

# Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Industry Reference Committee

## Summary of 2017 Industry Survey / 2018 RTO Consultation

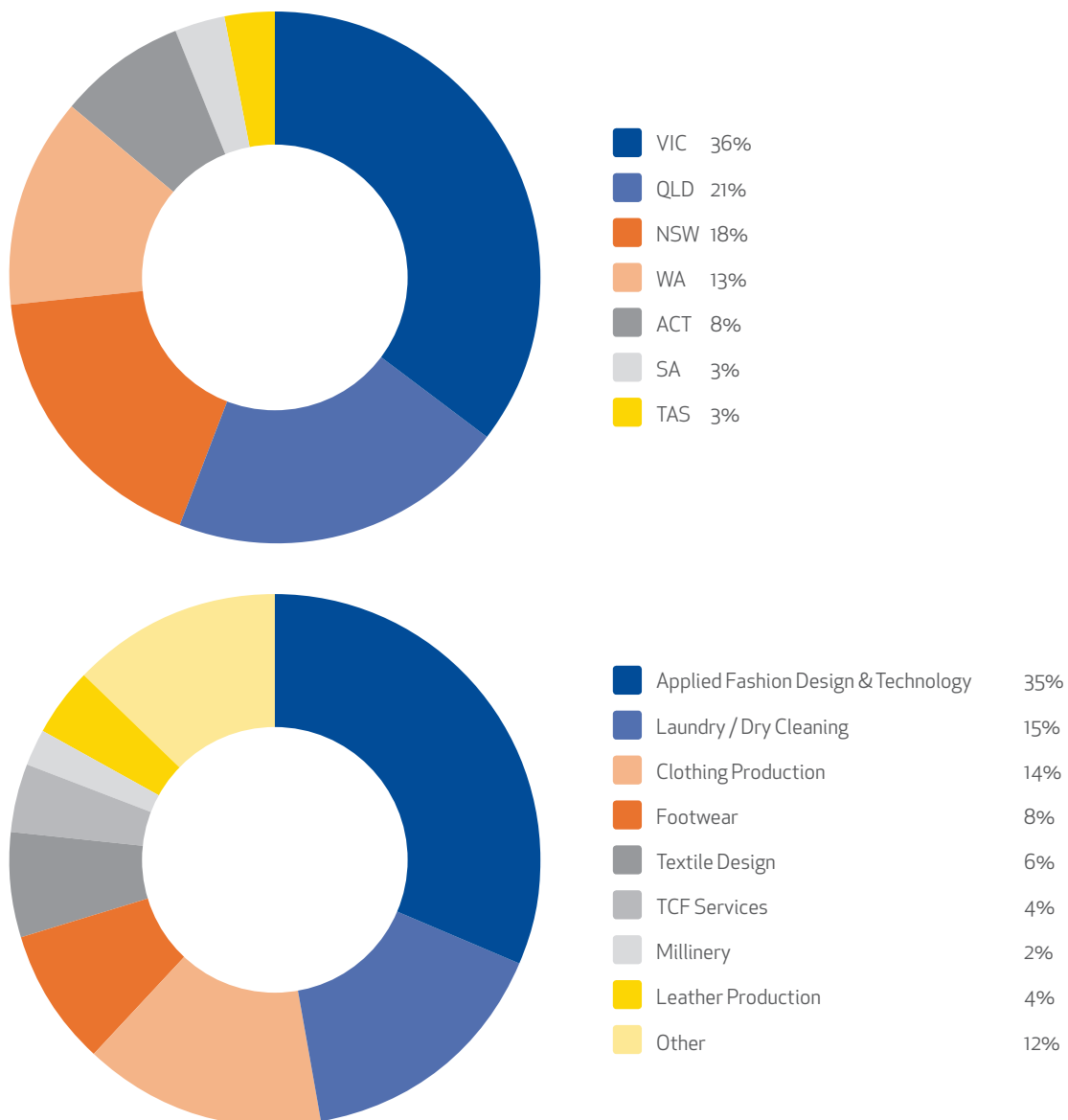
On behalf of the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Industry Reference Committee (IRC) IBSA Manufacturing undertook the following two activities to inform the IRC Industry Skills Forecast and assist in guiding future training package development work.

- 1 In November 2017 a targeted survey was undertaken to gather preliminary industry intelligence from Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) regarding the current training package qualifications, and their alignment to industry needs and outcomes. **An analysis of the survey is provided in Attachment A.**
- 2 In February and March 2018 interviews were conducted with a selection of RTOs to validate preliminary survey findings and provide further advice on whether the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package is meeting their clients' needs. **A report on RTO Consultations is provided in Attachment B.**

## Consultation Profile

In total, 46 participants either responded to the survey or were interviewed. The majority of participants were from the eastern states of Australia (over 80%)

Across all respondents, training for the major sub-sectors within the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear industry were covered. More than a third (35%) of participants provide training within the 'Applied Fashion Design and Technology' sector.



