

Administrative Information

Industry Reference Committee (IRC) name: Technicians Support Services Industry Reference Committee

Skills Service Organisation (SSO) name: SkillsIQ Limited

Training Package name examined: HLT Health Training Package

Change proposed: See Attachment A

Stakeholder consultation method and scale: See Attachment B

Background

The Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) commissions Training Package development work based on evidence from industry of the need for that change. SkillsIQ, under the direction of the Technicians Support Services IRC, has prepared this Case for Change to clearly set out the evidence on which the IRC's recommendation for change is based in relation to the review and update of the nationally recognised Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support Training Package Products currently packaged within the HLT Health Training Package.

The proposed update will seek to ensure that hospital pharmacy assistants and technicians have access to appropriate skills and knowledge in order to meet the current and future needs of the Australian health care system.

Training Package Products proposed for update

This Case for Change proposes an update of all the current Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support Training Package Products, including:

- 2 x qualifications
- 9 x Units of Competency.

See **Attachment A** for the full list of Training Package Products proposed for update.

Advice on new Training Package Products

This Case for Change is proposing to develop 14 new Units of Competency covering the following key areas:

- Pharmaceutical Science knowledge – Understanding of drugs, chemistry, biology and pharmacology
- Human resources contextualised to the hospital sector
- Leadership skills relevant to the Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support job role
- Work Health and Safety (WHS) knowledge specific to hospital pharmacy
- Hospital-specific communication/teamwork.

Further analysis and consultation will assist in determining the actual number of new Units of Competency. These Units will be packaged with the existing two qualifications when they are updated.

The Case for Change

Skills that meet the current and future demand for Hospital Pharmacy Assistants and Technicians

Pharmacy assistants and technicians provide assistance to pharmacists, under supervision, in hospital and community health settings. This may include pharmacies that are located outside of health services but supply medicines and products to hospitals and other health services.

In 2016, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) conducted a comprehensive workforce study into hospital pharmacy technicians and assistants. SHPA's White Paper, titled *Exploring the role of hospital pharmacy technicians and assistants to enhance the delivery of patient-centred care*, showed that:

- 95% of hospital pharmacy services employ pharmacy technicians/assistants
- Pharmacy technicians/assistants are integral to the provision of pharmacy services to patients in Australian hospitals and can be instrumental in increasing the availability and impact of these services
- There is concern regarding the lack of a career structure for hospital pharmacy technicians/assistants in Australia
- High staff turnover is linked to a lack of career opportunities, and is particularly prevalent in rural and remote locations
- Technicians/assistants are indeed interested in career advancement opportunities, and
- A lack of training opportunities, limited incentives to undertake training and few opportunities for progression are reported as major obstacles.

There are two qualifications currently packaged within the HLT Health Training Package, namely the *HLT37115 Certificate III in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support* and the *HLT47115 Certificate IV in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support*.

The job roles covered by the two qualifications include:

- Pharmacy Assistants
- Pharmacy Technicians
- Senior Pharmacy Technicians.

Industry consistently highlights that the current two qualifications are not meeting their needs. While the existing Units of Competency within the qualifications cover the basic skills required for the job roles, they do not provide underlying knowledge in key areas, namely, the pharmacology of drugs (what they do and how they work) and how the drugs interact with the body's systems. Due to the technicians being insufficiently skilled to undertake the required job tasks, pharmacists are then required to undertake technical tasks, instead of focusing on clinically-oriented activities.

Industry has also identified that the UK Pharmacy Technician and Assistant qualifications are highly regarded, and often preferred over Australian qualifications. A recent focus group, part of the SHPA Role Redesign Project, prior to the publication of the White Paper, highlighted that overseas-trained technicians were preferred over the Australian-qualified technicians, which clearly indicates that the current Australian qualifications are not meeting industry needs.

