Many participants felt that the qualification covers a large amount of content, but only at a surface level because of the pace at which it is delivered. Some believed this was an issue even when delivery extended over 12 months, and especially so in shorter delivery models.

While some interviewees said they would prefer that the qualification was delivered over a longer period to support higher-quality learning and outcomes, they also noted that there is significant market pressure to deliver it quickly.

Talking about competing in an open market ... why would I go somewhere that's going to take six months to do it when I can do it over a three-week period or something? (ID55, A/Manager-Staff capability, WA)

For us to be able to do the right thing as per the delivery. So far we've been trying to fit everything into that 12 months, but my worry is that if we put anything more, we'll have to push the timeframe out, which means that we run out of being competitive in the market. (ID81, Education Manager, Vic.)

While participants believed that completing the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment over a shorter timeframe was less likely to prepare teachers as effectively as completing it over a longer period, one interviewee observed that employers are unlikely to take the duration of study into account when recruiting trainers:

But at the end of the day, if you look at it, when you are an employer and you're recruiting trainers, you never ask them, 'how long did it take you to do [the] TAE?'. They say 'you've got a TAE? Come on board, mate. That's fine'. And that's the mentality that needs to change. (ID81, Education Manager, Vic.)

This may be exacerbated by the current shortages of VET teachers, especially in some industry areas, and when there has been pressure to deliver the qualification in a compressed form.

Initial teacher development (cont)

Table 15 Perceived delivery issues of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, as identified by interviewees

Reported issue	Interviewee comments
Timeframe	
Delivered too quickly	• Too condensed • Covers a lot, but all surface level • Market pressure to deliver quickly • Not as thorough as teaching qualifications in other sectors
Not delivered or taught well	
Skills and expectations of TAE teachers	• Lack of experience of some trainers • Different expectations of teachers (especially regarding assessment)
Too much repetition	• Not enough scaffolding • Over-assessed
Lack of contextualisation	• Difficult to contextualise • Case studies and scenarios not relevant/relatable
Jargonistic	• Language not tailored to students, or explained well
Not enough support	• Noting the different experience for those undertaking the Cert IV with their employer while teaching under guidance
Delivery mode/conditions	
Online delivery	• Felt external to the experience of teaching • Difficult to manage, e.g. sending videos for assessments
Feels like a box-ticking exercise	• Felt like a process rather than a genuine learning experience
Difficult to balance with work commitments	• Onerous to undertake if currently working full-time in industry • Can be overwhelming if in a new teaching role
Structural and other issues	
Little opportunity to practice/demonstrate teaching skills	• The opportunities provided require small numbers of 'students' – not authentic
Limitations in the electives being delivered	• Training providers choosing the 'easiest' elective units to deliver, some noting that these are not the delivery-focused units • Practicum unit often not offered

Note: As reported by research participants.

Initial teacher development (cont)

Not delivered or taught well

Some interviewees reported that they did not think the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment was always taught or delivered well. Most of the issues raised fell into two groups: those related to the abilities of the teachers delivering the qualification, and those related to the structure of the qualification.

As is the case for any educational experience, the ability of the teacher has a large influence on the satisfaction and outcomes of the learners. Specific concerns raised about teachers delivering the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment were:

- TAE teachers not experienced enough

I think that a lot of trainers who teach TAE aren't experienced enough to teach it. And so, their knowledge of the actual nitty gritty of the unit is a little bit below par. (ID13, VET Coordinator, Vic.)

- TAE teachers having different expectations, especially regarding assessment

Well, there was between three, maybe four, teachers ... that we had for TAE and each of them was wildly different in what they expected, what they would accept as a good answer or a bad answer, or whatever it was. You talk to one and they go 'That's brilliant. That's great. That's spot on'. You speak to the next person and they go 'No, it needs to be exactly this'. So as far assessing, it probably raised some flags. (ID35, Novice teacher, Vic.)

For some, the level of resubmits needed for each assessment was frustrating, and when widespread, could indicate issues with delivery rather than the capability of the students:

I think we had five different teachers [...] And everyone was getting resubmits. So, we started with a class of probably about 25 and we ended up with maybe 12 completing. I don't think anyone ever passed a single assessment without a resubmit, and we had over thirty-five assessments. (ID7, Novice teacher, ACT)

Another interviewee also expressed concern about the number of assessments required, and the lack of scaffolding used to progress learning,

I thought there [were] a lot of hours that weren't particularly high value learning in the TAE. I've done two masters degrees, and I found it the most tedious learning I've ever done. And the most repetitive. I'm used to learning in a way that your knowledge builds ... you learn the foundations and then you learn upon that. And, when you do assessments and so forth, they build upon each other, so your learning advances, whereas there was a lot of repetition within the TAE. 'Do this three times', 'demonstrate that you can do the same complicated, boring thing, tedious thing three times'. So, it's three times, and you're not learning anything on top of it. (ID41, Novice teacher, Vic.)

Frustration was also expressed when there had been a lack of contextualisation:

Going into that Cert IV is quite overwhelming. I think because it's not linked to your industry specifically. So that's where people will be like, 'oh, but why am I doing this thing on hospitality when my background's early childhood?' (ID40, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

I remember getting copious amounts of feedback because I had to write up a session plan for a dance unit and I'm like 'I literally don't know, I'm not a dancer'... I've never seen or been to a dance class. I got feedback and I didn't pass one of the questions because I put too many people in this dance hall. I had 20 dancers and she said that would be an OH&S thing, 'how do you think that's gonna work practically?' I'm like, 'I literally don't know'. But that's not wrong, it was just the application. (ID7, Novice teacher, ACT)

Interviewees also described challenges with a lack of support while undertaking the qualification, although this often differed depending on how the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment was being undertaken (for example, undertaking it independently, or undertaking it while teaching under direction), discussed further below.

Initial teacher development (cont)

Good delivery and experiences

To balance these views, interviewees also gave many examples of Certificate IV in Training and Assessment being delivered well. TAE teachers spoke of how they contextualised the qualification for their learners, provided support (sometimes beyond completion of the qualification), provided complementary resources, ensured assessments were meaningful, supported their students to put their learnings into practice, and modelled effective teaching practices.

We catch up with them on a monthly basis, and we are checking their TAE progress. We have a conversation with them that's built around the [RTO] Teacher Capability Framework. So, depending on where they are within their journey, we tailor our conversation to meet what they're doing. So, at the very start, it's going to be something really simple, like looking at identifying your learner and their needs and how do you identify who your learners are. We ask them simple questions like, 'Okay, what have you found? You're in your classroom now. Who have you got? Where are they coming from? What are their difficulties? What are you identifying?'. By the end, we're talking about reflective practice assessment observations, etcetera. So, we build those conversations throughout the 12 months. (ID34, Teacher Development Coordinator, Vic.)

Of course, their first formalised training is the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. We also have a mentoring programme that works parallel to the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment these days, which is just, I think, amazing. And that mentor really is there to support them side by side in terms of their TAE studies, but in terms of their classroom practice as well. (ID50, Professional development lecturer, WA)

So I make a real concerted effort to have regular meetings with a new lecturer if they haven't got their TAE yet and communicate with them regularly. Do some marking together, check in with them about problems, check in with them on the quality of their resources. So, we try and get the opportunity to get in the classroom and give really structured feedback on their teaching, but that's hard to manage. (ID65, Experienced teacher, WA)

We had a beautiful work integrated learning model and it was really intensive on the learner. You know, supporting them through and contextualising it to their environment. And, because we have the relationships with everyone in the Institute, it creates the community and the culture and support networks. (ID73, Department Head, ACT)

Other interviewees, who have undertaken the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, reported good experiences of undertaking the qualification, praising their TAE teacher and the support they received from them and their RTO.

That's where I will give that credit to my trainer at that time because she worked very closely with me, teaching me, and I was basically shadowing her. So that was helping me a lot with those face-to-face workshops. (ID8, Experienced teacher, ACT)



Initial teacher development (cont)

Delivery mode/conditions

Some interviewees highlighted the large volume of work that is required to complete the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, and that this was onerous and difficult if working full-time in industry, or if trying to complete it as a new trainer who has recently moved from industry to teaching (while teaching under direction).

There's a massive amount of workload. So, you're learning a new position, a new role, going from industry into education. While you're doing that, you're also sort of thrown into this 'Well, hey, you've now got three assessments to do in the next two weeks, then you've got this'. (ID35, Novice teacher, Vic.)

Challenges with undertaking the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment online were also raised, including feeling disconnected to the training, and the practicalities of submitting assessments through that delivery mode,

It ends up being self-paced, online, and then they've got to provide videos. Most TAE is delivered that way. Occasionally there might be some group training involved, but mostly [you] just can't get them together to do that. It's not a bad qualification, but the student experience of all those demonstrations that they've got to do, all the videos they've got to send. I've clustered the assessments as much as I could. They also say, 'if I had been given a chance earlier to do it in a group training situation—it simply wasn't practical, I couldn't do it—but I wish I could have done it that way'. (ID17, TAE teacher, NSW)

An important finding from the interviews was the (mostly) positive experience of those undertaking the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment while employed as a teacher (training under direction), especially if doing the qualification with their employing RTO (discussed further below).

Structural and other issues

Other issues raised related to the limited opportunities to practise delivery, or 'teaching', in authentic settings. These comments were often linked to the 'Facilitate vocational training' unit (TAEDEL411) requirement to facilitate a small number of sessions in front 'of at least four learners', which many interviewees did not view as reflective of real teaching practice. Participants also noted that meeting delivery requirements could be particularly challenging when completing the qualification online, where opportunities to demonstrate teaching in front of groups may be limited.

Some interviewees discussed the potential benefits of the practicum unit (TAEDEL415) introduced in the 2022 version of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. However, it was noted that relatively few RTOs currently offer this elective unit.

Undertaking the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment while teaching under direction

Many interviewees had either completed the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment while working as a trainer under direction or were involved in delivering the qualification to staff undertaking this pathway within their training provider. This model, supported through the Credential Policy arrangements (Australian Government 2025b), is where a person who is actively working towards a training and assessment credential can deliver training and contribute to assessment, provided they work under the direction of a qualified trainer or assessor.

While there were some reports of poor experiences of undertaking the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment while teaching under direction (lack of supervision, lack of contextualisation), the majority of experiences reported by research participants were generally positive.

Both TAE trainers and participants reported that this can be a highly effective approach, particularly when individuals complete the qualification within the same training provider in which they are teaching. Interviewees identified several reasons for this:

- greater opportunity to contextualise the training to the teaching role
- the ability to align the structure of the TAE qualification with teaching responsibilities (for example, focusing on assessment units first)

Initial teacher development (cont)

- opportunities to ask more relevant and practical questions of TAE trainers and colleagues who have completed the same training
- TAE teachers being familiar with the policies, systems, and practices of the training provider, allowing them to address contextual gaps where needed
- stronger support systems, including support from TAE trainers, supervisors, and teacher development staff, with access to multiple mentors or supervisors
- the ability to practise teaching skills as they are developed, under supervision
- opportunities to observe other trainers, including supervisors and mentors
- being trained by staff within the same organisation, creating a shared commitment to success
- greater flexibility in managing workload pressures and attending classes or mentoring sessions.
- the unit *Work effectively in the VET sector* (TAEPDD401) was valued for its strong connection to industry
- the qualification was considered to offer greater flexibility through the available skill sets, particularly when combined with the Credential Policy arrangements that do not always require completion of the full qualification.

However, some concerns were also raised:

- some interviewees were disappointed that the LLN unit had been removed, as they believed it helped prepare teachers to support students with learning difficulties
- there were concerns that the qualification had become more difficult due to the increase in the number of units, from 10 to 12.

Some interviewees discussed the new practicum unit (*TAED415 Complete a practicum in a vocational education and training environment*) when reflecting on how well the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment prepares teachers for teaching roles. The practicum unit was generally viewed positively, with participants believing it could better prepare teachers for teaching practice and classroom management. However, interviewees reported that relatively few training providers are delivering or offering the unit, noting that it is an elective unit.

Participants suggested that the practicum unit may be considered “too hard” to deliver because Certificate IV in Training and Assessment students who are not already employed by, or connected to, a training provider may struggle to secure suitable placements. Some also noted that training providers may have concerns about allowing members of the public into classrooms for practicum purposes, although similar safeguards as those used in other work placement situations could be implemented to counter this.

It is notable that participants generally expressed positive views about the newest version of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, despite the strong overall sentiment across the interviews that the qualification is not fully fit for purpose or leaves significant gaps in preparing teachers for their roles. A more comprehensive evaluation of the TAE40122 would therefore be valuable to explore if and how it addresses some of these identified gaps.

Some of these practices and supports can also be provided to novice teachers who are joining a training provider after gaining their TAE qualification, or if they are undertaking it at a different training provider (discussed further in the *Supporting novice teachers* section).

Differences between the TAE40122 and earlier versions

The latest version of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40122) is relatively new, having first become available for delivery in December 2022. As a result, only a limited number of interviewees had direct experience with it. Most of the discussion above, therefore, related either to older versions of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, or to broader views about the qualification overall.

Interviewees with direct experience of the latest version of the qualification were invited to share their views. Responses were mixed, but generally positive. Specific feedback included:

- the TAE40122 was viewed as more fit for purpose than the TAE40116
- the unit *Facilitate learning for young vocational learners* (TAED416) was seen positively

Initial teacher development (cont)

What would improve the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment?