## MST Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package Feedback

Participants were asked to rate how well the qualifications in the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package meet current industry needs. Survey respondents indicated a satisfaction level of 65%, while those who participated in interviews provided an overall rating of 50%, or higher, for all qualifications.

The satisfaction level is illustrated below:



Participants indicated that, on the whole, the training package and qualifications meet industry need. Areas which can be improved include the volume of learning and a need for greater flexibility in delivery and assessment. Further details regarding the training package components that require change, as well as what's working well and what could be improved, are detailed in the Survey Analysis (Attachment A) and the RTO Consultation Report (Attachment B).

### Learner Needs

Participants reported that the learners needs were being met well, particularly in their ability to gain practical experience as well as hands on skills. A number of areas where learner needs could be better met are provided in the RTO Consultation Report (Attachment B).

This is consistent with the NCVET 2017 Graduate Outcomes of Vocational Education and Training (VET) Students by Industry for the LMT Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Industry which indicates that 79.7% of VET Students were satisfied with the training.

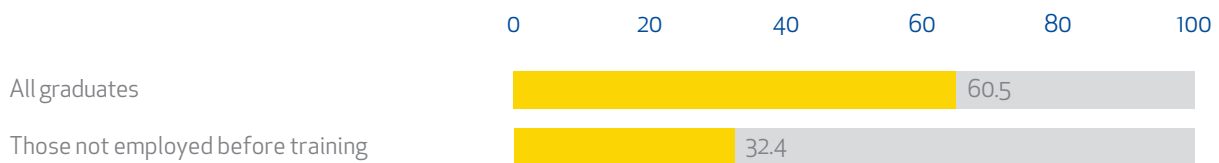
The satisfaction level is illustrated below:



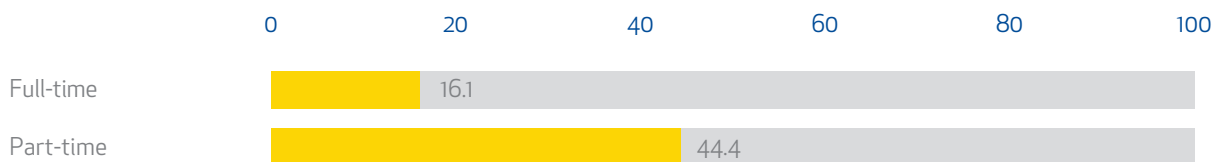
## Employment Outcomes

Participants indicated that between 55% - 75% of graduates were employed in the industry. This is consistent with the NCVET 2017 Graduate Outcomes of VET Students by Industry for the LMT Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Industry.

### Total employed after training (%) - TCF (LMT)



### Employment type (% all graduates) - TCF (LMT)



## Future implications for the Training Package

Participants identified a number of areas and key trends that might have implications for the training package over the next 3 – 5 years. These include:

**Technological change** which includes Computer Aided Design (CAD), Electronic Pattern Making and Additive Manufacturing to produce prototypes.

**Offshore manufacturing** which will require a focus on networking and relationship building skills as well as navigating the supply chain.

**Bespoke manufacturing** a shift to minimum and low volume production will require specialised production skills. Emerging trends of embroidery and accessories were identified as areas of employment and growth.

**Sustainable manufacturing** which includes knowledge and use of natural fibres and organic materials as well as ethical sourcing.

Further implications for the MST Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package are provided in:

- **Attachment A:** 2017 Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Industry Survey Analysis
- **Attachment B:** 2018 MST Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package RTO Consultation Report

# 2017 Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Industry Survey Analysis

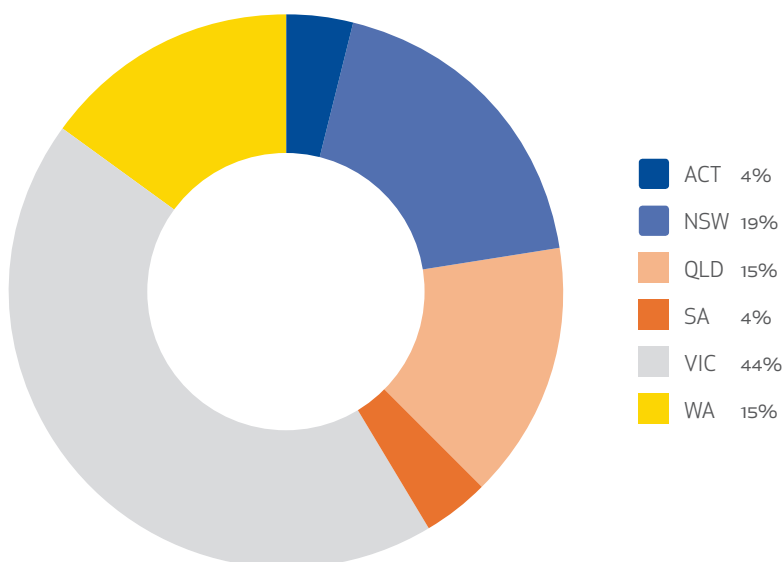
On behalf of the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Industry Reference Committee (IRC), IBSA Manufacturing conducted a targeted survey in November 2017 to gather industry intelligence from Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) regarding the current training package qualifications, and their match to industry needs and outcomes.

