Follow-up Strategic Security Industry Audit
Final Report

Background

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) formerly known as the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF) provides for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to be audited against AQTF standards within the RTO's registration period. The Training Accreditation Council manages RTO audits based on a risk managed approach and addresses identified risks to the Department and the VET sector.

A significant risk identified by the Finance, Property and Business Services Industry Training Council, the Security Agents' Institute of WA and the Commercial Agents' Squad of the WA Police Service, was the standard of delivery and assessment of the Certificate II in Security Guarding (PRS20198). This industry risk led to the Strategic Security Industry Audit in 2001 which involved the audit of 28 RTOs against ARF standards.

The 2001 Strategic Industry Audit identified serious issues regarding the quality of training in the Security Industry. These included:

- RPL provided on a reference from an employer or a resume

- In some instances, videos used as the only medium of instruction

- Simulated assessment carried out in a classroom not meeting workplace standards

- The industry being dollar driven and not outcome driven

The Security Steering Committee comprising of industry representatives, the WA Police and Departmental staff was established to oversee the security industry audit. This committee recommended RTOs identified as having serious non-compliances at the 2001 Security Strategic Industry Audit to be revisited in 2002/2003.

This report provides the outcomes of this follow up audit.

Focus of the Follow-up Strategic Security Industry Audit

The Follow-up Strategic Security Industry focused on the quality of delivery and assessment of the Certificate II in Security (Guarding) in relation to a number of Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) standards.

The focus of the audit were Standards:

1 – Systems for quality training and assessment

7 – The competence of RTO staff

8 – RTO Assessments

9 – Learning and Assessment Strategies

10 – Issuing AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment

Issues

The following issues were identified from the Follow-up Strategic Security Industry Audit:

- The majority of RTOs had difficulties complying with AQTF standards 8 and 9 relating to delivery and assessment strategies.

- A number of RTOs had not reviewed and updated their delivery and assessment strategies as they were awaiting the release of the new Asset Security Industry Training Package which had been delayed.

Audit Methodology

The method chosen for the follow-up security industry audit, consistent with the approach for other TAC strategic industry audits, involved the following three project stages: Stage 1 – Identification of RTOs, Stage 2 – Desktop Audit and Stage 3 – Site Visit. These stages are outlined in detail below:

Stage 1 – Identification of RTOs

The identification of RTOs was the first stage of the follow-up Security Industry Audit and involved compiling two lists of RTOs. The first list based on RTOs that were identified as having serious non-compliances during the 2001 audit. The second list based on RTOs to be selected for "random" audits were determined by the Security Steering Committee on the basis of identified risks; staff or industry alert or complaints received.

The two lists were tabled and discussed at the Security Steering Committee meeting on the 5 September 2002. The Security Steering Committee decided to narrow the list of RTOs down to 13 organisations that would be the focus of the 2003 follow-up Security Industry Audit: These were:

1. NGR Security Systems

2. MarketGrid Pty Ltd

3. Achieve Through Training t/a Australian Centre of Risk Management & investigation studies (Victoria)

4. Falcon Investigations & Security Pty Ltd

5. Group 4 Securitas (New South Wales)

6. Craig Steven Mackellar t/a Paragon Corporate Training

7. Elkbridge Pty Ltd t/a Broadening Horizons

8. Dillon Whitelaw & Associates

9. Perth Store Security Pty Ltd t/a Perth Security Services

10. Security Institute Pty Ltd (Queensland)

11. *Gold Security Group (International Pty Ltd)*

12. *Chubb Security Services Pty Ltd*

13. *Praxis Training and Development Services*

It should be noted that only the first 10 RTOs were audited as two RTOs had relinquished their registration and one RTO was recently audited for renewal of registration.

Stage 2 – Desktop Audit

Letters were sent out in September 2002 to the 13 RTOs advising them that a follow up to the 2001 Strategic Audit was taking place, and requested that they send in their internal audit/self-assessment report, risk management strategy and other supporting documentation (within 3 weeks).