When interviewees were asked what could improve initial teacher training, and the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment specifically, responses tended to fall into three broad themes:

- the content of the qualification
- the structure of the qualification, including how it is delivered (including the teaching/training arrangement)
- the additional supports provided to teachers undertaking the qualification.

Given the perceived shortcomings of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in preparing teachers for their teaching role, it was unsurprising that interview participants suggested a range of additional content that they believed should be included in the qualification (table 16). Many of these suggestions related to the teaching aspects of the role, such as understanding how students learn, student engagement, and classroom management. Participants also identified other important skills they believed should be included, including emotional intelligence and time management.

Interviewees acknowledged the introduction of the three streams of elective units within the revised version of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (Training and assessment, Learner support and General). However, there were still suggestions that the qualification could be more effectively contextualised or tailored to the needs of different types of teachers.

Participants indicated that part of the issue relates to the units most commonly packaged and delivered by training providers, with some interviewees suggesting that providers often prioritise assessment-focused units, which were viewed as the 'easiest units to deliver'.

Interviewees also suggested that greater contextualisation could be achieved through different delivery models (discussed below), or when the qualification is delivered for a specific industry context. One participant, for example, described a previous situation where a training provider delivered a health-focused version of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Table 16 also identifies areas of content that some interviewees believed could be removed from the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or,

alternatively, learned on the job through classroom experience. Some topics, such as designing assessment tools or lesson plans, were viewed by these participants as higher-level activities that many teachers would not need to undertake (teachers often use those developed by others). However, other interviewees expressed opposing views, arguing that these skills remain important.

Many suggestions focused instead on the structure and delivery of the qualification, particularly when undertaken alongside teaching roles. Participants proposed alternative delivery models, including apprenticeship or traineeship-style approaches. Teaching under direction, as enabled through the Credential Policy, was also viewed positively, although interviewees noted that this model is currently used more commonly in TAFE institutions and suggested it would be beneficial if it could be adopted more broadly across the sector.

Having a direct connection with a training organisation, as occurs in these models, was seen as highly beneficial for those undertaking the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Interviewees also suggested other ways of strengthening this connection, such as incorporating placements into the qualification. Participants noted that the practicum unit in the revised Certificate IV in Training and Assessment was intended to provide this opportunity but observed that the unit is currently underutilised and not widely offered by training providers. One interviewee reported that their organisation was considering introducing the practicum unit, while others highlighted practical challenges that would need to be addressed for successful implementation.

Interviewees believed that these models not only support stronger contextualisation of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and greater opportunities to apply teaching skills in practice but also enable deeper learning and skill development by reducing the pressure to complete the qualification within a compressed timeframe. These approaches were also viewed as more manageable than attempting to complete the TAE while working full-time in industry.

Some participants also suggested adjustments to how the qualification is delivered for those teaching under direction. One suggestion was a block-release model, where novice teachers would complete a period of Certificate IV in Training and Assessment training, such as one or two units, before returning to their teaching role to apply what they had learned, then undertake further training blocks over time.

Initial teacher development (cont)

Table 16 Suggested improvements to the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (made by research participants)

Suggested inclusions • Stronger alignment of content with new Standards for RTOs and with ASQA's self-assurance • Behaviour and classroom management • Building relationships with students • Communication skills • Cultural awareness • Digital skills • Emotional intelligence • Teaching and delivery skills		• Understanding how students learn • Presentation skills • Reflective practice • Student engagement • Time management skills • Writing session plans • More authentic practical sessions • 'Assessment hours', similar to required teaching hours
Suggested omissions (or optional, or better learned on the job) • Developing assessment tools • Developing delivery plans • Validation		• Repetitive tasks (for example, repeatedly filling in the same templates) • Teaching and classroom management (needs to be developed in the classroom)
Suggested structural changes • Different models of TAE delivery • Apprenticeship &/or traineeship delivery models • Training under direction while completing the Certificate IV in Training and assessment (as allowed through the Credential Policy), potentially for longer • Work placement in the classroom (compare with Practicum Unit of TAE40122) • Block delivery		• Different ordering of clusters (assessment last versus assessment first) • Different qualification levels for different teaching roles (e.g. Certificate III for teachers who do not do the higher-level tasks) • More customisation, for specific roles
Suggested supports (overlaps with supporting novice teachers section) • Time in classroom while learning • Mentoring • Shadowing other teachers		• Peer support enabled • Workplace support to fill the gaps in initial training
Other suggestions • More contextualisation (could be through an industry-specific Certificate IV in Training and Assessment) • More experienced Certificate IV in Training and Assessment trainers		• A refresher module that can be conducted when a teacher has more teaching experience

Initial teacher development (cont)

Others proposed a more substantial redesign of trainer development, overlapping with broader discussions about novice teacher support and ongoing professional development. These suggestions included extended onboarding periods, where new trainers might spend the first six months of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment learning about the VET sector, followed by additional training focused on instructional practice and teaching capability development, noting that this is unlikely to be possible in all RTOs.

Collectively, these suggestions highlight the diverse purposes and needs associated with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. The findings suggest a strong desire for even greater flexibility and tailoring than is currently enabled through the streams in the latest version of the qualification. Some participants suggested that greater use of skill sets for specialised tasks, undertaken by only a subset of VET teachers, may provide one way of achieving this.

Implications

Much of what is presented here is not new. Many of these suggestions have previously emerged through consultations and have also been discussed in the literature and the VET Workforce Blueprint (Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council 2024a).

A key issue underlying the varied concerns raised is the broad range of purposes the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is expected to serve. Given the diversity of VET teaching roles identified by Jobs and Skills Australia, it is unsurprising that individuals and employers — including training providers, enterprises, and community organisations — require different things from the qualification. This diversity likely contributes to the wide range of views, about the adequacy of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

This is particularly evident in the suggestions relating to qualification content and structure. For example, not all teachers need to know how to design assessment tools, but for some it is a core requirement of their role. Similarly, individuals undertaking the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to train others within their industry workplace may have little interest in completing the qualification through a traineeship-style delivery model. These examples highlight how context and purpose shape perceptions of the qualification and influence satisfaction with it.

The findings also raise broader questions about whether the purpose of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is sufficiently clear. There were suggestions that the qualification may attempt to cover too much content in some areas, potentially at the expense of developing other important skills. While the streams introduced in the revised Certificate IV in Training and Assessment appear intended to address differing needs, interviewees identified ongoing concerns about the units and streams that RTOs choose to offer. Participants also questioned whether users have access to different pathways and elective choices. More broadly, the findings suggest there may be limitations in the current ability to tailor the qualification to different teaching contexts and purposes.



Initial teacher development (cont)

Supporting novice trainers

If we don't help, then it can never be, people will never grow. Does that make sense? We'll just be seeing the same trainers that are coming out of [the] TAE now. If we don't help and support, then it can never change. (ID2, Experienced teacher, NT)

In this study, novice trainers are defined as trainers with less than 5 years of experience in delivering VET and included some who are teaching under direction while undertaking the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

The previous section described how new VET teachers often enter teaching roles with strong industry knowledge and expertise but feel unprepared for the practical demands of teaching. The findings highlight a gap between being technically competent in an industry area and feeling confident and prepared to teach effectively.

This section further explores why novice trainers require additional support, the structural and personal challenges they face, and the approaches that can best support their transition into, and development within, their teaching roles.

These findings are not derived solely from data provided by novice trainers. They also incorporate perspectives from other participant groups including TAE teachers, experienced VET teachers and teacher development staff.

Why novice trainers need support

As described earlier, there are diverse career and qualification pathways into VET teaching roles. A common pathway, however, is the transition from industry into teaching, which represents a significant occupational shift. Unlike individuals who enter teaching as their initial or primary career, many VET teachers have spent much of their working lives developing industry expertise rather than teaching capability.

In addition, unlike school teaching and some other teaching professions, VET teaching does not require a teaching degree as a pre-requisite. Instead, many new

VET teachers enter the profession by undertaking the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

As discussed earlier, there are perceived gaps in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, with interviewees commonly viewing the qualification as being heavily focused on compliance requirements rather than the practical teaching and classroom management skills needed for effective teaching. As a result, many novice teachers reported lacking confidence when confronted with the realities of the classroom. As one novice teacher explained:

The TAE actually teaches you in a very long, convoluted manner - all about the marking and the assessments and the compliance requirements. It touches on presentations, but... I did not know how to teach after doing TAE. (ID41, Novice teacher, Vic.)

Closely related to the perceived or actual lack of teaching skills is the identity shift required of novice teachers as they transition from industry expert to educator. Interviewees highlighted that many novice teachers may not initially recognise that effective teaching requires the development of specific teaching skills, beyond their existing industry expertise.

It was kind of a given that if you're an industry expert, you're going to kind of land on your feet and you'll know how to teach, because you've got the knowledge...but that's not true. We have knowledge around our industry, but that doesn't mean we know how to impart that knowledge. (ID34, Teacher Development Coordinator, Vic.)

Particularly in the male-dominated trades areas, they just don't see themselves as educators. They say 'I'm a plumber and I'm just teaching the skill of plumbing' and they don't realise that these young people are coming in with all their needs. (ID44, Director-Professional teaching practice, Vic.)

Initial teacher development (cont)

From competence to confidence: How can novice teachers be supported?

Competency is minimum benchmark; we need confident trainers who cope with diversity and behaviour (Workshop participant)

The transition from industry expert to effective VET educator is not always smooth or linear. Experienced teachers and teacher development staff expressed a strong view that new teachers were often 'thrown in the deep end'. As one experienced teacher reflected:

Back then I had no mentoring or supervision or anything like that. I basically got my qualification and then I just started. They said, 'OK, this is what you have to teach'. And then I just got thrown in at the deep end. (ID66, Experienced teacher, WA)

With the right supports and conditions — including structured induction, early classroom experience, purposeful mentoring, a growth-oriented culture, and opportunities to learn with and from peers — novice teachers can make this transition with greater confidence and develop their teaching capability.

This section outlines key conditions and support strategies that can assist new trainers as they move from initial teacher training into teaching roles (table 17). Drawing on participant examples and representative quotes, it highlights promising practices that can strengthen novice teacher capability, confidence, and role clarity.

Table 17 Support strategies for novice trainers

Support	Details
Initial teacher training (also see section on the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment)	- Contextualised teacher training - Stronger focus on teaching skills - Work-integrated and practicum-style pathways - Early and authentic classroom exposure
Induction and onboarding	- Structured and staged - Early engagement with relevant people and resources - Holistic – organisational/process and teaching-focused
Workload management	- Allowing time for reflection and professional learning - Staged/delayed teaching responsibility
Ongoing support	- Formal and informal - Mentoring, buddying, shadowing, team teaching, communities of practice - Enabling peer support
Supportive leadership	- Supportive of teacher development (including teaching skills) - Providing an encouraging and safe culture, focused on growth - Setting clear expectations – responsibilities and boundaries of role - Developing agency in novice teachers
Ongoing professional development	- Needs based - Bridging initial teacher training gaps - Contextualised and meaningful professional learning

Source: As reported by interviewees and workshop participants

Initial teacher development (cont)

Initial teacher training

The previous section discussed how well initial teacher training, particularly the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, prepares individuals for teaching roles. Discussions with research participants also highlighted several specific elements of initial teacher training that could improve the transition into teaching. These included:

- stronger contextualisation of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, particularly when undertaken while teaching under direction
- a greater focus on practical teaching skills
- more authentic classroom exposure through arrangements such as work-integrated learning, teaching under direction, or practicums and placements.

Training pathways that include placements or supervised teaching arrangements were seen as particularly valuable for novice teachers. These approaches provide opportunities to apply newly developed skills under supervision, while exposing novice teachers to classroom practice, learner diversity, and student behaviour before teaching independently.

At present, there are two formal mechanisms that support these types of arrangements:

- teaching and assessing under direction, as outlined in the Credential Policy
- completion of the practicum unit (TADEL415) within the current version of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, although interviewees noted that this unit is not widely delivered.

As discussed earlier, participants who had completed their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment while teaching under direction generally reported positive experiences, suggesting that the model enabled stronger contextualisation and provided valuable support. This arrangement may also be particularly attractive to industry workers transitioning into teaching, as it reduces the challenge of completing the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment while remaining employed in industry. Some parts of the sector are already actively promoting such models, such as the TAFE NSW 'paid to learn' program.

Induction and onboarding

Research participants advocated for structured, staged, and holistic induction and onboarding processes to support novice teachers. The depth, structure, and formality of these processes varied across RTOs depending on factors such as organisation type, size, available resources, and leadership support. However, participants identified several common features of effective induction and onboarding programs, spanning both organisational and teaching-related support. These included:

- information about available resources and support services for both teachers and students, alongside early opportunities to connect with relevant staff such as teacher development personnel, student support staff, and experienced teachers
- orientation to organisational systems, including the Learning Management System
- orientation to internal compliance requirements and standards processes
- allocation of supervisors and/or mentors, including a dedicated point of contact that novice teachers can approach for support at any time
- opportunities to observe experienced teachers and gain early, supported access to classrooms
- clear introduction to organisational expectations, including:
 - » the boundaries of the teaching role and associated responsibilities
 - » recognition that novice teachers are not expected to be expert teachers immediately, with the first year framed as a period of professional learning and development
- regular wellbeing check-ins, acknowledging that transitioning into a VET teaching role can be a significant personal and professional adjustment.