The survey results inform the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear IRC Industry Skills Forecast and assist in guiding future training package development work. Please find below an analysis of the survey results.

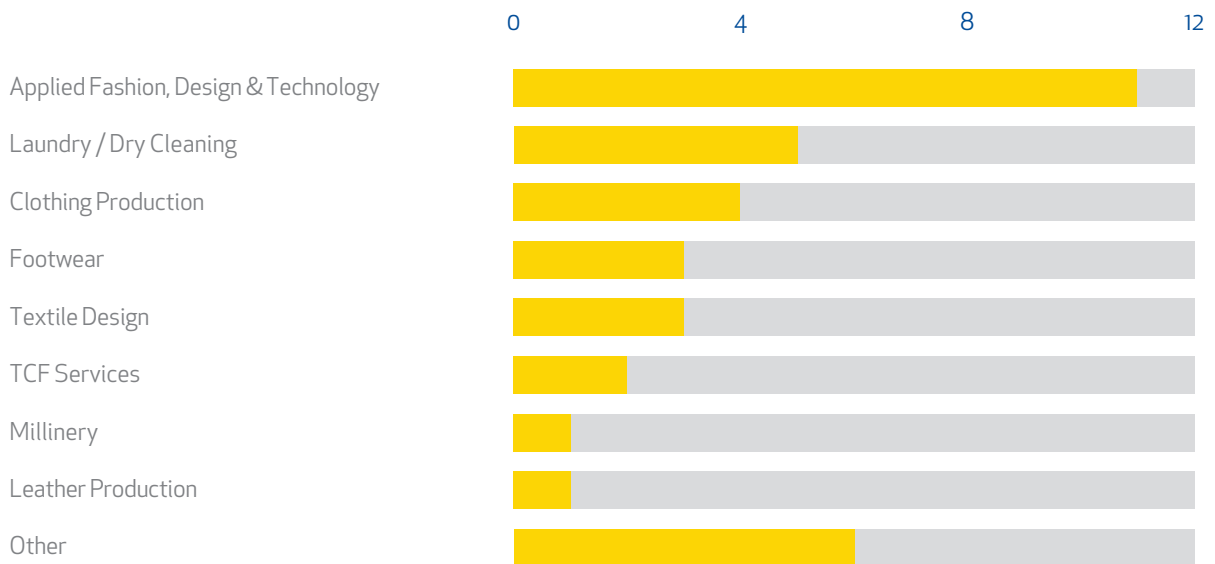
## Survey Respondents Profile

Of the 27 respondents who completed the survey, the clear majority of responses came from the eastern states of Australia (over 80%) and were training practitioners within an RTO (87%).

Across all respondents, training for the major sub-sectors within the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear industry were covered. More than half (57%) of respondents provide training within the 'Applied Fashion Design and Technology' space.



The breakdown of training category provided by respondents is as follows:



## MST Training Package Feedback

Respondents were asked to rate how well the qualifications in the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package meet current industry needs. The satisfaction level is illustrated below:



A satisfaction level of 65% shows that, on the whole, the qualifications meet industry need, however some components may require updating to assist with implementation or to meet emerging skill needs.

When asked to clarify which aspects of training package components required change the majority of respondents focused on modifying packaging rules. A third of respondents indicated that additional qualifications and new skill sets were required.

Aspects of training package components requiring change	modified packaging rules required	additional units required	additional qualification required	new skill set required	changes to core units
% of respondents	30%	18%	15%	15%	7%

Respondents commented that:

- the performance criteria, performance evidence and knowledge evidence for some units are “over the top”
- there are too many units in Certificate III level qualifications
- more flexibility within electives is required so the qualification can be tailored to the workplace
- the development of customised skill sets would assist learners who don't want full qualifications
- a review of the pre-requisites was needed to meet industry requirements
- consider introducing units on:
  - working in a team
  - working in diverse organisations
  - change management
- consider the review and update of units to meet rapid changes in technology
- In the Laundry and Dry Cleaning qualifications, consider reviewing the need for:
  - ‘wash’ units as not all learners undertake this task
  - ‘handling chemicals’ units as most machines are now self-managed or managed by vendors
  - management units at Certificate II level as learners are unlikely to be in supervisory roles