The UK Pharmacy Assistant/Technician training system requires the completion of two qualifications: the first being knowledge-based prior to completion of a second, competency-based qualification. While a two-qualification approach does not translate into the framework of the Australian VET system, much of the content covered within the knowledge-based qualification has been identified as being content which would fill the key gaps within *HLT37115 Certificate III in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support* and *HLT47115 Certificate IV in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support*. Another key gap identified was the lack of robust performance assessment, which doesn't address key knowledge-based or performance-based competency relevant to the workplace. Additional guidance information will be included in the Companion Volume Implementation Guide about industry's

expectations of assessment. Performance evidence statements need to be strengthened in the corresponding Units of Competency required.

Recommendations

The proposed update of these qualifications will seek to incorporate the required changes to ensure that industry has access to skilled pharmacy technicians and assistants, to meet the current and future needs of the Australian health care system.

Industry has identified that the current structure and packaging of the two qualifications, *Certificate III in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support* and *Certificate IV in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support*, is not meeting industry needs.

Initial discussions have identified the following amendments to the qualifications as follows:

- *Certificate III in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support*
 - Update of the number of core Units of Competency
 - Possible removal of the Units of Competency related to Infection Control and Working with Diverse People as these are often covered in the Hospital Accreditation/Induction programs.
 - Development of a new Unit of Competency contextualised to the hospital sector around Communication Skills, Team Effectiveness and Organising Workplace Information.
 - Update of the electives offered within the qualification, as currently there are many BSB Training Package Units of Competency packaged in the electives. It is recommended that the selection of electives should align more closely to the job role, and ideally should include HLT Training Package content, which will be more relevant to the Hospital Pharmacy sector than the BSB units.
- *Certificate IV in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support*
 - Update of the number of core Units of Competency.
 - Exploration of the potential to include streamed electives for specialised pharmacy areas such as Compounding.
 - The inclusion of a new Leadership Unit in the core, as senior technicians often manage teams within a hospital pharmacy.
 - Development of a new hospital-specific Work Health and Safety (WHS) Unit of Competency.
 - Update of the packaging of Certificate III Units of Competency as electives in the Certificate IV qualification so that individuals can directly enter the Certificate IV and can pick up any relevant Units from the Certificate III.

A thorough analysis of all existing Units of Competency will be conducted. Analysis will determine whether the gaps in the underpinning knowledge can be adequately addressed by using content currently within existing Units of Competency, and, if not, new Units will be identified. The gaps identified relate mainly to Pharmaceutical Science and include the following:

- Chemistry principles for pharmacy technicians
- Biology principles for pharmacy
- Microbiology for pharmacy

- Human physiology for pharmacy
- Action and uses of medicines
- Available drugs (e.g. those used for the treatment of gastrointestinal conditions, the cardio-respiratory system, central nervous system, etc.)
- The manufacturing of medicines for use in a pharmacy
- Medicines for a range of other specific conditions
- Medicine management.

These gaps will be addressed through updating the existing Units where applicable, or via the creation of new Units.

Industry Support for Change

Method and scale of stakeholder consultation

The Industry Reference Committee (IRC) provided the direction for the Case for Change development. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) gathered initial information and industry feedback. SkillsIQ conducted desktop research sourced from industry publications and an analysis of the UK Pharmacy Technicians' qualifications. Broad industry feedback was acquired from stakeholders within the SkillsIQ database, who were notified of public consultation through the SkillsIQ website, TAC and IRC networks. See **Attachment B** for the Stakeholder Consultation Method and Scale document.

Unresolved issues and sensitivities

The following industry sensitivities have been recognised:

- There is no national system in terms of recognition and terminology around job roles. Therefore, there are variations between each state and territory in:
 - Assistant/technician career pathways
 - Technicians' grading systems (i.e. Grade 1, Grade 2 etc.).
 - The technical language used in reference to the job tasks across the country.
- The professional development of assistants and technicians must involve the pharmacists, who may need to develop relationships with pharmacy technicians/assistants as part of the pharmaceutical services team.
- There is an inconsistency in the onsite training received by graduates which is dependent on the training delivery methods of different training providers and the degree of access to those trainers versus other delivery methods.