Participants stressed that ongoing onboarding processes are more effective than one-off information sessions, given the complexity and volume of information involved in transitioning into a teaching role. New teachers enter an organisation much like new students, with limited understanding of how the organisation operates, who to seek support from, and where to begin.

Initial teacher development (cont)

For this reason, participants emphasised the importance of connecting novice teachers with the right people and resources from the outset. Doing so helps ensure that new teachers are not left to navigate the organisation alone, while also enabling leaders and support staff to identify early where additional support may be needed. Embedding these connections into induction and onboarding processes was seen as laying the foundation for a more confident and well-supported transition into teaching.

The induction has been an absolute game changer because we connect them with the right people from the get-go... and that has really helped us, as well, identify if there's going to be any additional supports required. (ID34, Teacher Development Coordinator, Vic.)

We pay particular attention to our new educators through our induction processes... We have a what's called a 'new educator development program'... we have a one-on-one conversation with the new educator, their head of department, and their mentor. We're very big on supporting the mentor who's going to be in situ with them in their teaching departments. (ID80, Experienced teacher, ACT)

Our induction goes for 12 months. It's actually embedded in our enterprise agreement. (ID80, Experienced teacher, ACT)

This onboarding period can also be used to start developing an educator mindset in novice teachers, as discussed in the next section on professional development.

Workload management

Managing workload emerged as a key enabler for novice teachers. Participants emphasised the importance of protecting the learning and development space of new teachers by reducing their teaching load, particularly for those who are simultaneously completing the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Participants suggested that this approach provides novice teachers with time for lesson preparation, reflection, classroom observation, and engagement in mentoring or support activities, rather than expecting them to operate at full teaching capacity while they are still learning how to teach.

...3 months 'breathing room' after commencing, before facing my first class, coupled with a 'trainers toolkit' – an online module taking me through preparation for my 'first class'. (Workshop participant, NT)

We know that their workload just doesn't allow them to keep up to date with the TAE requirements. We're asking them to be a student and a new teacher and settle in — it's too much. So, we highlight that as maybe an issue and try to make sure there's support in place... reduce their teaching load. (ID36, Education Manager, Vic.)

I can see that in a new educator's development, they develop so much more quickly and they're more confident in their ability in the classroom, because they've been afforded that time upfront. (ID80, Experienced teacher, ACT)

Research participants identified several ways to better manage workload for novice teachers, including:

- reducing class contact hours
- avoiding the allocation of multiple units and/or multiple student cohorts
- carefully considering the student cohort assigned, including avoiding groups with particularly high complexity or support needs
- providing designated non-contact time for lesson preparation and professional learning.

Participants also acknowledged that implementing some of these approaches can be more challenging for smaller training providers. In addition, such arrangements may not easily apply to casual or sessional teachers, highlighting the need to consider alternative ways of providing sufficient time and support for professional development.

Initial teacher development (cont)

Ongoing support

Both formal and informal supports, ideally initialised through the onboarding process, are highly valued mechanisms of novice teacher capability development.

... new lecturers now require... mentors at the start... setting them up at the start, encouraging professional development at the start of their career is very worthwhile at the end. (ID49, Mid-career teacher, WA)

Mentoring, buddying, shadowing, team-teaching and communities of practice

Mentoring, buddying, shadowing, and team teaching were identified as valuable forms of support for novice teachers when they were structured and intentionally designed. Participants emphasised that effective mentoring involved more than simply sharing knowledge. It required ongoing connection and commitment to the growth of the new teacher, including support to develop problem-solving skills, reflective practice, and emotional resilience. Effective mentoring was characterised by the mentor's expertise, consistency, care, and the quality of the relationship established with the novice teacher.

In practice, new teachers particularly valued being paired with mentors who understood both the organisational context and the specific teaching area. Examples of effective mentoring approaches included:

- assigning every new teacher a mentor from their first day, with clear expectations about the frequency and focus of check-ins (for example, weekly or fortnightly during the early stages) and extending mentoring beyond completion of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment when undertaken while teaching under direction
- providing two complementary mentors, such as one from a teaching development or quality team and another from the same teaching or delivery area
- ensuring mentors are allocated dedicated time for mentoring, are trained in mentoring, coaching, and providing constructive feedback, and receive organisational recognition for their contribution.

Team teaching was also described as another effective support strategy, particularly for building classroom management skills and confidence in lesson delivery. Teaching alongside an experienced colleague allowed novice teachers to observe, in real time, how experienced educators engage learners and respond to classroom challenges. As one participant explained:

We would do some team teaching, which was unbelievable. It was such a good experience for me, especially in my first couple of years of teaching. I had an experienced teacher, and I was able to see how she was doing classroom management. I would like to see more of it done. (ID37, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

Communities of practice were seen to provide a collegial environment where new teachers could develop their teaching identity, reflect on their practice, and connect with peers experiencing similar challenges. These forums brought together teachers from a range of study areas and career stages to share experiences, discuss effective practices, and collaboratively problem-solve the challenges associated with early teaching experiences.

...learning in a community of practice unites people from different perspectives that have common ground, and that's what these are for. (ID26, Manager-VET Workforce Capability, NT)

Participants reported that shadowing, team teaching, and communities of practice were most effective when they provided structured opportunities for novice teachers to observe experienced colleagues, gradually take on greater responsibilities, and reflect on what worked well and what could be improved within a supportive environment. The attitude and approach of the mentor or experienced teacher were seen as critical to achieving positive outcomes. Conversely, participants also described the limitations of poorly designed or informal mentoring and shadowing arrangements, as well as the risks associated with being paired with disengaged mentors. As two novice teachers explained:

I found that pretty hit and miss... it wasn't purposeful... it wasn't like 'yeah, this is why I'm going to do what I'm doing, here's the session plan, have a look at the content beforehand'. (ID7, Novice teacher, ACT)

Initial teacher development (cont)

If you're with a really good educator that has really strong values, then it's awesome. But if you're with an educator that either has a negative view on the corporation or they're not very involved in the teaching and they're doing it as an on-the-side kind of thing... it can hinder you as a new educator, because you're gonna learn bad habits. (ID61, Novice teacher, Qld)

Participants also acknowledged that personality mismatches sometimes needed to be addressed and experienced teachers noted that feedback was not always acted on, suggesting that formalised expectations and follow-up could make mentoring relationships more effective.

There are situations where, maybe, the personalities aren't well aligned, that we've had to address. But usually, most of the time, it's been very positive. (ID51, Manager-Professional Development, WA)

I found that the feedback wasn't really being received or acted on... if there was a bit more of a formal situation where they had to act on the feedback and show that they were doing it, it might have been more helpful for them. (ID66, Experienced teacher, WA)

- normalising reciprocal classroom observation across teams, supported by simple observation guides and structured debriefs that frame feedback as professional growth rather than performance management
- encouraging new teachers to build and maintain peer networks, including connections formed through their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment cohort and broader professional networks
- providing online peer observation opportunities and archiving recordings and resources so that casual and remote staff can also engage in peer learning, including through cross-disciplinary groups where teachers can learn from colleagues in other fields
- creating opportunities for informal connection through open-plan workspaces, shared staff areas, team lunches, and organisational cultures where sharing resources and ideas is encouraged.

Participants suggested that introducing a small degree of structure around peer support can help teachers recognise its value, while still allowing informal and collegial learning arrangements to flourish.

Enabling peer support

Two really good colleagues who were experienced teachers... I was able to sit in on their classes and see how they did it. That was absolutely brilliant. (ID41, Novice teacher, Vic.)

Novice teachers valued opportunities to observe colleagues teach, share lesson plans and presentations, and participate in discussions about what was and was not working in practice. Organisational conditions were seen as important in enabling these, often informal, forms of peer learning and support. Examples included:

- establishing small, peer-driven groups focused on teaching and learning
- allowing novice teachers to participate during work time so that peer learning is recognised as legitimate professional learning

Supportive leadership

It's okay to make mistakes... There is no such thing as stupid questions - ask anything and everything... Don't be scared to jump in and give it a go. (Workshop participant, Tas.)

Supportive leadership plays several roles in helping new teachers transition into VET delivery, including the development of a supportive culture, setting expectations and responsibilities, and developing a growth mindset in novice teachers.

Initial teacher development (cont)

Training provider culture

A good training provider culture involves leaders who understand the challenges new teachers face, actively support their development and foster a culture where it is genuinely okay to make mistakes. Participants mentioned that when the leadership and more experienced teachers model that learning from mistakes is normal and expected, new teachers feel free to ask questions and accept that their development as a teacher will be ongoing. One TAE teacher reflected on the impact of hearing a highly experienced teacher show uncertainty:

'It wasn't until my lecturer, during one of the lectures, said — 'I'm not sure about that. I'll have a look and get back to you.' That released me. I was like, this amazing woman, who's [got a] PhD, and she's like, 'I don't know'... that freed me. (ID60, TAE teacher, Vic.)

The evidence suggests that supportive leadership involves actively modelling vulnerability, reflective practice and openness to feedback, and avoids perfection-seeking cultures that leave new teachers feeling they must 'put on a performance'. In the most supportive settings, leaders and teams created a psychologically safe culture in which collaboration, shared problem solving and mutual encouragement were the norm, making it easier for new teachers to grow into the role.

Setting expectations

Supportive leadership also involves setting clear organisational expectations for new teachers. When leaders clearly communicate what the role involves and how priorities should be balanced, they provide role clarity that helps novice teachers navigate the transition into teaching with greater confidence.

Participants emphasised that expectations should be communicated through regular, structured check-ins, rather than relying on informal conversations or assuming that new teachers will simply 'know' what is expected of them. Examples identified by research participants included:

- frequent meetings (such as weekly or fortnightly) between the new teacher and their supervisor and/or mentor during the first semester or year

- linking conversations about expectations and performance to a structured reference point, such as a capability framework or individual learning plan, so new teachers clearly understand what is expected of them
- using check-ins for meaningful developmental conversations, including discussions about what is working well, what challenges are emerging, and what additional support or professional development may be helpful
- recognising and celebrating progress so that new teachers feel their growth and development are acknowledged and valued.

Developing teacher agency

While training providers play an important role in providing structured support for novice teachers, the data suggests that those teachers who are proactive and take responsibility for their own development are often best positioned to build capability quickly and develop resilience. Participants highlighted that fostering a growth mindset and a sense of professional agency is, in itself, an important form of professional development and one that can be encouraged by organisational leaders.

Self-directed strategies that leaders can encourage novice teachers to adopt include:

- seeking out (potentially additional) mentors or supportive colleagues, even informally:

I've worked professionally for many years. So I was able to kind of find some really good friendships within the department and I've got a good eye for who knows what and [I'm] not afraid to ask for help and build those reciprocal relationships. I was really lucky that I would just grab people and be like, 'hey, show me how to do this.' And I'd repay the favour through [things like] helping with role play assessments. (ID7, Novice teacher, ACT)

- Asking to observe experienced teachers in the classroom:

I say to [my students], 'contact them... sometimes you might want to volunteer to support or just to observe in a classroom... you don't know until you ask'. Obviously, all RTOs have got their own policies and procedures, but it's a conversation that might lead them somewhere. (ID60, TAE teacher, Vic.)

Initial teacher development (cont)

- requesting additional induction or more structured feedback where needed
- engaging in reflective practice early and using self-reflection tools to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement
- proactively seeking student feedback, including informal, real-time feedback during teaching
- building professional networks early in their teaching career and drawing on these networks for ongoing support and learning.

Targeted, ongoing, needs-based professional development

Ongoing professional development is explored in more detail in the following section, but it is important that professional learning begins as new teachers transition into their teaching roles.

Targeted and ongoing professional development was seen as essential for addressing gaps left by initial teacher training, particularly during the early years of teaching. Participants emphasised, however, that professional development needs to be meaningful and responsive to the needs of novice teachers, rather than generic training delivered primarily to meet organisational professional development requirements. Prioritising professional learning that strengthens classroom confidence was viewed as especially important in helping new teachers feel capable and supported in their roles.

Novice trainers reported that their immediate professional development needs commonly related to:

- teaching strategies and student engagement, including how to plan and deliver engaging, student-centred learning
- classroom management and responding to psychosocial challenges
- supporting learners with diverse needs, including learners with disability, ADHD, autism, CALD learners, and First Nations learners
- digital literacy and Learning Management System (LMS) use, particularly for those teachers with limited digital skills
- time and workload management
- reflective practice, including not only the expectation to reflect, but how to do so meaningfully

- emotional intelligence and wellbeing
- AI literacy, including understanding how AI tools can be used within teaching contexts
- educator identity and mindset, supporting industry experts to develop a teaching identity alongside their vocational expertise.

Some new teachers described how their professional development needs often emerge through day-to-day teaching challenges, meaning that their learning is frequently self-identified and self-directed, with limited structured guidance:

I self-identify a lot of gaps I have... and usually look for training... (ID67, New teacher, WA)

After the TAE was done, I just started reading some books and talking to people who've been around for a while... conferences has been a big one for me. (ID35, New teacher, WA)

Participants suggested that professional development is most effective when it is contextualised to the teacher's field of practice and delivered in accessible, engaging formats, rather than through generic modules disconnected from classroom realities.