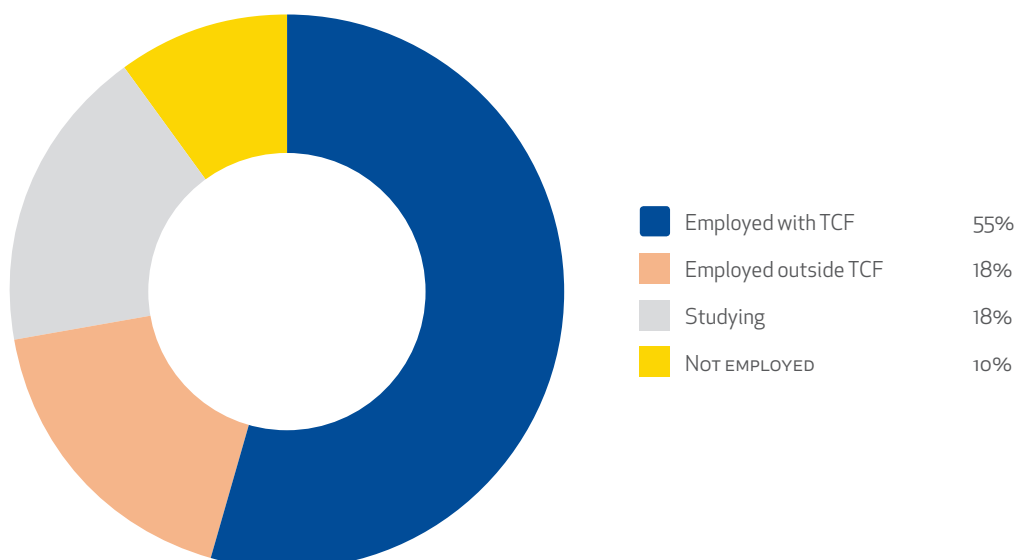
## Employment Outlook

We asked survey participants what current skills training industry employers were asking for. Their responses fell into four main categories, as indicated in the table below.

Production skills (27%)	Supply Chain skills (14%)	Technology (12%)	Generic workplace skills (37%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic pattern making and grading / basic practical skills</li> <li>• Garment construction and alteration / Trade specific hand skills / production skills</li> <li>• Sewing and overlocking / Machine operation skills</li> <li>• General production / operational skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole of supply chain incl. international capabilities</li> <li>• Sourcing / Purchasing / Fashion Buying / Merchandising</li> <li>• Product range design and manufacture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAD / Globally-enabled manufacturing and design</li> <li>• Electronic pattern making / Technical drawings</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Excel / data analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational health and safety incl. infection control and hygiene</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Organisational skills and planning</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Quality Assurance</li> <li>• Marketing</li> </ul>

## Strong Employment Outcomes

Employment outcomes within four months of graduating were extremely positive, with 73% of graduates being employed, and a further 18% undertaking further study to gain employment.





## Looking to the Future

According to survey respondents, the emerging skills needs employers are looking for fall into two broad categories: Technical and Trade skills. The specific skills required within these areas are noted below. Respondents identified technical skills requirements twice as often as trade skills, meaning that this is likely a significant area of future training package development to ensure that these new requirements are incorporated.

### Technical skills

- 3D design + manufacture / advanced manufacturing
- Social media / Online communications with customers
- Digital skills - design / merchandising / pattern making
- Radio frequency identification tags (RFID)

### Trade skills

- Textiles - new technologies / green / advanced fabric technology
- Sustainability
- Multi-skilling (future-proofing)

Survey respondents also provided additional comments regarding current training package or future training requirements within this industry to further inform the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear IRC.

The following extracts may be of value to the IRC in supporting them with their training package development work:

“ The existing qualifications are broad and do not provide a specific set of skills that match to employment award wage levels e.g. Diploma in Applied Fashion Design provides minimal training across the entire industry set of skills, employers are expecting to hire specific competencies in patternmaking or CAD or Teck packs, quality assurance or swimwear product development... ”

“ The aged care laundries are non-compliant to the Laundry Standard...and there are no skills sets or qualification to meet such a need. ”

“ The Fashion Industry is constantly changing - the Training packages do not offer enough electives that are industry specific to reflect Retail changes in Business... ”

“ ...Need a course for accessories. ”

“ Reduce the number of UoCs in the fashion design diplomas. ”

“ The future of the TCF service sector is in dire need of attracting and retaining personnel. While the package as it sits now is great at meeting the needs of employers, there is a real issue of apprenticeship take up. ”

# 2018 MST Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package RTO Consultation Report

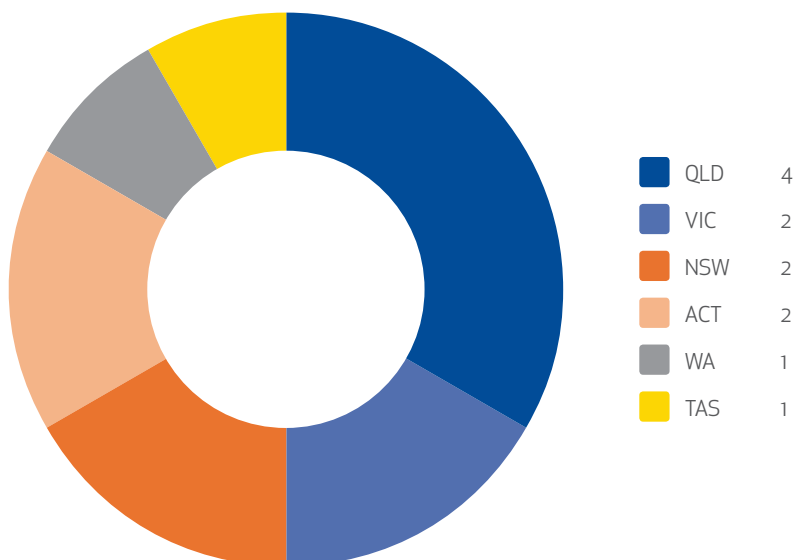
## About the consultation

On behalf of IBSA Manufacturing, Ithaca Group conducted interviews with a selection of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to find out whether the current Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package is meeting their clients' needs. The findings of this consultation inform this year's Industry Skills Forecast and ongoing training package development work.