Impact of Change

Impact analysis

The impacts of the proposed changes on stakeholders can be summarised as follows:

Industry and employers

Access to a skilled workforce and qualifications that support the delivery of the skills and knowledge as defined by industry is critical. Further, industry and employers would significantly benefit from clearer training pathways and strengthened qualifications to address current gaps due to changes in career and job structures. A current analysis of job roles and occupational outcomes aligned to Training Products is a valuable forum for collaborative engagement within the Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support Sector. Adequately trained assistants and technicians will enable the pharmacist to focus on clinical activities and service activities.

The risk associated with **not** implementing the changes is that workers will not possess the relevant skills for the sector to provide assistance to pharmacists in hospital and community health settings, resulting in risks to patients, cost implications for in-house training and a potential increase in staff turnover due to the lack of appropriate training and pathways. Without sufficiently trained assistants and technicians, pharmacists will continue to undertake technical tasks instead of clinical activities.

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

Increased relevance of the Training Package Products will improve opportunities for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to partner with industry in order to provide programs better aligned to job outcomes. Although changes to units of competency and qualifications create flow-on impacts and costs for RTOs in relation to administrative systems, training resources and assessment materials, a positive impact for all RTOs will be improved clarity around training outcomes and assessment expectations.

The risk of no change is that the training offered may not match industry needs, and the quality and reputation of the course delivery may be compromised.

Learners

Learners will benefit from improved clarity and updated Training Products that industry confirms reflect the current skills and knowledge required for job roles in the sector. Broader qualifications which align to more than one job outcome will also enhance occupational mobility within the sector.

The risk of no change is that learners may graduate with insufficient skills to support the sector and therefore their employability may be compromised.

General Public

The enhancement of skills for the Hospital/Health Services Support workforce will result in better services to hospital-based admissions.

The risks of not implementing the changes are significant, as the Hospital Pharmacy Support sector is crucial to hospital admission activity in terms of enabling the efficient provision of medication both to admitted patients and anyone from the general public accessing Emergency services at the hospital.

Estimated timeframes

Central to the update process is the ongoing involvement of industry and national stakeholder engagement. It is estimated that development will take approximately 12 months. This work will be conducted under the guidance of the Hospital Pharmacy Support TAC and the Technicians Support Services IRC.

Broad consultation with employers, industry professionals, graduates and training providers across Australia, including those in metropolitan, regional and rural areas, will be conducted with a view to drafting Training Package Products, ensuring that the resulting Products are strongly aligned to the current skills needs of the Hospital/Health Support Services workforce.

Implementing the COAG Industry and Skills Council reforms for Training Packages

The recommended work in this Case for Change is consistent with the COAG Industry and Skills Council (CISC) reforms for Training Packages by:

- Identifying and removing obsolete Training Package Products from the system, where possible. In this instance, the HLT Health Training Package update saw significant rationalisation in 2015, so there may be no obsolete Units.
- Documenting industry expectations for training delivery and assessment through the Companion Volume Implementation Guide.
- Enhancing portability of skills between occupations, such as between Hospital and Community Pharmacy.
- Removing unnecessary duplication within the Training Package, although industry notes the specific nature of the role within the hospital pharmacy setting. Units of Competency from the Certificate III will be included in the Certificate IV to allow for clear pathways.
- Identifying where skill sets can enhance the flexibility of the Training Package.

This Case for Change was proposed and endorsed by the Technicians Support Services IRC.

