Building confidence in your RTO's services – how learner and employer feedback can help

This guide looks at using learner and employer survey data for demonstrating the quality of your training operations.

Building confidence in your RTO

Training and assessment services are delivered in a competitive environment. Many RTOs are vying for training and assessment business. Learners and employers are looking for quality training. Your learner and employer survey results can be a key factor that influences the decisions of learners and employers about where to spend their training and assessment funds.

Your survey results can help build and maintain your market position as a quality training provider. Your results can build learner and employer confidence in your RTO. There are business decisions you need to make about using your data to build confidence.

Releasing your data

The first thing to recognise is that your learner and employer survey results belong to you. What information you release, and how you release it, is your decision.

It’s a business decision and you need to take a number of things into account.

Because you ask employers to complete the employer survey each year, you might expect some will ask to see the results. Your existing learners, and perhaps potential learners, might ask to see learner survey results. How you respond to such requests may have an influence on the confidence of employers and learners.

Other RTOs - your competitors - could make their results available in some form.

Your business decision can be proactive. You might release some results on your website. You might release detailed results, and your analysis of them, only to learners and employers who complete the learner and employer surveys. You might provide results to prospective clients only - employers you plan to strike a business arrangement with.

It’s worth taking a long view about the evidence you provide about your training quality. Your survey results are only reliable if you get a sufficient number of respondents every year. A good way of encouraging learners and employers to respond to surveys is to give them feedback on your results and on the changes you make in response to the survey results.

Your quality improvement plan can be a confidence builder

What your results are, and deciding what results you release, are as important as having a definite plan for improving your results.

Your quality improvement plan can build confidence in your RTO and support your business development effort. Convey to learners and employers that you see your learner and employer results as a direct input to your quality improvement plan. Confidence in your RTO’s services can build from your results and from your plan to improve them.

What can you claim?

If you are confident in your results, you could claim - on your website or perhaps in a brochure - to have high levels of employer satisfaction and learner engagement.

But comparisons with other RTO results must be made very carefully. That’s why the Code of Practice for the learner and employer surveys says ‘Data from the learner and employer surveys is not suitable for making simplistic unqualified cross-RTO comparisons.’

It’s important to understand why it’s not a good idea to make such comparisons in case you want to explain differences in results between your RTO and other RTOs.

Let’s look at some employer survey results. (Similar things apply when you analyse and report on learner survey results.)

Making thoughtful comparisons

There are seven scales in the Employer Questionnaire (EQ), the survey instrument developed for use with employers. Here are the employer survey results from four of those scales for My RTO.

### EQ scales per cent agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQ scale</th>
<th>My RTO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trainer Quality</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
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<td>Effective Assessment</td>
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<td>65</td>
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On two scales - Effective Assessment and Effective Support - My RTO’s results are much lower than for the other scales. But looking at one RTO’s results doesn’t tell you how its competitors are going.

My RTO provides training in two areas: security services and investigative services. My RTO’s main competitor - Safe&Secure - provides training in three areas: security services, investigative services and first aid.

Look at the results from the same scales, but with more data for My RTO and Safe&Secure.
**EQ scales per cent agreement**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>EQ scale</th>
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<th>Safe&amp;Secure RTO¹</th>
<th>Safe&amp;Secure RTO²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Trainer Quality</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>83</td>
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<td>66</td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Support</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

1. security services, investigative services and first aid
2. security services and investigative services only

For the Effective Assessment Scale, Safe&Secure’s results for all qualifications are better than My RTO’s results - 79 per cent versus 69 per cent. But look at the results in the grey columns, which are just for security and investigative services. It looks like Safe&Secure does a great job in first aid training, but is not as good as My RTO in security and investigative services training.

Every RTO is different. Meaningful comparisons rely on thoughtful analysis.

**Things to do**

1. Decide how you will release your survey results - where, in what form and to whom.
2. Explain your quality improvement plan to employers.
3. Make sure your data collection is well-planned, well-administered, and that you analyse results thoughtfully.
4. Read the three page AQTF 2007 Code of Practice: Learner and Employer Surveys.
5. Be clear on what claims you can make about your results without comparing your results with other RTOs’ results.
6. Consider benchmarking with other RTOs. Benchmarking allows you to show clients how your results compare with other RTOs’ results. Benchmarking agreements would cover the terms for releasing the data of your benchmarking partners. (See the enhancement guide about benchmarking.)

**About this guide**

This Continuous Improvement Guide forms part of the AQTF 2007 Quality Indicators Resources Package. This package contains information and materials for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to use to collect, analyse and act on data about their training and assessment.

The Australian Quality Training Framework 2007 (AQTF 2007) Quality Indicators are part of the AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration for training organisations that wish to deliver nationally recognised vocational qualifications and competencies. Three Quality Indicators have been endorsed by the National Quality Council (NQC): Learner Engagement, Employer Satisfaction and Competency Completion. These are designed to help RTOs conduct evidence-based and outcomes-focused continuous quality improvement, and assist Registering Bodies assess the risk of an RTO’s operations.