## Participants and RTO Locations

A total of 12 separate interviews were conducted (by phone or face-to-face) with 20 participants from a mix of public and private RTOs across Australia [see Figure A below].

Figure A: Locations of RTO representatives interviewed



Those consulted delivered a range of qualifications from the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package<sup>1</sup> including qualifications in:

- fashion design, merchandising and technology (6)
- clothing and textile production (3)
- footwear and leather production (2)
- laundry and dry cleaning (2).

Six of the RTOs consulted provide training related to 'Applied Fashion Design and Technology', with half of the qualifications in this area delivered at Certificate IV level or higher.

## Industry & Employer Needs

In order to find out how well qualifications within the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Training Package are currently meeting the needs of industry and employers, respondents were asked to identify what's working well, what could be improved and what's missing in the qualifications that they deliver.

### Overall rating

Respondents rated the qualifications that they deliver on a scale of 1-100, with 100 representing a perfect score in meeting the needs of industry and employers. Responses showed that in general (with skilled interpretation by trainers), the training package is adequately meeting the needs of industry and employers. All respondents provided an overall rating of 50 or higher for all qualifications.

However the range of responses varied greatly depending on which industry subsector the training relates to, and whether the qualification/s being delivered are lower level qualifications (i.e. Certificate III or lower) or Certificate IV and above.

For example, Clothing and Textile Production qualifications rated highly at 80 - 90 by relevant respondents. Here, the comment was made that the current training package "is a vast improvement on the previous." In contrast, Footwear qualifications, although considered satisfactory overall, were rated fairly low, with an average rating of 65.

The ratings given to Applied Fashion and Design Technology qualifications were much more variable. Here, the effectiveness of the MST50116 Diploma of Applied Fashion Design and Merchandising in meeting employer and industry needs is particularly contentious, receiving both the lowest rating (50) and the highest (95) for the same qualification. The Certificate III in Applied Fashion Design and Technology consistently rated well, with respondents noting that it provides "good basic skills" and an "excellent range of electives for students that is a good cross-section of the skills that industry needs."

<sup>1</sup> Two respondents had either drawn units of competency from qualifications in this package in the past, or had investigated doing so, but were not currently delivering it.

While the overall sense is that industry needs are currently being met, a number of participants qualified their answer by saying that this is with intervention: they are able to make these qualifications work by paying close attention to unit selection and modifying, translating or tailoring units to meet industry needs.

## What is working well?

Respondents were asked to describe what they believe is working well to meet the needs of industry and employers in the qualifications that they currently deliver. Overall, there is a sense that the Training Package is heading in the right direction, with one respondent suggesting “it’s just a matter of really digging in and fine-tuning, keeping what’s essential and getting rid of what’s not.” In addition, respondents point out that frequent overhauling of the Training Package creates a large amount of unwelcome work and expense to repeatedly rewrite qualifications. While there are improvements to be made, there is no suggestion from respondents that these require major changes, rather just “tweaks” to what already exists.

Overwhelmingly, the delivery of knowledge, skills and understanding that industry needs is felt to be the most significant factor that is working well in the Training Package, in particular:

- the delivery of “hands on” skills that give learners the everyday knowledge they need in the workplace
- a greater focus on design in the Certificate IV in Custom Made Footwear
- good coverage of emerging skills such as key cutting in the Certificate III in Footwear
- meeting industry need for customisation skills through decorative units such as pleating and beading within Clothing and Textile Production.

The inclusion of digital technology units within Fashion Design and Technology was also well received.

While some respondents found elements of the Training Package restrictive, those delivering Clothing and Textile Production qualifications felt that the depth of detail and direction provided in the current Training Package was a vast improvement on the previous qualifications which were described as “really vague.”

Careful attention unit selection, planning and consultation, as well as teachers’ ability to make units relevant due to their industry experience, were also suggested to be key factors that help qualifications meet current industry needs. This was especially evident in one public RTO, where careful planning for the delivery of Applied Fashion Design and Technology qualifications enabled the creation of regional “specialisations” that satisfy both industry need for skills and learner needs for flexible options, despite industry, demographic and geographical challenges. This upfront planning included:

- including regional consultation and cooperation with the state Industry Council
- identification and resolution of confusion in the wording of unit title/s and anomalies in unit prerequisites
- implementation of distinct skill sets.