If an RTO had been recently validated/re-registered, they were exempt from sending in their internal audit documentation. This was the case with one organisation, where they submitted their risk management strategy only.

Desktop audits were conducted to:

a. Highlight the requirement of AQTF standard 1.4 (The RTO must conduct an Internal Audit) for RTOs to complete their internal audit annually.
b. Identify which RTOs were compliant with the standards and would not require a site visit.

One RTO was highlighted for both the security follow up audit and the 2002 Strategic Industry Audit of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. They were sent an individual letter which requested internal documentation that would be analysed for both audits.

Eleven (11) internal audit reports were received (one RTO was recently audited another had relinquished RTO status). The internal audit documentation was distributed to the auditors, who conducted a desktop audit on the report. The auditors were requested to submit a short report that identified if the RTO had supplied sufficient information to indicate compliance against each AQTF standard, and to make a recommendation of whether a further site visit would be required.

The desktop audits took 2-3 hours each to complete. Based on the evidence provided, it was recommended that all RTOs should undergo a site visit

The auditor's reports were tabled at a Steering Committee meeting, where the recommendation to site visit all RTOs was supported. Due to restrictions with resources (because of the large number of validations and re-registrations conducted at the end of the year) it was agreed that the majority of the site visits would take place in early 2003, and only urgent/high risk visits would take place in 2002.

Stage 3 – Site Visit

The State Recognition Authorities (SRA) in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales were notified of RTOs registered in their state that were required to take part in the follow up audit.

In November 2002, advice was sent to the 11 RTOs to request their participation in a audit site visit, and noted whether the visit would take place in 2002 or early 2003.

One RTO had withdrawn their registration for Security (Guarding) qualifications, due to insurance problems.

Two RTOs (One registered in NSW the other in WA) were site visited in 2002. The NSW SRA had been notified of the audit findings. All other RTOs were visited in February and March 2003.

The auditors had been allocated to the RTOs after confirmation that there was no conflict of interest. RTOs were sent a letter in January 2003 advising them of the auditor. The auditors were sent a package including the internal audit document, to be returned to the RTO at the site visit with some verbal feedback, and other relevant information.

The time allocation for the site visit was up to 2 hours to review the internal audit documents, and 4 hours for the site visit and writing the report.

Findings

On completion of the follow-up security industry audit, eight RTOs were found compliant, one RTO non compliant and one interstate RTO was not audited as they were not currently delivering security training in Western Australia.

The RTO found non compliant was deemed to be low risk by the Training Accreditation Council as the organisation was currently not delivering security training and had made an undertaking not to deliver or enrol students until the organisation was found to be fully compliant with the AQTF standards.

This organisation has since submitted to the Department a Risk Management Strategy which clearly demonstrates how the organisation will address the issues of non compliance identified at the audit. A follow up security industry audit has been scheduled for this RTO which will be integrated with the organisation's renewal of registration scheduled for September 2003.

The interstate RTO not currently delivering in WA has been contacted by the Department and is required to notify the Department once delivery in WA has been confirmed. It is expected that this RTO will be audited by the end of 2003.

Conclusion

The follow-up audit findings identified that six RTOs were initially found to have non compliances with the AQTF standards. However, five of those six RTOs addressed the non compliance issues within the required timeframe. The primary issue resulting from the follow-up audit was the quality of RTO assessments (Standard 8.1).

The auditors identified significant improvements with the quality of training and delivery since the 2001 Security Strategic Audit. This outcome is positive considering the higher AQTF quality standards that RTOs are required to meet.

In comparison, the 2001 Strategic Industry Audit identified that eleven RTOs had serious non compliances issues.

Overall the RTOs involved in the follow-up audit showed a strong commitment to the principles of quality training and delivery and were receptive to the comments made by the auditor and supportive of the need for ongoing auditing of the industry.