Implications

The strategies identified above to support novice VET teachers are not new (Francisco 2015; Denning 2016; Schlesinger 2023; Griffin & Davidson 2025). However, the findings highlight a persistent gap between recognising these strategies as effective and implementing them consistently within training providers. This suggests that the challenge is not in identifying what works, but in ensuring that these practices are meaningfully enacted in practice.

These findings raise important considerations for sector leaders. Efforts may need to focus more strongly on mechanisms that actively support and incentivise implementation across training providers. A key question is whether some practices should be mandated. However, participants also noted the risk that, if mandated, such practices may become compliance exercises rather than being genuinely embedded into organisational culture and day-to-day practice.



Ongoing teacher development



Ongoing teacher development

Key findings and implications

- The development of teaching skills—alongside maintaining industry currency—is a key enabler of effective teaching and learning in VET. Strong teaching capability can increase teacher confidence, support training provider quality and compliance, and contribute to improved student outcomes.
- Elevating the importance of teaching skill development may be supported by:
 - » fostering an educator identity among VET teachers
 - » professionalising the VET teaching workforce
 - » strengthening guidance on maintaining teaching currency
 - » recognising and promoting teaching excellence.
- RTOs use a range of approaches to identify professional development needs and support their application. These include formal performance and development processes, capability frameworks, reflective practices, responses to changing student cohorts, and professional conversations.
- Some RTOs use established capability frameworks, while others have developed their own to guide professional development. An updated sector-wide VET educator capability framework could provide valuable support for organisations that lack the resources to develop their own. Making such a framework available online as a 'living' resource would enable it to remain current and responsive to changes in the sector.
- The application of new teaching skills can also be supported through structured opportunities for sharing practice, ongoing professional dialogue and incremental approaches to change. Organisational cultures that provide time, flexibility, trust and space for professional learning further enable teachers to apply and sustain new skills in practice.
- Reflective practice was identified as an important mechanism for both identifying development needs and embedding new skills. However, many VET teachers reported limited confidence in using reflective practice effectively, suggesting a need for practical guidance and supporting resources.
- The creation of a professional development framework could help guide the design and delivery of high-quality professional development while balancing the needs and priorities of individual teachers, training providers and the broader VET system.

Ongoing teacher development (cont)

Context

The previous sections highlighted the diverse experiences teachers have with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, including the commonly held view that the qualification does not fully prepare teachers for the teaching aspects of the VET role, and the ways training providers can support novice teachers as they transition from competent industry practitioners to confident educators.

This section turns to the ongoing development of teaching skills throughout a teacher's career. This section explores why ongoing development of teaching skills matters, how development needs can be identified, and ways to improve access to professional learning opportunities. It also examines the strategies and organisational conditions that support the application of new teaching practices.

The discussion focuses on practical approaches drawn from the experiences of interview and workshop participants, including practices they reported as effective within their organisations and suggestions for improvement. Additional information on this topic, including a more detailed discussion of professional development activities and their use, is provided in the support document, available from the NCVER website.



Raising the importance of ongoing development of teaching skills

A consistent theme across both the interviews and research workshops was the importance of ongoing development of teaching skills for all VET educators, regardless of their level of experience. Participants emphasised that developing teaching capability should not end once a teacher obtains their initial teaching qualification, including and especially the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

This view was partly driven by a commonly held perception among participants that the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, is not sufficient on its own to develop highly effective teachers. As discussed earlier in the report, many participants believed the qualification places greater emphasis on compliance and assessment requirements than on teaching practice. Participants also noted that the teaching role is becoming increasingly complex, with emerging challenges such as artificial intelligence and growing reports of psychosocial issues affecting learners. Ongoing professional development was therefore seen as an important mechanism for addressing evolving teaching skill needs and capability gaps.

Some participants also highlighted the broader benefits of strengthening teaching capability. As one interviewee observed:

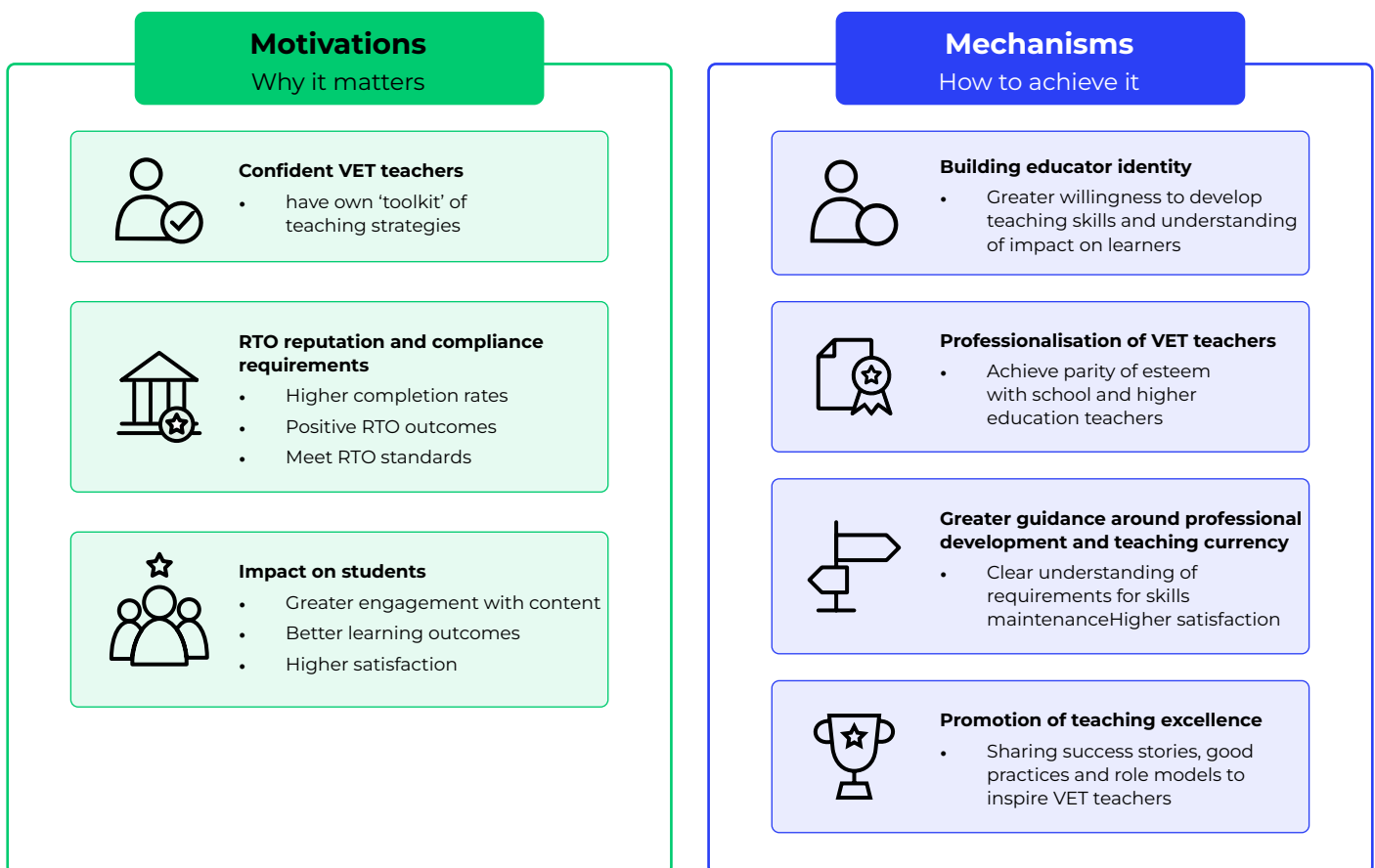
I think if ... we're serious about skilling the future of Australia, surely better teaching is going to help with that, because better teaching equals better learning and better learning equals better application in the workplace. (ID55, A/Manager-Staff capability, WA)

Workshop participants further suggested that efforts to strengthen teaching capability are more likely to succeed when both individual teachers and RTOs can clearly see the benefits. Discussions therefore focused not only on why teaching skills matter, but also on the outcomes that may be achieved through ongoing development and the mechanisms that could support it.

These motivations, outcomes and enabling mechanisms are summarised in Figure 8 and discussed in more detail below.

Ongoing teacher development (cont)

Figure 8 Motivations and mechanisms for raising the importance of ongoing development of teaching skills



Ongoing teacher development (cont)

Motivations and outcomes

The ongoing development of teaching skills can deliver benefits for teachers, training providers and students. These are discussed below.

Creating confident VET teachers

Building teaching skills and knowledge through ongoing professional development can increase teachers' confidence and capability across a range of delivery contexts. Interview and workshop participants provided numerous examples of how activities such as undertaking higher-level teaching qualifications, participating in mentoring or observation exercises, or undertaking other forms of professional learning helped teachers strengthen their teaching practice. These experiences equipped teachers with a broader range of strategies and approaches that could be applied as different teaching challenges arose.

Much more confident in my abilities, but that comes from the years of experience of building up my teacher toolbox; my resource kit. (ID37, Experienced teacher, Vic.)

Building confidence as a teacher can help individuals develop their own teaching style. Workshop participants noted that many teachers initially teach in the same way they were taught because they assume this is the "right" way. As teachers build their teaching skills and gain experience, they become more confident in adapting their approach to suit their learners, context and personal strengths.

Participants emphasised that developing teaching capability is cumulative and a long-term investment. As teachers gain experience and engage in ongoing learning, they accumulate knowledge, skills and practical strategies that enhance their effectiveness in the classroom. Workshop participants noted that this 'can make their jobs as teachers easier in the long term' by strengthening their ability to engage learners, deliver content effectively and adapt assessment practices to meet diverse learner needs.

RTO reputation and compliance requirements

Workshop and interview participants suggested that developing teaching capabilities can also benefit training providers. Stronger teaching skills may contribute to more engaging learning experiences, improved student satisfaction and higher completion rates. In a sector where qualification completion rates are often used as an indicator of training quality, these outcomes have the potential to enhance an RTO's reputation. This view was reflected by the following RTO leader, who emphasised the importance of positive student experiences with teachers:

Our philosophy is that the first point of contact most students have physically with an RTO is the trainer and assessor. So, I want to make that a positive experience. (ID22, Managing Partner/TAE teacher, Qld)

Additionally, workshop participants and interviewees pointed to the new *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025* which highlight that RTOs need to ensure that training and assessment is delivered by appropriately qualified and skilled people, including a focus on continuing professional development in training and assessment (Outcome Standard 3.2) (Australian Government 2025a). Having a dedicated focus on improving the teaching capabilities of their teachers will help RTOs to meet these standards.

One of the things that I'm really pleased about in the new standards...is the RTO needing to take responsibility for releasing people for professional development and for releasing people for currency. Because that's not what was happening for a long time. (ID19, TAE teacher, Qld)

I guess the whole thing from an RTO ownership perspective is that I think there needs to be a level of compliance review for the RTO, so I think the training organisations need to understand that a portion of their responsibility [is] the upskilling of their particular trainers and assessors. (ID22, Managing Partner/TAE teacher, Qld)

Ongoing teacher development (cont)

Impact on students

A focus on strengthening teaching skills also benefits students. Workshop participants emphasised that enhanced teaching capability can improve the overall learning experience by making learning more engaging, accessible and relevant. Greater student engagement with learning activities and course content can support deeper understanding and retention of knowledge and skills, ultimately contributing to improved learner outcomes.

But let's really focus on the teaching. If you have good teaching, ... the assessment's not going to be an issue. (ID1, RTO Manager, NT)

If I'm creating a better trainer, I'm creating better success for the student. (ID22, Managing Partner/ TAE teacher, Qld)

Workshop participants highlighted that strong teaching practices can result in fewer assessment resubmissions. This may lead to higher student satisfaction and contribute to improved qualification completion outcomes.

Broadening professional identity to develop an educator mindset may encourage teachers to further develop the skills needed to support learners with diverse needs, including those experiencing learning challenges or psychosocial impacts. Viewing themselves as educators can increase awareness of the role that teaching practice plays in supporting student success. This includes understanding how to use engaging, inclusive and high-impact teaching strategies to create accessible learning environments and improve outcomes for a diverse range of learners.

Mechanisms for raising importance of ongoing development of teaching skills

The following presents participant perspectives on mechanisms that could promote the ongoing development of teaching skills in the VET sector.

Building educator identity

How individuals view their professional identity can influence the types of professional development they prioritise. Those who see themselves primarily as industry experts who teach may be more inclined to focus on maintaining and developing their industry skills, especially when teaching on a casual basis (Misko, Guthrie & Waters 2021).

As vocational experts transition into teaching roles, they may expand their professional identity to include that of an educator. This process has been described as boundary crossing and is viewed as an ongoing negotiation between industry and teaching identities (Fejes & Köpsén 2014; Weller et al. 2025). Regardless of where teachers sit on the spectrum between industry expert and educator, they are responsible for facilitating learning and developing the skills of others. As such, ongoing development of teaching capability, alongside maintaining industry currency, is important for all VET teachers.