These achievements are well regarded, with this particular RTO’s Applied Fashion and Design Technology qualifications reportedly held up as a “prime example” of how to create a solid foundation for regional skills development.

## What could be improved?

The two most commonly reported concerns with the current Training Package were the considerable volume of learning and a need for greater flexibility in delivery and assessment, particularly at the higher levels within fashion design, merchandising and technology qualifications. Other areas identified for improvement include modifications to the name and scope of some qualifications, the usefulness of the Training Package companion volumes, hours allocated to units, language and clarification of “Australian Standards”.

The need to reduce the amount of information repeated in units was identified across the training package qualification areas. This is felt to be creating too many irrelevant details in each unit, contributing to assessment overload and impacting teaching/learning time. It also creates a lot of hard work for teachers, “paperwork for the sake of paperwork” and the risk of failing audits because of strict auditing requirements.

It was also suggested that overall, the ability of the MST Training Package to meet job demands for complex technical skills and complex problem solving knowledge needs to be investigated. It was noted that academic degree programs do not address this and the industry requires more hand-on, applied learning training outcomes.

Specific comments by industry area include:

### Footwear and Leather Production

Respondents suggested a need to:

- Broaden the scope and name of the qualification, as the term “Custom Made” footwear is only relevant to small business. For example, there are brands that are designed here and made offshore and there are large retailers (e.g. Cotton On and Country Road) with jobs to offer. Changing the name and focus of the qualification would allow for accommodation of a broader range of industry needs.
- Include units that develop hands on skills in the footwear qualification. Basic skills are what employers are looking for and there is a feeling amongst some employers that these trade and hand skills are lacking.
- Improve Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) pathways. While this is a delivery issue and not related to the qualifications themselves, lack of recognised RPL pathways is creating problems as most of the apprentices are from the footwear repair industry - an industry in which most people are operating small businesses with no certification, as they have just learned “on-the-job”. In these cases, it is difficult to determine an appropriate recognition of prior learning (RPL) pathway.

### Clothing and Textile Production

Respondents delivering qualifications in these areas felt that the recent changes to the Training Package involved merging textile design and production without much regard for the needs of industry. They suggested a few ways in which these could be improved, including:

- Clarify references to Australian Standards. For example, Which Australian standards? How should they be met?
- Review hours allocated to units. These need to be realistic and reflect the time that it actually takes to complete practical components.

- Improve the packaging rules and prerequisites to make delivery more flexible. This is particularly an issue when mapping units between Certificate IV and Diploma qualifications. (For example, currently the Diploma unit to analyse and use colour requires the prerequisite unit 'set up print screens', however setting up a print screen has no relevance to analysis and use of colour.) Some noted that issues like this and the level of inflexibility as to what units must be delivered led the RTO to decide that delivering the Diploma was not viable.
- Remove typos/errors and ensure that language used is universal. Some suggested that language is very NSW-centric - for example, the OH&S area uses specific terms and language applicable to NSW, but not VIC.
- Ensure that skills are reflective of current industry practice. Some noted that Industry (particularly big business) has moved on in the use of technology and this is not always reflected in the units. For example, skills in the use of hand looms are still covered, but they are not used in large businesses anymore. It is worth noting though, that in some small businesses there is a resurgence of their use.

## Laundry and Dry Cleaning

Respondents identified a number of new and combined units that would improve laundry and dry cleaning qualifications and skills outcomes. These include:

- Core units in infectious disease control. Currently, laundry qualifications for Aged Care are delivered as part of the Health Support Training Package. It was suggested that these units/qualifications need to be brought into the Laundry Operations qualifications as core units. The respondent stressed that there is a big gap in the provision of laundry skills and infection control training that adequately addresses important public health issues and that properly deliver vital hands on skills required here.
- A special unit is needed on ironers and ironer safety.
- A unit is needed in relation to RFID (electronic tracking) which is now implemented in the large laundry services and "about to hit the industry in a big way."
- A unit is needed that helps learners to understand the complexity of the standard.

Combining skill sets in both laundry and dry cleaning was identified as another way that the qualifications could be improved as there are a number of competencies that work together.

## Fashion Design, Merchandising and Technology

Overall, the majority of respondents felt that qualifications in this area could be improved by:

- Lowering the number of units required to complete fashion qualifications, bringing it into line with equivalent qualifications and reducing the risk that students are "over prepared" for industry. Although some suggested that it was important to ensure that graduates had production skills and that these shouldn't be taken out of the qualifications.
- Reviewing core and elective units in lower level qualifications. Respondents suggested a number of ways that lower level qualifications (i.e. Certificate II - IV) could be improved by shifting specific units from elective to core. In these cases, the number of core units would increase and electives decrease in each qualification.