Tony Badrick, Chair

Signature of Chair:

Date:

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ATTACHMENT A - Training Package Components to Update

SkillsIQ

Contact details: Melinda Brown, General Manager

Date submitted: Jul 2018

Material for update:

- Qualifications: 2
- Units of Competency: 18 (9 existing and 14 new units)

Training Package Code	Training Package Name	Qualification Code	Qualification Name	Unit of Competency Code	Unit of Competency Name
Qualifications					
HLT	Health	HLT37115	Certificate III in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support		
HLT	Health	HLT47115	Certificate IV in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support		
Units of Competency					
HLT	Health			HLTPHA001	Maintain pharmaceutical imprest stock
HLT	Health			HLTPHA002	Pack pharmaceutical products
HLT	Health			HLTPHA003	Assist with dispensing of prescriptions and medication orders
HLT	Health			HLTPHA004	Order, maintain and distribute pharmaceutical stock

Training Package Code	Training Package Name	Qualification Code	Qualification Name	Unit of Competency Code	Unit of Competency Name
HLT	Health			HLTPHA005	Conduct small-scale compounding and labelling of pharmaceutical products
HLT	Health			HLTPHA006	Provide assistance in dispensary administration
HLT	Health			HLTPHA007	Conduct small scale compounding and labelling of aseptic pharmaceutical products
HLT	Health			HLTPHA008	Support pharmacist communication with clients and other health professionals
HLT	Health			HLTPHA009	Support pharmacists in the collection and presentation of workplace data and information
HLT	Health			New Unit	Communication skills, team effectiveness and organising workplace information in a hospital setting
HLT	Health			New Unit	Chemical principles for pharmacy technicians
HLT	Health			New Unit	Biology and physiology for pharmacy
HLT	Health			New Unit	Action and uses of medicines
HLT	Health			New Unit	Gastrointestinal and nutritional medicines
HLT	Health			New Unit	Cardio-respiratory medicines
HLT	Health			New Unit	Central nervous system medicines and anaesthesia
HLT	Health			New Unit	Infections, immunological products and vaccines
HLT	Health			New Unit	Endocrine and genitourinary medicines
HLT	Health			New Unit	Malignant disease, immunosuppressive and musculoskeletal medicines
HLT	Health			New Unit	Eye, ear, nose and dermatological medicines
HLT	Health			New Unit	Manufacture of medicines for use in a pharmacy

Training Package Code	Training Package Name	Qualification Code	Qualification Name	Unit of Competency Code	Unit of Competency Name
HLT	Health			New Unit	Leadership in Hospital Pharmacy
HLT	Health			New Unit	Medication Management

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Attachment B: Stakeholder Consultation Method and Scale

Stakeholder Consultation

Name of Stakeholder	Organisation	Detail method(s) and Scale of Consultation
Technicians Support Services Industry Reference Committee (IRC)		
Tony Badrick	Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia	IRC Member
Karyn Calcino	Health Industry Training	IRC Member
Alma Cassells	Fiona Stanley Hospital	IRC Member
Jodie Davis	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation	IRC Member
Lorah Hickman	Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA)	IRC Member
Kim Lally	Australian Private Hospitals Association	IRC Member
Jane O'Keefe	Sonic Healthcare	IRC Member
Elinor Radke	Federation Sterilising Research Advisory Councils of Australia (FSRACA)	IRC Member
Athanasia (Soula) Siafakas	TAFE NSW, Sydney	IRC Member
Leigh Svendsen	Health Services Union (HSU)	IRC Member
Vicki Swaine	Australian Anaesthesia Allied Health Practitioners (AAAHP)	IRC Member
Hospital Pharmacy Support Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)		
Fawn Birch	NSW Health Wollongong Hospital	TAC Member
Paula Caird	Fiona Stanley Hospital	TAC Member
Karyn Calcino	Health Industry Training	TAC Member
Mark Clifford	Westmead Hospital	TAC Member
Lorah Hickman	Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia	TAC Member
Tess Rivers	Monash Health	TAC Member
Ellisha Vas	Epic Pharmacy, Icon Group	TAC Member

*Additional stakeholders will be added following public consultation.

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