Building an educator identity may help VET teachers recognise the importance of continually developing their teaching skills throughout their careers. Interviewees in teacher development roles described the value of helping teachers see their role as extending beyond the delivery of industry-specific skills, also contributing to broader workforce capabilities and supporting students throughout their learning journeys:

I think it's that whole identity piece...they really see themselves as 'I'm a plumber and I'm just teaching the skill of plumbing' and they don't realise... 'I'm also responsible for building capabilities so they can enter the workforce and society'. (ID44, Director-Professional Teaching Practice, Vic.)

Ongoing teacher development (cont)

I think what we have is much stronger industry identity. So, 'I'm a personal trainer' or 'I'm a bricky' or 'I'm a hairdresser' or 'I'm a sparky', that's my identity. And that's something that we've been trying to change, and we talk about this in our induction. That yes, you need those industry skills. You need to stay connected to the industry, and that's why we hired you. But you now need to become a teacher because day in, day out you will be teaching. You'll be supporting students. You'll be assessing. You'll be doing paperwork. You'll be using computers... it's all this we're trying to shift, that identity. (ID55, A/Manager-Staff capability, WA)

The development of an educator identity is often a gradual process. As teachers gain experience and build their teaching capability, they may begin to see teaching as a core part of their professional identity rather than simply an extension of their industry role. One interviewee (ID 80) illustrated this through the example of a horticulture teacher who, when asked what they did for a living, would always respond, "I'm a groundskeeper." After teaching for around five years, however, they surprised their spouse by introducing themselves to someone as "a teacher."

For some teachers, unlocking a passion for teaching can help embed their identity as an educator. As noted by Weller et al.,

the shift from an occupational to a vocational identity involves finding meaning, purpose, alignment with personal beliefs and values and a fulfilment of self, beyond fulfilling the daily practices of an occupation. (Weller et al. 2025, p.506)

In this way, teaching becomes more than a job; it becomes a meaningful professional identity that can motivate ongoing growth and development.

More information on educator identity can be found in *Developing the educator mindset in VET: Practice guide*.

Professionalisation of VET teachers

Conversations during the workshops on raising the importance of the ongoing development of teaching practices included discussion regarding the professionalisation of VET teachers. While this is not a new topic within the sector, participants continued to view it as an important mechanism for recognising VET teachers as

educators and strengthening the educator identity of those entering teaching roles.

Discussions included achieving greater parity of esteem between VET teachers and their counterparts in the school and higher education sectors. Some of the avenues mentioned to achieve this included:

- Teacher registration
- Professional standards for teachers
- VET capability framework/s
- Creating a tiered VET educator workforce
- Stronger links between teaching skills and experience, remuneration and career progression
- Greater scrutiny of teaching quality through external review or auditing.

Greater guidance around professional development and teaching currency

Some research participants expressed a desire for more guidance on how much professional development teachers should be doing to maintain and develop their teaching skills.

Many of these discussions were linked to the requirements of the 2025 Standards for RTOs, which outline the types of activities that may be used to demonstrate ongoing vocational and training competency, but provide limited guidance on the amount or frequency of professional development teachers should undertake to maintain their teaching capability as demonstrated through the following interviewee.

People often say to me, 'but how much PD? How much PD do I need to do in a year?' ... Sometimes I wonder if it would be good if that type of information was really clearly stated in the standards or other regulations just so that it helps [us all to get] on the same page with it. (ID12, Compliance Manager, NSW)

However, the 2025 Standards for RTOs were designed to ensure a strong focus on learner outcomes and deliberately move away from specifying prescriptive requirements that drive a focus on compliance rather than good organisational practices that deliver quality outcomes.

Ongoing teacher development (cont)

While some workshop participants suggested that having to meet a specified number of continuing professional development points or hours each year relating to teaching skill development would help guide teachers and training providers, there was some concern that this could shift the emphasis from meaningful professional learning to compliance, turning professional learning into a 'tick-and-flick' exercise. Participants recognised that clearer guidance on maintaining teaching capability could be beneficial for RTOs, but emphasised that genuine improvement depends on the sector valuing teaching skill development and teachers being motivated to engage in it for reasons beyond meeting minimum requirements. As one workshop participant observed, there is a need to "move away from a compliance culture to a developmental culture".

Promotion of teaching excellence

Workshop participants suggested that a key mechanism for raising the importance of ongoing teaching skill development amongst VET teachers is the promotion of teaching excellence at both the RTO and sector level. Sharing success stories, showcasing effective teaching practices and providing access to role models can help teachers identify opportunities to strengthen their own practice and aspire to higher levels of teaching capability.

A potential barrier – the dichotomy of business model

Workshop discussions highlighted that an RTO's business model can influence the priority given to the ongoing development of teaching skills. According to participants, organisations with a stronger commercial focus were more likely to prioritise enrolments and less likely to approve time out of the classroom for professional learning. Some team leaders described tensions between operational demands and investing in teacher development:

You have to keep having the discussion, but ... we only earn money when we're in a classroom, so it's a constant struggle to go, 'we actually need to invest in our staff'. (ID31, Team Leader, WA)

RTOs more focused on student outcomes, however, were generally seen as more supportive of professional development for their teachers. This was based on the view that improving teaching capability can enhance student engagement and support better learner outcomes. During one workshop, participants noted that enterprise RTOs appeared to place particular emphasis on learner outcomes, likely because they are training their own workforce and therefore have a direct interest in the quality of teaching.

Identifying professional development needs and accessing professional development activities

Improving teaching practice requires both the identification of areas for development and access to high-quality professional learning opportunities. The interviews and workshops explored how RTOs and individual teachers identify professional development needs and the mechanisms available to support ongoing learning.

An observation from the interviews was the variation in organisational capacity to support teacher development. Larger RTOs, particularly TAFEs, often have dedicated teacher development or educator capability teams responsible for strengthening teaching practice, supporting industry currency and coordinating professional development activities. In smaller RTOs, these responsibilities are more likely to be assigned to a single staff member, often alongside a range of other duties. This can influence the level of support available for identifying and addressing professional development needs.

Identifying professional development needs

A range of both formal and informal methods are used by both RTOs and individual teachers to identify their skill development needs, with many participants reporting the use of several methods.

Figure 9 summarises the main approaches to identifying teaching skill development needs discussed by educator capability staff, RTO leaders and VET teachers during the interviews and workshops.

Ongoing teacher development (cont)

Figure 9 Methods used by participants for identifying professional development needs in teaching practice



Ongoing teacher development (cont)

More detailed information about each of these identification methods can be found in the support document and *Strengthening teaching practices in VET: Research summary*. While more formal tools such as frameworks and skills matrices are widely used to underpin professional development across RTOs and teams, the importance of observing teaching practice, listening to student feedback and reflecting on one's own teaching practice cannot be underestimated when it comes to identifying the needs of individual teachers.

It is also worth noting that existing sector-wide educator capability frameworks are somewhat dated and do not fully reflect contemporary teaching challenges and practices, including the use of artificial intelligence and responding to psychosocial challenges in learning environments. This raises the question of whether there would be value in developing an updated sector-wide capability framework.

Interview participants noted that some training providers have adapted and updated existing capability frameworks for their own use, suggesting that such frameworks continue to have practical value. An updated sector-wide framework may be particularly beneficial for training providers that lack the resources or expertise to develop their own. To remain relevant and responsive to changes in the sector, it would be beneficial to develop any future frameworks as online, living resources that can be regularly reviewed and updated.

Several teachers emphasised that identifying skill gaps and professional development needs is only valuable if it leads to meaningful action. Some felt that these exercises rarely result in genuine professional learning opportunities and are instead undertaken primarily so that RTOs can demonstrate that performance reviews have been completed and organisational policy requirements have been met.

Sadly, the only thing they do is tick boxes. They sit with you, for example, to do a performance review, but it's just a tick a box. (ID29, Novice teacher, WA)

Accessing professional development activities

The literature review identified four broad categories of professional development that can support the development of teaching skills. These resonated with workshop participants, and are described in figure 10 along with some of the key insights from workshops and interviews.



Ongoing teacher development (cont)

Figure 10 Professional development categories with key insights from participants

 Traditional professional development activities	 Peer-to-peer learning opportunities	 Higher-level teaching qualifications	 Action research
Includes workshops, conferences, webinars, online learning and professional subscriptions. • Larger RTOs tend to have their own repositories of learning programs they have developed in-house to share with teams or individual teachers. They also usually have a team responsible for coordinating teacher development. • Smaller RTOs have a greater reliance on external sources, such as professional subscriptions to organisations such as Velg Training and VET Development Centre. They usually have a single individual to coordinate teacher development, which may be combined with other roles.	Involves mentoring, coaching, peer observation, shadowing, team teaching, informal conversations and communities of practice. • Teachers highly value the opportunity to learn from others both formally and informally. • Being able to share experiences, observe others teaching and ask questions of peers can lead to improved teaching practices. • Peer-to-peer learning strategies for smaller RTOs include building relationships with other RTOs to share knowledge, experiences and teaching practices, and participating in broader networking opportunities, such as online communities of practice, professional networks and LinkedIn groups.	Includes diploma-level and other higher teaching qualifications. • Improved salary and career progression opportunities are initial motivators for undertaking higher-level teaching qualifications. • They provide teachers with a greater understanding of teaching and assessment practices as well as more strategies for engaging learners. • Trade teachers who have completed a higher-level teaching qualification reported that the improvements in their teaching, skills and confidence outweighed any initial concerns about academic ability.	A cyclical process of improvement that involves teachers identifying challenges in their teaching practices, implementing interventions to address them, reflecting on the outcomes, and sharing their learnings. • Action research was the least easily recognised category amongst VET teachers, except in Victoria where there are fellowships. • Funding and opportunities for formal action research projects appear to have declined over past decade. • It is more likely to be occurring informally through individual teachers trialling new approaches, reflecting on outcomes and adjusting their teaching practices.

Ongoing teacher development (cont)

A detailed discussion of these professional development approaches is provided in the support document, including how they are used across different types of RTOs and how access to them may vary among different groups of teachers, such as those working in trade-related areas.

Professional development was generally seen to occur at three different levels:

- RTO - often focuses on compliance related matters and typically provided through mandatory professional development days. May differ depending on RTO size and type.
- Department - targeted towards skill needs identified across a department or teaching team. Depending on the context, the focus may be on compliance, teaching practice or industry currency.
- Individual VET teacher – driven by an individual teacher's specific skill needs, career goals or areas of personal interest. Participants noted that access to development at this level is often most affected by workload, time and funding constraints, with some teachers undertaking professional learning in their own time and at their own expense.

Research participants discussed the barriers to accessing or meaningfully participating in professional development at these different levels, and provided suggestions on how to overcome them, as shown in table 18. Further information on this, including for different RTO types and sizes (including for small RTOs) is available in the support document.

Access to professional development was only part of the discussion. Participants also emphasised the importance of ensuring that professional development is relevant, high quality and capable of improving practice. As noted in the table, teachers viewed it as good practice for professional development to be tailored to different levels of experience, recognising that novice and experienced teachers often have different learning needs.

Participants also expressed a preference for topics to be delivered through multiple learning formats and over time, rather than as one-off events, as they felt this helped reinforce learning. Educator capability staff shared this view, noting that it leads to sustained learning:

We have a variety of things that we do too, because what we're all about is trying to get more longevity out of the professional development. (ID54, Manager-Teacher Capability, Vic.)

One suggestion raised by a VET teaching and learning expert was the development of a sector-wide framework or guide on effective professional learning for VET teachers. Such a framework could provide overarching guidance on the design and delivery of high-quality professional development, support the use of a range of professional learning approaches, and possibly assist RTOs in balancing the professional development priorities of the organisation, departments and individual teachers. Being able to recognise the elements of high-quality professional development, could also help RTOs with choosing quality external professional development for their teachers as well. This is especially important for smaller RTOs who have a greater reliance on subscription services and external activities.



Ongoing teacher development (cont)

Table 18 Participant suggestions to enable participation in professional development

Barrier	Suggestion	Supporting quote
Across RTO, department and individual levels		
Activities tend to be designed for less experienced teachers or those with limited knowledge of a topic	Pitching professional development to different experience levels.	<i>'We identified that we needed to split our PD into levels ... we have emerging, proficient, and advanced.'</i> (ID48, Consultant-Teacher Development, WA)
Teachers do not have time for professional development	Building in time for professional development into teachers' weekly workloads.	<i>'Each week you have 4 1/2 hours of what's called 'professional activities', and in that time, that's replying to emails, attending meetings, maybe student consultation, but also in that bucket of 4 1/2 hours a week that's also time allocated for PD. So, if you want to attend PD ... it is built into the workload model.'</i> (ID55, A/Manager-Staff capability, WA)
RTO level specific		
Teachers not attending or participating in professional development organised by training provider	Gaining managerial support or buy-in for professional development can help support teacher attendance.	<i>'Culture and resources are a big one, so it really comes from your direct line managers to really encourage professional development and ...[give] resources.'</i> (ID49, Mid-career teacher, WA)
Teachers unavailable to attend RTO professional development due to teaching schedule and limited availability of other teachers to cover their classes due to teacher shortage	Planning RTO-wide professional development options in advance and advising managers before they develop their teaching schedules allows managers to incorporate the PD into teachers' schedules.	<i>'It's helpful when we are presented with a forecast of professional development 12 months ahead because then we can start locking that into our master timetable and then individually as well.'</i> (ID37, Experienced teacher, Vic.)
The professional development on offer is not of interest to teachers or related to their own skill gaps	Involving teachers in decision making around professional development focuses for the RTO. This could be through avenues such as surveys, department feedback, or conversations.	<i>'They don't get a great sense that they're actively involved in the process of working out what PD is helpful to their teaching practice. It's a little more, kind of, instructed. This is what you need to do next because this is what the [RTO] requires. And I think, around teaching practice, there's space for more collaboration with teachers.'</i> (ID57, Program Leader, Vic.)