- Increasing flexibility and delivery options by modifying packaging rules and reviewing prerequisites, core units and electives at higher levels. Respondents cited examples where: prior skills or knowledge are required to complete a unit, however no prerequisites are listed; core units are not felt to be the most important units to deliver; there are mapping anomalies between lower level and higher level qualifications (e.g. Applied Quality Standards is a core unit in the Diploma of Applied Fashion Design and Merchandising however it is not listed as a unit within the Advanced Diploma). Some specific examples for how these higher level qualifications could be improved were provided, including reducing the number of specialist electives required in the Advanced Diploma, and merging and renaming units within the Diploma. Two RTOs indicated that they can't deliver Diploma and Advanced Diplomas that meet local industry need because of perceived "lack of flexibility" in delivery of the qualification. Reducing the assessment load for RTOs and learners by ensuring that the Training Package only specifies what needs to be taught and assessed, and is relevant to the core aims of each unit. Currently, there is too much information repeated across units (For example, "Quality Criteria" is included in every unit yet has little relevance to a unit like Analyse Colour and still needs to be assessed). One respondent suggested that separating "delivery" and "assessment" more clearly within the training package might assist here.
- Avoiding "too much detail" or listing too many specific items, tools, and/or media to be utilised or covered in units. These should be kept minimal or optional to allow teachers greater flexibility in how to deliver given the resources, time, and budget available. For example, one RTO cited a fashion illustration unit which specifies use of an airbrush. These are expensive and uncommonly used in industry. This RTO now has to purchase one specifically so that it can deliver this unit. Another RTO is struggling to teach using the required fibres and fabrics as they don't have access to the new materials, nor does their local industry require it.
- Ensuring that where the quantity of assessment items is specified, that this is reflective of the time available for that unit and allows an appropriate balance of teaching/learning time to develop "hands on" skills. There is also a need to ensure that the number of different types of assessment specified in performance criteria and performance evidence actually match up.
- Improving the language used. There are instances where greater definition, clarity or more industry-relevant wording is required (For example, the unit MSTSD - 4003 refers to making "slits", however this is not a current industry term).

Respondents held differing views on whether qualifications should be merged or separate. Some felt that, at the higher levels, the merging of different qualifications such as fashion design and merchandising makes it difficult to deliver streamlined qualifications that are relevant to industry needs, as it requires too many core units. It was suggested that separating business and merchandising would provide more options and flexibility to meet the needs of industry.

However, referring to the same qualification [MST50116-Diploma of Applied Fashion Design and Technology], another respondent felt that including merchandising in the Diploma focused training on emerging skills and industry areas, noting that "The inclusion of merchandising in the current qualifications is taking it in the right direction. Need to expand on this and delete redundant units to bring the volume of learning down."

Other areas for improvement that respondents identified include the training package companion volumes which were cited as being useless, hard to follow and extract meaning from, and repetitive, with a respondent noting that "We don't use them or find them useful." It was also noted that references to "Australian Standards" should be removed as there are no Australian Standards.

Overall, it was also noted that the industry needs a greater focus on higher level technical skills. One respondent identified that the top 3 job demands employers are seeking within the jobs market for Fashion Design & Production are:

- Construction knowledge & expertise
- Pattern, grade & fit expertise
- Textile testing & fabrication knowledge.

These are skills that are best developed through hands-on, applied learning in higher level VET qualifications.

## What is missing?

Respondents identified what they felt was missing from the qualifications that they deliver in order to meet the needs of industry and employers.

With regards to the MST Training Package overall, the absence of specific identification of underpinning foundation skills was noted by some respondents as a shortcoming. It was suggested that trainers would benefit from the inclusion of a table that identified where foundation skills are applied in the Performance Criteria, similar to that provided in other training packages.

Gaps identified in specific industry sectors are outlined below.

### Footwear and Leather Production

- Business skills in the higher level qualifications. "By only giving students vocational skills we are not giving them anywhere else to go."
- Skills in common tasks such as the supply and fitting of heel blocks and non-slip shoes and half soles - they were previously covered in the training package, but not in the current version.

### Laundry Operations and Dry Cleaning

- Core units in infectious disease control, alongside a general focus on the importance of managing bio security issues within laundry and dry cleaning as infectious diseases like anthrax and ebola - all transferable on linen - become an increasing threat.

### Clothing and Textile Production

- Inclusion of new technologies e.g. CAD software design.
- Flexibility of delivery within the training package rules and requirements that would allow RTOs to streamline qualifications to meet the needs of both large industry and small businesses.



## Fashion Design, Merchandising and Technology

- Focus on merchandising and buying for large retailers. This is where students want to go and where the jobs are. This requires a shift to digital technology; however the basics are still relevant. “Unless you know the basics, how will you be an effective buyer?”
- Digital skills. The inclusion of merchandising in the current qualifications is taking a step in the right direction.
- Units that address the growth in the market for alterations. Currently, there are only two units that cover fitting at Diploma level. Including more units would help to meet the growing market in alterations due to the growth of online purchases (customers buy online and then need to get resized / refitted).
- The use of new fabrics (such as stretch fabrics and sustainable materials). Students need to spend more time sewing and handling new materials to meet retail shifts and growing consumer demand in these areas.
- Focus on bespoke, custom and specialised work, such as menswear, alterations and bridal. Menswear (tailoring) is missing completely from the training package and there are examples of industry demand here. One RTO was recently approached by a menswear business that is shifting their operations from Asia to Australia; however “none of our students can do it.” While there are units which may be adapted to these needs (e.g. pattern making), there is not the time or units available to specialise in this.