Ongoing teacher development (cont)

Translating new skills into practice – actions and RTO conditions that help

Applying the ideas, skills and knowledge gained through professional development is just as important as participating in the professional development itself. Interviewees emphasised that professional learning is unlikely to improve teaching practice unless teachers are given opportunities and support to apply what they have learned. As the following interviewee explained, the application phase is critical to translating learning into changes in teaching practice:

You're taught something, you're implementing it, and I think that's the big thing with PD, if there's no level of implementation or no level of practise, that loop never gets closed. (ID45, Experienced teacher, WA)

Workshop participants and interviewees shared a range of experiences and strategies for applying new teaching skills in practice. While they acknowledged common barriers to application, particularly time pressures and workload demands, the focus of this section of the report is on the factors that enable successful implementation. These include both the activities that help teachers translate learning into practice and the organisational conditions that training providers can create to support ongoing improvement in teaching.

Activities that enable application of new teaching skills

Helpful actions identified by participants for translating new teaching skills and knowledge into practice could be grouped into four broad categories, as outlined in table 19.

The formal sharing, ongoing conversations and incremental change actions are self-explanatory, but a brief discussion on reflective practices is provided below. Further information about each of the four activities can be found in the support document and *From professional learning to practice for VET teachers: Practice guide*.

Two important considerations emerged in relation to reflective practice; the need to embed it within professional development activities and the need to provide VET teachers with guidance on how to engage in reflective practice effectively.

Several interviewees working in educator capability roles emphasised the importance of incorporating reflective practice into the design of professional development activities. Suggestions included building in time for reflection and feedback at the end of sessions, using quizzes or self-assessment activities to check understanding, and encouraging participants to consider how they might apply new learning in their own teaching context. These approaches can help teachers leave professional development activities with a clearer understanding of the key learnings, how they relate to their practice, and which changes they may wish to implement first.

At the same time, while reflective practice was identified as a useful mechanism for both identifying professional development needs and implementing new skills, many interview and workshop participants observed that VET teachers are not always confident in how to undertake reflective practice. The following example from one team leader illustrates this challenge:

... reflection writing. None of them can do it, none. It's not really taught as part of the TAE, and maybe it should be... but I always said to my training officers... when you do some PD, I want a reflection of what you've learned, what you might do differently, how it affects you. 99% of them cannot write a reflection to save their life. They tell you what they watched, they tell you that they liked it, and that's it.... [but] show me what you've actually learned, how you put it into practice and what you might change in the future (ID12, Compliance Manager, NSW)

This suggests that a practical guide on how to undertake reflective practice, including guiding questions, could enable VET teachers to get more out of their professional learning activities.

Ongoing teacher development (cont)

Table 19 Activities to support application of new teaching skills

Activities	Description	Benefits	Supporting quotes
Formal sharing	Sharing with other teaching staff the key ideas learnt during professional development, such as through presentations, reports, emails and discussions at meetings.	Solidifies new knowledge for teachers and helps to retain what they learnt. Other team members are exposed to the learnings even though they didn't attend.	<i>'They write an e-mail as part of their PD requirements. It's a summary of the workshop and anything that was positive out of that workshop that we might be able to implement.'</i> (ID22, Managing Partner/TAE teacher, Qld)
Ongoing conversations	Conversations with others (i.e. other participants, team members or managers) about what was learnt and how they may use it in teaching.	Provides an avenue for bouncing ideas off each other, learning collaboratively and sharing pain points.	<i>'I think it's ...talking with colleagues and asking, 'what do you think? How did you find that? Do you think you're going to use it?' And then, your own 'independent way of thinking. 'Oh, OK. I might try that next week and see what happens!'</i> (ID58, Experienced teacher, Vic.)
Reflective practice	There are three main stages where reflection takes place: 1. Before or at the very start of professional learning 2. During and immediately at the end of the professional learning 3. Ongoing reflection post professional learning	Sets goals for what a teacher would like to achieve or get out of the activity. Teachers leave professional development with their own key learnings and ideas of how may want to include them in teaching practice. Avenue to refine changes to teaching practices.	<i>'I think it's that sort of reflection that you know that self-reflection, how can I use this. So that sort of planning of what you're going to do'</i> (ID 58, Experienced teacher, Vic.)
Incremental changes	Making small changes to teaching practices at a time and seeing how they work.	Small changes are more manageable than several changes at once. Making one change at a time allows the teacher to see if it is having an impact.	<i>'[While] completing this course... I'd go back in and I was trying new things and I was seeing results ... I think that's made a big difference.'</i> (ID35, Novice teacher, Vic.)

Ongoing teacher development (cont)

Developing a supportive culture within RTOs

A supportive organisational culture was identified as a critical enabler of applying new teaching skills and practices. Participants emphasised that the success of professional development depends not only on the quality of the learning activity, but also on the extent to which individual teams and RTOs create an environment that supports ongoing improvement.

Across the interviews and workshops, three common themes emerged: providing teachers with the time and space to implement new approaches, giving them the flexibility and trust to adapt their practice, and following up to support, monitor and evaluate changes over time.

The barriers and enablers associated with each of these themes are summarised in table 20, with further detail provided in the support document. The enablers are practices that leaders within RTOs can implement to create these supportive conditions. These findings are also consistent with the work of Griffin and Davidson (2025) on effective teaching and learning.

Sector opportunities in professional development

It is acknowledged that many of the barriers and challenges relating to professional development identified in this report have been recognised within the VET sector for many years. This research builds on existing evidence by providing contemporary insights from interviewees and workshop participants about what is working well and where further improvements could be made. In particular, it explores approaches to raising the importance of ongoing teaching skill development, identifying professional development needs, improving access to professional learning opportunities, and supporting the implementation of new teaching practices. The support document provides additional evidence to support these findings, including further participant quotes, workshop discussions and insights into how experiences vary across different teaching contexts.

The findings also suggest that additional sector-level resources could be beneficial. Participants identified potential value in an updated VET educator capability framework, a professional development framework or guide, and practical guidance and resources on reflective practice. Together, these resources could support teachers and training providers to identify teaching skill development needs, design and access meaningful professional learning, and translate new knowledge and skills into teaching practice. Further information around these suggested resources can be found in Strengthening teaching practices in VET: Research summary.

Ongoing teacher development (cont)

Table 20 Enabling supportive conditions to help incorporate new teaching skills into practice

Supportive conditions	Barriers	Enablers
Allowing time and space	A lack of time or busy workload prevents the capacity to incorporate new skills into teaching practice.	Time within working hours to reflect on how teachers can use new skills in their teaching after completing professional development. Reduced workloads or administrative support so teachers have time to seek advice and workshop ideas. Space and avenues for sharing ideas with others following professional development. Professional development aligned with real problems to ensure relevance to teaching and a higher likelihood that it is implemented.
Providing flexibility and trust	Some RTOs do not allow course materials to be changed as they want consistency in what is being delivered to students. Sometimes a fear of failure will prevent teachers from making changes.	Create a culture of continuous improvement, modelled from executive level down. Encourage trial and error so teachers can experiment with different strategies and work out what works best with their personal teaching style and for their cohort of learners. Establish a supportive culture so teachers can seek support, ask questions or experiment and potentially fail, without a fear of judgement.
Following up and measuring change	Limited follow up can impact motivation to enact changes. Not measuring changes in practice can devalue professional development.	Have follow-up discussions with teachers by team leaders, managers or educator capability staff to show an interest in what was learnt and to help encourage sharing of new knowledge and application of skills. Encourage a sharing and supportive culture in the RTO. Measure growth in capabilities to demonstrate the value of professional development and illustrate that the RTO expects there to be an outcome from professional development. Existing mechanisms such as capability frameworks, teaching observations, and student feedback can be used to assess changes in teaching practice and capability over time.



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Appendix A



Appendix A

Methodology

This study used a mixed methods approach to better understand opportunities and challenges in developing VET teacher capability and how teachers can be better supported to manage psychosocial impacts in diverse VET delivery contexts.

The research involved four main activities:

1. Literature review and desktop research
2. National survey of VET teachers
3. Semi-structured interviews
4. National research workshops, conducted in each state and territory.

Across the study, findings were integrated through triangulation to identify areas of convergence, complementarity, and divergence between literature, interviews, survey responses and workshop discussions.

Literature review and desktop research

An extensive literature review and desktop research was conducted to establish the context for the study and identify gaps in the evidence base relevant to VET teacher capability development and psychosocial impacts in VET delivery. This literature review included national and international journal articles, research reports, industry reports, policy and framework documents, research summaries and good practice guides. The aim of the literature review was to inform the focus and subsequent stages of the project.

An interim report was produced from this phase which examined:

- The complexity of teaching in VET and the VET educator workforce
- Effective teaching in VET: from competence to excellence
- Teacher training: from initial teaching qualifications to professional development

- Psychosocial impacts: to explore what is known about the presence, type and impact of psychosocial factors in the VET delivery environment, how students can be supported to manage learning barriers due to psychosocial factors, and how psychosocial factors can impact teachers and their ability to teach effectively.

Additional desktop research examined teacher capability frameworks and self-assessment tools used to support professional development.

During this phase, the research team also consulted with selected stakeholders to gain insights into current priorities and approaches to teacher capability development.

The literature review, desktop research and stakeholder consultations identified two interrelated research streams for the study:

1. How teacher capability is developed through initial teacher training and ongoing professional development
2. Understanding psychosocial factors in VET delivery contexts, and how to best support both teachers and learners. (How psychosocial factors shape VET delivery contexts, and how teachers and learners can be supported in responding to these challenges)

National survey of VET teaching experiences

A national survey of VET teachers was implemented to examine teacher observations of psychosocial impacts in the delivery environment. The survey was conducted from 29 October 2025 to 5 January 2026.

Survey design

The survey was developed and administered using the SurveyMonkey online platform. The survey questions were designed to capture data to understand VET teachers' classroom experiences, confidence and competence in responding to student behaviours and psychosocial needs and the impacts on training delivery. The survey design was informed by the literature review and consultations with stakeholders.

Appendix A (cont)

The survey was structured across five areas:

- Participant demographics and professional background
- The experience of student behaviour and the impacts on teaching practice and learning (including psychosocial impacts)
- Teacher capability and confidence to identify and respond to student support needs
- The impact of student behaviour on teaching practice
- Professional development uptake and effectiveness in supporting psychosocial challenges

Table A1 shows how these different elements were explored and captured in the survey.

An introduction to the project, including information about the purpose of the research, voluntary participation, confidentiality and privacy statements, was provided at the beginning of the survey. Prior to dissemination, the survey was tested with a small number of VET teachers to assess question clarity and relevance. Feedback from pilot testing informed revisions incorporated into the final survey.

Survey dissemination

The survey was disseminated nationally through training providers, peak bodies and professional associations including VELG and VDC, other sector networks and project communication channels. Distribution methods included direct email invitations and promotional materials containing a survey link. This dissemination strategy was intended to maximise reach across jurisdictions and provider types while supporting voluntary participation.

Survey participants

The survey received 956 responses (noting that not all questions were answered by all respondents). As shown in table A2, of the 859 respondents who answered the demographic questions, participants were drawn from all Australian states and territories, with the largest cohort from Victoria (32.8%, 282 participants) followed by New South Wales (25.6%) and Western Australia (21.5%). South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory were also represented.

Table A1 Elements explored in the National Survey of VET teaching experiences

Topics	Questions
Teacher demographics and professional background	Age, gender, state/territory, disability status, First Nations and CALD background, provider type, delivery mode, training credentials and industry
Teaching challenges	Open-ended responses on what teachers find most challenging in their VET role
Student behaviours	Open-ended responses on student attitudes and behaviours that are difficult to support
Student support	Open-ended responses on available resources and additional resource needs
Teacher confidence and perceived impact of student behaviour on teaching practice	Likert scale questions on teacher confidence in identifying and responding to student needs, the impact of undeclared student needs, and the impact of student behaviours arising from psychosocial needs Likert scale of questions on the impact of student behaviour and support needs on teacher wellbeing and retention
Professional development	Participation and effectiveness of professional development aimed at supporting students; open ended responses on additional professional development needs
Closing remarks	Open-ended question for participants to comment on the relevance of survey concepts to their practice and any additional observations

Appendix A (cont)

The sample represented a predominantly experienced workforce. Over half of respondents (53.8%) had 10 or more years of teaching experience and 26% had fewer than five years of experience. The majority of respondents were aged 40-59 years (55.1%), with a further 29.5% aged 60 and over. Females comprised of 54.6% of respondents and males 42.6%.

Approximately 12% of respondents identified as having a disability or impairment, 2% identified as First Nations Peoples, and 20% from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background.

Respondents were employed across a range of provider types, with TAFE representing the largest (52.5%), followed by private training providers (30.5%), schools, (7.1%), community education providers (6.4%), universities (4.5%) and enterprise providers (4.1%).

The predominant mode of delivery was face-to-face in a classroom setting (72.4%) followed by online delivery (15.3%) and face-to-face in the workplace (6.6%). Interviewees who selected 'other' (5.8%) described blended delivery, combining classroom or workplace-based face-to-face delivery with online components, simulated workplace training and flipped classroom approaches.

The majority of respondents (88.3%) reported delivering training independently, as opposed to under direction as allowed through the credential policy. Respondents taught cross a wide range of training packages, with Business Services (18.6%), Community Services (15.5%), Training and Education (12.4%), Construction (11.4%) and Health (10.3%) among the most frequently represented.



Appendix A (cont)

Table A2 Survey participant characteristics

Characteristics	Number of participants	Percentage
State/Territory¹ (n=859)		
New South Wales	220	25.6
Victoria	282	32.8
Queensland	126	14.7
Western Australia	185	21.5
South Australia	66	7.7
Tasmania	25	2.9
ACT	24	2.8
Northern Territory	9	1.1
Teaching experience (n=859)		
0-4 years	223	26.0
5-9 years	174	20.3
10+ years	462	53.8
Age (n=859)		
Under 25 years	2	0.2
26-39 years	105	12.2
40 - 59 years	473	55.1
60+ years	253	29.5
prefer not to say	26	3.0
Gender (n=859)		
Female	469	54.6
Male	366	42.6
Non-binary	6	0.7
Prefer not to say	18	2.1
Disability/Impairment (n=859)		
Yes	103	12.0
No	724	84.3
Prefer not to say	32	3.7
First Nations Status (n=859)		
Yes	18	2.1
No	814	94.8
Prefer not to say	27	3.1
CALD status (n=859)		
Yes	173	20.1
No	670	78.0
Prefer not to say	16	1.9

Appendix A (cont)

Table A2 Survey participant characteristics (continued)

Characteristics	Number of participants	Percentage
Provider type² (n=859)		
TAFE	451	52.5
Private provider	262	30.5
Schools	61	7.1
Community education provider	55	6.4
Universities	39	4.5
Enterprise provider	35	4.1
Main mode of delivery (n=763)		
Face-to-face in classroom	552	72.4
Online	117	15.3
Face-to-face in workplace	50	6.6
Other	44	5.8
Teaching role (n=857)		
Teaching/assessing independently	757	88.3
Teaching/assessing under direction	43	5.0
Other	57	6.6

Notes: ¹ Survey respondents could select more than one State/Territory, so percentages sum to greater than 100%.

² Survey respondents could select more than one provider type, so percentages sum to greater than 100%.

Other percentages may sum to greater than 100% due to rounding.

Appendix A (cont)

Survey data analysis

Data from the survey were exported from SurveyMonkey into Microsoft Excel for preparation, coding and analysis.

The dataset included respondent demographic information, scaled rating questions and open-ended responses relating to teachers' experiences and student behavioural challenges. Following export, the data were reviewed and restructured into an analysis-ready format suitable for filtering, pivot table analysis, data visualisation and statistical summaries.

Additional calculated fields were created to support frequency counts, percentage calculations and comparative analyses across respondent groups.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analyses were undertaken using Excel and included descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation and comparative analyses.

The analyses included:

- demographic profiles of survey respondents
- frequencies and percentages for each challenge and behavioural theme
- frequency distributions for scaled rating questions
- comparison of results by:
 - » teacher experience levels (0–4 years, 5–9 years and 10+ years)
 - » delivery mode (face-to-face vs online)
 - » training packages (BSB Business Services, CHC Community Services, CPC Construction, Plumbing & Services and FSK Foundation Skills);
- analysis of coded qualitative responses using:
 - » number of responses
 - » percentage of teachers identifying each issue
 - » percentage of total coded responses.

A radar plot was developed in Excel to compare the responses of the major teacher challenge themes across teacher experience levels, (0–4 years, 5–9 years and 10+

years) providing a visual representation of differences between experience groups.

Results are presented as frequencies, percentages of respondents and percentages of coded responses. Percentages of respondents represent the proportion of teachers who identified a particular issue, while percentages of coded responses represent the relative frequency of each issue across all coded responses. As multiple issues could be coded from a single respondent's comments response percentages exceed 100 per cent.

Qualitative Data Coding

Responses to the open-ended questions relating to challenges experienced by teachers were analysed using manual thematic frequency analysis.

The manual coding process identified 1,180 coded challenge responses from 746 teachers and 1,380 coded behavioural responses from 714 teachers.

A coding structure was designed with themes and sub-categories from the challenges. Then each coded issue was assigned to a primary theme, representing the broad area of challenge reported by teachers and a subcategory providing greater detail about the issue identified. New data fields were created in the dataset for the Teacher Challenge and Student Behavioural Challenge responses.

For the Teacher Challenges question, responses were classified into the following primary themes:

- Administration
- Student Diversity
- Student Engagement
- Organisational Support and
- Psychosocial

For the Behavioural Challenges question, responses were classified into the following primary themes:

- Behavioural Challenges
- Emotional & Mental Health
- Foundation Skills
- Student Accountability and
- Student Engagement

Appendix A (cont)

Each response was examined and up to four distinct issues identified within a single response were coded. Responses that did not align with an existing theme were classified as 'Other'.

As respondents could identify multiple issues within a single response, the total number of coded responses exceeds the total number of survey participants.

Tables A3 and A4 presents the complete list of themes and a description of the associated subcategories for both question sets.

Table A3: Challenge themes and sub-categories groups coded from teacher experience survey responses

Challenge themes	Challenge Sub-categories
Administration	Administration, assessment, compliance, currency, time, training package and workload.
Diversity	Class size, student cohort diversity, diverse learning levels, learner LLND, student neurodiversity.
Engagement	Student accountability/responsibility, apathy, attendance, attention, commitment, engagement & motivation.
Organisational support	Change management, facilities & equipment, funding, management & leadership & support, organisational policy & support, professional development, resources & workplace culture.
Psychosocial	Student attitude, behaviour, diverse learner needs, student mental health.
Other	AI usage, classroom management, course & delivery, enrolment & pre-enrolment, fee free TAFE, phones, student employment and teacher well-being, work and quality.

Appendix A (cont)

Table A4: Student behavioural challenge themes and sub-category groups coded from teacher experience responses

Behavioural Themes	Behavioural Sub-categories
Behavioural	Aggression/abuse/violence, attention, attitude, disrespect, disruptive behaviour, immature/poor behaviour and resistance to feedback/help.
Emotional & Mental Health	Disorders defined, mental health, neurodivergence, student anxiety and undiagnosed/undeclared issues.
Foundation Skills	Digital literacy, ESL/language barriers, learning ability, learning needs/difficulties and learner LLN.
Student accountability	Accountability/responsibility, AI usage, distractions – phones/devices, non-attendance & lateness, student entitlement and expectations and time management.
Student engagement	Disengagement/disinterest, lack of commitment, life demands & pressures, motivation & apathy and perceived value/purpose/intent.
Other	Administration, cohort size, diversity & levels; course & delivery, employer support, enrolment & pre-enrolment, fee free TAFE, management support & resources, teaching quality & roles and youth in adult environments.





Appendix A (cont)

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews with 52 participants, including VET teachers, trainers and assessors, TAE teachers and teacher development staff (table A5) were conducted between November 2025 and January 2026. Both novice and experienced teachers were represented in the sample. The teacher development staff included CEOs, a director or professional teaching practice, education managers, compliance managers, professional development managers, RTO managers, portfolio leaders, teacher development coordinators and e-learning consultants.

Sampling strategy

A combination of stratified random sampling, purposive selection, and snowball sampling was used to recruit participants. This approach was intended to balance breadth and coverage with the need to include participants with specific forms of experience and expertise, across different training contexts.

The initial sample involved drawing a random sample of 288 RTOs from the Total VET students and courses 2024 dataset using three explicit stratification variables:

- RTO size determined by student enrolment numbers: small (fewer than 1000 students), medium (1000-9999 students) and large (10,000 or more students).
- Training provider type (this included private, enterprise, community education, and schools; TAFEs and dual sector organisations were identified and recruited separately).
- State of head office (to ensure jurisdictional coverage).

From the initial stratified sample of 288 RTOs, 50 were purposefully selected to reflect diversity in provider type, size and location. In selecting these training providers, the research team also sought to capture diverse student cohorts, including First Nations learners, culturally and linguistically diverse learners, women, low SEIFA backgrounds, regional and rural learners and learners with a disability.

The Total VET students and courses 2024 dataset was also used to identify 79 RTOs with enrolments in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment qualification (both the TAE40116 and TAE40122 versions) in 2024. From this list, 15 RTOs were invited to participate in the consultations.

Snowball sampling was used as a supplementary strategy to recruit individuals with specialist expertise or perspectives not otherwise captured through stratified sampling-based recruitment. Additional recruitment also occurred through promotion at the VELG conference, via pamphlets containing a QR code linked to an expression of interest form. Tables A6 and A7 present the distribution of training providers and participants, respectively, by provider type across each State and Territory.

Appendix A (cont)

Table A5 Interview participants by role

Novice VET teachers	Experienced VET teachers	TAE teachers	Teacher development staff & others
7	14	9	22

Table A6 Number of training providers, by provider type and jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Private training provider	TAFE	Community education provider	Enterprise provider	Dual sector	Schools
ACT		1	1			
VIC		3	1			
NSW	2			1		
WA		2				
Qld	3	1			1	
SA	1					
TAS		1				
NT					1	1

Table A7 Number of participants by provider type and jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Private training provider	TAFE	Community education provider	Enterprise provider	Dual sector	Schools
ACT		2	3			
VIC		16	1			
NSW	2			1		
WA		13				
Qld	7	1			1	
SA	1					
TAS		1				
NT					1	2

Appendix A (cont)

Data collection

Semi-structured interview discussion guides (summarised in table A8) were developed for each participant category: novice VET teachers, experienced VET teachers, TAE teachers and teacher development staff/others. These interview guides were informed by the literature review and structured around topics related to career and qualification pathways into teaching roles, effectiveness of initial teacher training and ongoing professional development. The semi-structured format ensured that the core topics were covered consistently while allowing the research team to explore topics more deeply according to the answers and examples provided by the participants.

Before each interview, participants were provided with an information sheet outlining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, ethics and confidentiality arrangements and the intended use of the data. Informed consent to participate was obtained at the start of every interview.

The interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams, although three were conducted by phone where participants experienced technical difficulties.



Appendix A (cont)

Table A8 Discussion framework

Novice VET teachers

- Pathways into VET teaching (including qualification choices, such as doing Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and higher-level qualifications, and teaching under direction)
- How initial teacher training prepared them for teaching practice, including any immediate professional development needs and gaps
- How they identify and prioritise ongoing professional development needs
- How RTOs support access to and implementation of professional development
- Opportunities to learn from others and perceived barriers/enablers

Experienced VET teachers

- Teaching pathways and qualifications, including decisions to upskill or undertake additional teaching qualifications over time
- How their professional learning has evolved
- Identification of professional development needs
- Extent and effectiveness of RTO support for capability development
- Learning from others and contributing to others' learning and how such opportunities could be improved

Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) teachers

- How long they have been teaching the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (and what versions they have taught)
- Their perceptions about strengths and any gaps in initial teacher training and areas where new teachers struggle with the most/where new teachers need additional support
- Their perceptions about higher-level teaching qualifications
- Importance of mentoring and peer learning

Teacher development staff

- Participant job role and responsibilities within the RTO
- Induction, professional development and relevant support provided for new or experienced teachers
- Identification of ongoing professional development needs for VET teachers
- Organisational decision-making process regarding professional development priorities and support
- Opportunities for peer learning and collaboration among teachers
- Formal or informal collaborations with other RTOs on teaching delivery or sharing professional development activities
- Perspectives on additional skills and support needs for new and experienced teachers



Appendix A (cont)

Data analysis

Interview transcripts were imported into NVivo for data management and analysis. Thematic analysis was undertaken to identify recurring patterns and themes across the interviews. The analysis followed an iterative process in which codes were developed and compared across transcripts before refining and organising into broader themes aligned with the research questions. Throughout this process, interpretations of data were reviewed and discussed within the research team to strengthen consistency and ensure that the findings remained closely grounded in the data.

Research workshops

The final phase of data collection involved a series of in-person research workshops with VET teachers, TAE teachers and teacher development staff. The workshops were designed to further explore issues raised in the survey and semi-structured interviews in more depth and to test ideas for potential resources and support strategies for teachers and training providers. The research team conducted eight workshops, with one workshop held in each state and territory.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through several channels:

- Invitations were sent to interview participants who had indicated interest in attending a workshop
- Peak bodies and professional associations were asked to promote the workshops to their members
- Promotional material, containing a QR code linked to a SurveyMonkey registration form, was distributed through NCVER communication channels (newsletter and social media).

In total 165 participants attended the workshops. Participants represented VET teachers, TAE teachers, RTO managers and teacher development staff. Table A9 provides a detailed breakdown of workshop participants by jurisdiction.

Table A9 Number of workshop participants by state and territory

SA	QLD	ACT	NT	TAS	Vic	WA	NSW
22	25	16	18	19	24	23	23

Workshop format and analysis

Workshops ran from 9.00 am to 3.30 pm (local time) and were organised into two sessions: managing diverse classrooms and strengthening teaching practices. Each workshop was facilitated using a sequence of six structured activities (Table A10). These activities were informed by the literature review, the interviews and the national survey.