## Future Implications for Training Packages

Respondents were asked to identify what’s on the horizon that might have implications for the training package over the next 3-5 years. Their responses are summarised below.

### Technological Change

New technologies were identified across all industry qualification areas, which will impact training package development within the next 3-5 years. Examples include the use of:

- Computer Aided Design (CAD) technology and 3D printing to produce footwear prototypes
- Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) electronic tracking of individual laundry items
- 3D draping and CAD software in fashion design and technology.

Respondents identified that the rapid growth of new technologies and the speed with which industry change is occurring has significant implications for the training package. Rapid technological change also presents funding, skills and resources challenges for RTOs as they try to keep pace with industry change, while also balancing the need to deliver core manual skills.

### Offshore Manufacturing

Some respondents felt that the continued shift towards offshore manufacturing within clothing and textiles production will require a greater focus on networking skills and learning how to build relationships with offshore manufacturers, suppliers and others, and also shift the focus of training to areas like design and pattern making, rather than production.

## Industry Trends

Respondents identified a number of trends within fashion and textiles that will have implications for training packages in the next 3-5 years. These include an industry shift amongst large retailers towards local alterations of mass produced garments and textiles. This trend will require growth of bespoke, minimum production and low volume manufacturing skills, and the training package needs to be able to reflect these more specialised needs. Fitting and alterations were also identified as associated skills that need greater focus to reflect these trends, together with quality assurance and the ability to assess garments from a specifications sheet.

Sustainability is another emerging trend and an area of growth for fashion and textiles. This will have training package implications, including the need to consider units that focus on how materials can be sourced sustainably and the use of natural fibres and organic materials.

There is also a growing push for greater innovation within the Australian fashion industry. It was suggested that the Australian fashion industry needs to define itself and develop its own look (in much the same way that NZ has). At the moment, respondents feel that units of competency don't allow for innovation; instead they're very "flat" and reflect the need to meet current industry needs. It was suggested that to meet future skills needs, training package developments will need to encourage more exploration, innovation and critical thinking within fashion design and technology.

## Business Diversification

Businesses in the footwear industry are increasingly experiencing financial pressure and beginning to diversify the activities they undertake internally, which they may have previously outsourced (e.g. bookkeeping and accounting). It was felt that there will be a greater need to add business skills training to the Footwear qualification in order to meet these diverse business needs in the future.

## Learner Needs

In addition to employer and industry needs, the study aimed to assess how well learners' needs are being met. To do this, respondents were asked to what extent they feel that the current qualifications are meeting the needs of learners. In general, RTOs consulted in this study felt that their learners' needs were being met well, particularly in their ability to gain practical experience and hands on skills. A number of RTOs emphasised that this is because of creative delivery by RTOs, rather than the qualifications themselves.

Respondents also identified a number of areas where learner needs could be better met. These include:

- Creating better career pathways for learners within higher level qualifications in Custom Made Footwear and Clothing and Textile Production. Including business skills at Diploma level here could help.
- Reviewing allocated hours for some units within the Clothing and Textile Production qualifications as they don't realistically reflect what the unit requires students to do. For example, the teaching/learning time for a unit can be 30-40 hours however within that time they are expected to make 10 repairs. There needs to be more practical time allowed to enable a holistic approach that covers the whole process.

- Ensuring the delivery of practical units that develop hands-on skills within laundry and dry cleaning qualifications and delivery by qualified trainers with appropriate industry experience and knowledge.
- Embroidery is an area in which there is growing employment available. This could be better catered to in terms of the qualifications offered and directing learners towards these opportunities.
- Reducing the volume of learning for Fashion Design and Technology qualifications in order to lower the time it currently takes for students to complete their qualification and reduce attrition rates. Reviewing and/or simplifying qualification names to better reflect what is actually provided. For example, one RTO does not deliver “merchandising” as part of their Fashion Design and Merchandising qualification. Having to include this in the qualification name is confusing for students. Similarly, some qualification names could be simplified (e.g. drop “applied” from Applied Fashion Design and Technology as it is unnecessary).
- Change the ability to gain “direct entry” into Advanced Diploma of Applied Fashion Design and Merchandising: this is not the case as students need to have the Diploma, and it’s misleading and confusing for students.

## Employment Outcomes

Respondents were asked whether graduates of the qualifications are getting jobs in the industry, and why or why not. Approximately 75% of respondents felt that students were gaining employment in industry at the end of their qualification. Where students are not going on to be employed, the biggest reasons are cited as being:

- Wanting to start own business (30%)
- Lack of jobs in the industry (30%)
- Qualifications are being used as a “stepping stone” to further study (30%).

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