Appendix A (cont)

Table A10 Workshop activities

Session one: managing diverse classrooms

- **Activity 1 – Opening reflection**
Participants shared their personal experiences of psychosocial challenges in their teaching role and reflected on how well equipped they have felt to respond
- **Activity 2 – Elements of the proposed psychosocial support cycle**
Participants explored the three core elements of observing/noticing, recognising/identifying, and responding to student psychosocial needs, discussing current gaps, challenges, and what tools or supports would be helpful across different training contexts.
- **Activity 3 – Usefulness of a psychosocial support framework**
Participants considered whether a framework would be a useful product, what it should include, and what other supports or resources might complement it

Session two: strengthening teaching practices

- **Activity 4 – Development of teaching skills**
Participants discussed how teaching capability can be built through professional development, peer learning, higher-level qualifications and action research.
- **Activity 5 – Implementing new skills**
Participants discussed how new and experienced teachers can put skills into practice, including the support needed during initial training and through ongoing professional development.
- **Activity 6 – Self-reflection**
Participants identified key takeaways, suggested initiatives they would like to see, and shared resources or professional development that have assisted them in supporting psychosocial challenges of students.

Workshop data were captured through facilitator notes, group discussion outputs, structured activity materials and participant reflection sheets. These data were analysed thematically to identify recurring themes across participant groups. The analysis also informed validation of emerging findings from earlier phases of this research.

Ethics and confidentiality

Appropriate research ethics procedures were applied across all phases involving participant data. Participants were provided with information about the study and participation was voluntary. Data were stored and reported in ways that protected participant confidentiality and anonymity.

Data integration and triangulation

Data from all four phases were brought together through an iterative process of triangulation. Data

integration occurred at multiple points in the study, and data collected from each stage informed the development of subsequent stages.

Limitations

The study has some limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. Participation in the interviews, survey and workshops was voluntary, which means the sample may have included individuals and/or training providers with a strong interest in teacher capability development and psychosocial impacts than those who did not participate. Also, while the sampling strategy aimed to achieve national coverage, across different types and sizes of training providers, providers with diverse student cohorts, VET teachers at different career stages, and varied delivery modes, not all diverse delivery contexts are represented in the data. The data collected should not be considered representative of the whole VET teacher workforce.



■ Appendix B



Appendix B

Additional survey data

Table B1 Teaching role challenges reported by teachers by years of teaching experience, grouped by challenge type

Challenge type	Teaching experience		
	0-4 years n=186 (%)	5 to 9 years n=157 (%)	10+ years n=403 (%)
Administration	46	46	65
Diversity	16	18	16
Engagement	34	38	17
Organisational	18	24	27
Psychosocial	27	21	16

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Notes: Percentages sum to greater than 100% as individuals reported more than one challenge (up to four challenges included in analysis).

Table B2 Teaching role challenges reported by teachers by years by training package they deliver, grouped by challenge type

Challenge type	Training package			
	BSB n=137 (%)	CHC n=118 (%)	CPC n=83 (%)	FSK n=66 (%)
Administration	72	65	49	58
Diversity	11	17	20	21
Engagement	27	21	19	35
Organisational	24	19	31	24
Psychosocial	12	25	12	18

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Notes: Percentages sum to greater than 100% as individuals reported more than one challenge (up to four challenges included in analysis). Some respondents teach in more than one training package.

Appendix B (cont)

Table B3 Teaching role challenges reported by teachers by years of teaching experience, grouped by challenge type

Challenge type	Delivery mode	
	Face-to-face n=588 (%)	Online n=116 (%)
Administration	55	54
Diversity	17	14
Engagement	27	23
Organisational	25	17
Psychosocial	20	17

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Notes: Face-to-face includes in the classroom or workplace. Percentages sum to greater than 100% as individuals reported more than one challenge (up to four challenges included in analysis)



Appendix B (cont)

Table B4 The impacts of student behaviour on teaching and teachers, by years of teaching experience (total n=731)

Survey question	Teaching experience (years)	Number in group	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
Student behaviour has become more challenging since I started teaching	0-4	184	31	28	22	19
	5-9	153	48	24	12	16
	10+	394	49	20	13	17
	All	731	44	23	15	18
Student behaviour negatively impacts my ability to teach at least once a week	0-4	184	28	30	22	21
	5-9	153	29	31	20	21
	10+	394	28	28	23	22
	All	731	28	29	22	21
I feel overwhelmed by student support needs at least once a week	0-4	184	18	30	23	29
	5-9	153	18	30	29	24
	10+	394	21	26	25	28
	All	731	20	28	25	27
Student behaviour negatively impacts my enjoyment of teaching at least once a week	0-4	184	31	28	25	16
	5-9	153	33	25	20	22
	10+	394	30	27	20	23
	All	731	31	27	21	21
I have thought about leaving VET teaching/training in the last six months	0-4	184	21	23	17	39
	5-9	153	33	16	12	39
	10+	394	36	16	10	38
	All	731	31	18	12	38

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Appendix B (cont)

Table B5 Understanding of student support needs, by years of teaching experience (total n=752)

Survey question	Teaching experience (years)	Number in group	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
I feel confident to identify student learning needs	0-4	190	55	42	3	1
	5-9	157	69	29	2	0
	10+	405	73	23	2	1
	All	752	68	29	3	1
I feel confident to support students' identified needs	0-4	190	45	46	7	2
	5-9	157	55	36	8	1
	10+	405	53	38	6	3
	All	752	51	40	7	2
When students aren't engaged in learning, I understand why	0-4	190	34	46	17	3
	5-9	157	34	53	10	3
	10+	405	45	44	10	1
	All	752	40	46	12	2
Understanding why students may have trouble engaging in learning helps me respond to them effectively	0-4	190	63	33	4	1
	5-9	157	58	36	4	2
	10+	405	68	37	3	1
	All	752	65	31	4	1
Undeclared student learning needs impact my planned teaching/training schedule at least once a week	0-4	190	47	30	17	6
	5-9	157	47	35	10	8
	10+	405	47	32	14	8
	All	752	47	32	14	7

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Appendix B (cont)

Table B6 Impacts of student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs, by years of teaching experience (total n=752)

Survey question	Teaching experience (years)	Number in group	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts my planned teaching at least once a week	0-4	190	36	31	23	11
	5-9	157	41	29	18	12
	10+	405	39	28	18	15
	All	752	38	29	19	13
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts their own learning at least once a week	0-4	190	50	27	17	5
	5-9	157	52	31	10	8
	10+	405	50	27	13	10
	All	752	50	28	13	8
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts other students' learning at least once a week	0-4	190	44	26	21	8
	5-9	157	45	29	11	15
	10+	405	44	27	17	12
	All	752	44	27	17	12

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Appendix B (cont)

Table B7 Demographics of survey respondents by training package

		BSB (%) n=156	CHC (%) n=130	CPC (%) n=96	FSK (%) n=68
Gender	Female	67	82	13	85
	Male	31	15	83	13
	Non-binary	1	1	0	0
	Prefer not to say	1	2	4	1
Age	<40 years	7	8	14	13
	40-59 years	61	66	45	56
	60+ years	31	22	40	25
	Prefer not to say	1	3	2	6
Experience	0-4 years	16	26	21	26
	5-9 years	17	19	17	16
	10+ years	67	55	63	57

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Appendix B (cont)

Table B8 The impacts of student behaviour on teaching and teachers, by training package

Survey question	Training package	Number in group	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
Student behaviour has become more challenging since I started teaching	BSB	133	40	22	17	21
	CHC	119	39	27	16	18
	CPC	81	42	26	17	15
	FSK	62	39	18	24	19
Student behaviour negatively impacts my ability to teach at least once a week	BSB	133	21	29	19	32
	CHC	119	24	24	31	21
	CPC	81	35	36	11	19
	FSK	62	31	27	19	23
I feel overwhelmed by student support needs at least once a week	BSB	133	18	28	20	35
	CHC	119	17	34	23	27
	CPC	81	19	21	32	28
	FSK	62	19	23	31	27
Student behaviour negatively impacts my enjoyment of teaching at least once a week	BSB	133	23	27	20	30
	CHC	119	22	33	25	20
	CPC	81	37	28	17	17
	FSK	62	32	15	27	26
I have thought about leaving VET teaching/training in the last six months	BSB	133	33	17	10	41
	CHC	119	25	25	10	39
	CPC	81	36	17	9	38
	FSK	62	32	8	10	50

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Appendix B (cont)

Table B9 Understanding of student support needs, by training package

Survey question	Training package	Number in group	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
I feel confident to identify student learning needs	BSB	138	73	23	3	1
	CHC	121	69	28	2	1
	CPC	81	70	26	2	1
	FSK	66	71	27	2	0
I feel confident to support students' identified needs	BSB	138	57	36	6	1
	CHC	121	58	39	3	0
	CPC	81	47	44	2	6
	FSK	66	56	39	5	0
When students aren't engaged in learning, I understand why	BSB	138	46	40	10	4
	CHC	121	41	46	12	1
	CPC	81	37	47	14	2
	FSK	66	55	38	8	0
Understanding why students may have trouble engaging in learning helps me respond to them effectively	BSB	138	73	25	1	1
	CHC	121	74	24	2	0
	CPC	81	59	30	7	4
	FSK	66	77	21	2	0
Undeclared student learning needs impact my planned teaching/training schedule at least once a week	BSB	138	36	39	14	10
	CHC	121	49	31	12	9
	CPC	81	57	26	15	2
	FSK	66	36	41	18	5

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Appendix B (cont)

Table B10 Impacts of student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs, by training package

Survey question	Training package	Number in group	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat \disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts my planned teaching at least once a week	BSB	138	28	37	19	16
	CHC	121	39	29	22	10
	CPC	81	46	27	19	9
	FSK	66	38	30	23	9
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts their own learning at least once a week	BSB	138	43	30	16	10
	CHC	121	52	30	12	6
	CPC	81	58	21	15	6
	FSK	66	53	27	15	5
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts other students' learning at least once a week	BSB	138	35	30	17	18
	CHC	121	40	28	21	11
	CPC	81	51	26	16	7
	FSK	66	50	21	23	6

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Appendix B (cont)

Table B11 Demographics of survey respondents by delivery mode

		Face-to-face ¹ (%) n=604	Online (%) n=117
Gender	Female	51	72
	Male	47	26
	Non-binary	1	1
	Prefer not to say	2	1
Age	<40 years	14	7
	40-59 years	55	56
	60+ years	28	38
	Prefer not to say	3	0
Experience	0-4 years	28	51
	5-9 years	22	24
	10+ years	51	63

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Notes: ¹ Face-to-face includes in classroom or workplace

Appendix B (cont)

Table B12 The impacts of student behaviour on teaching and teachers, by delivery mode

Survey question	Training package	Number in group	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
Student behaviour has become more challenging since I started teaching	Face-to-face ¹	578	46	22	15	17
	Online	111	34	29	14	23
Student behaviour negatively impacts my ability to teach at least once a week	Face-to-face ¹	189	30	29	22	20
	Online	27	20	26	25	29
I feel overwhelmed by student support needs at least once a week	Face-to-face ¹	141	20	28	26	26
	Online	25	17	29	19	35
Student behaviour negatively impacts my enjoyment of teaching at least once a week	Face-to-face ¹	579	32	27	21	20
	Online	111	24	24	24	27
I have thought about leaving VET teaching/training in the last six months	Face-to-face ¹	190	30	19	14	37
	Online	46	38	13	6	43

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Notes: ¹ Face-to-face includes in classroom or workplace

Appendix B (cont)

Table B13 Understanding of student support needs, by delivery mode

Survey question	Training package	Number in group	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
I feel confident to identify student learning needs	Face-to-face ¹	405	68	30	2	0
	Online	76	66	28	3	3
I feel confident to support students' identified needs	Face-to-face ¹	325	52	40	6	1
	Online	59	49	40	5	6
When students aren't engaged in learning, I understand why	Face-to-face ¹	595	38	48	12	2
	Online	115	43	38	13	5
Understanding why students may have trouble engaging in learning helps me respond to them effectively	Face-to-face ¹	382	62	32	4	1
	Online	84	71	27	2	0
Undeclared student learning needs impact my planned teaching/training schedule at least once a week	Face-to-face ¹	594	47	32	14	7
	Online	115	40	38	11	10

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Notes: ¹ Face-to-face includes in classroom or workplace

Appendix B (cont)

Table B14 Impacts of student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs, by delivery mode

Survey question	Training package	Number in group	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Somewhat disagree (%)	Disagree (%)
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts my planned teaching at least once a week	Face-to-face ¹	595	41	27	20	12
	Online	115	24	38	17	21
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts their own learning at least once a week	Face-to-face ¹	595	51	27	14	8
	Online	115	46	31	10	13
Student behaviour arising from psychosocial needs disrupts other students' learning at least once a week	Face-to-face ¹	534	47	27	16	10
	Online	89	32	23	23	23

Source: National survey of VET teaching experience

Notes: ¹ Face-to-face includes in classroom or workplace



Teachers are not expected to diagnose or treat these challenges – their role is to recognise, respond, refer, support & review.



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