**Ongoing Quality Assurance Arrangements**

The Security Industry Committee will meet again in September/October 2003 to review the follow-up strategic security industry audit. The committee will continue to meet to ensure recommendations and outstanding issues with respect to the audit are addressed, and introduce measures to ensure the ongoing quality of security training in Western Australia.

Steering Committee Recommendations

At a meeting on the 14 May 2003, the Security Steering Committee recommended that consideration be given by the industry to the following recommendations:

- All security RTO's to be offered professional development opportunities in particular with AQTF standards 8 and 9.

- Resources to assist compliance with AQTF standards 8 and 9 to be disseminated to all security registered training organisations.

- All security RTO's to be provided with information and assistance in the development of qualifications and statements of attainment that meet the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) in relation to AQTF Standard 10.2.

AQTF Compliance Results

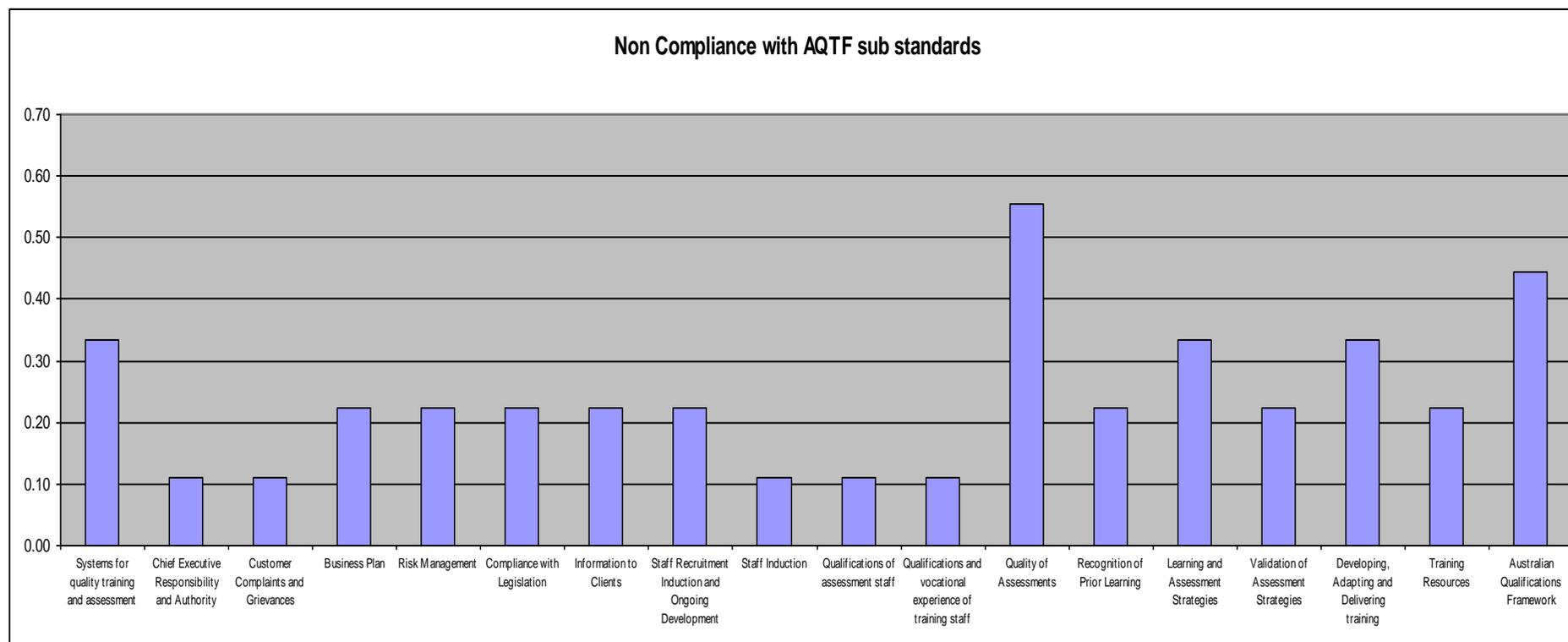Non Compliance with AQTF standards
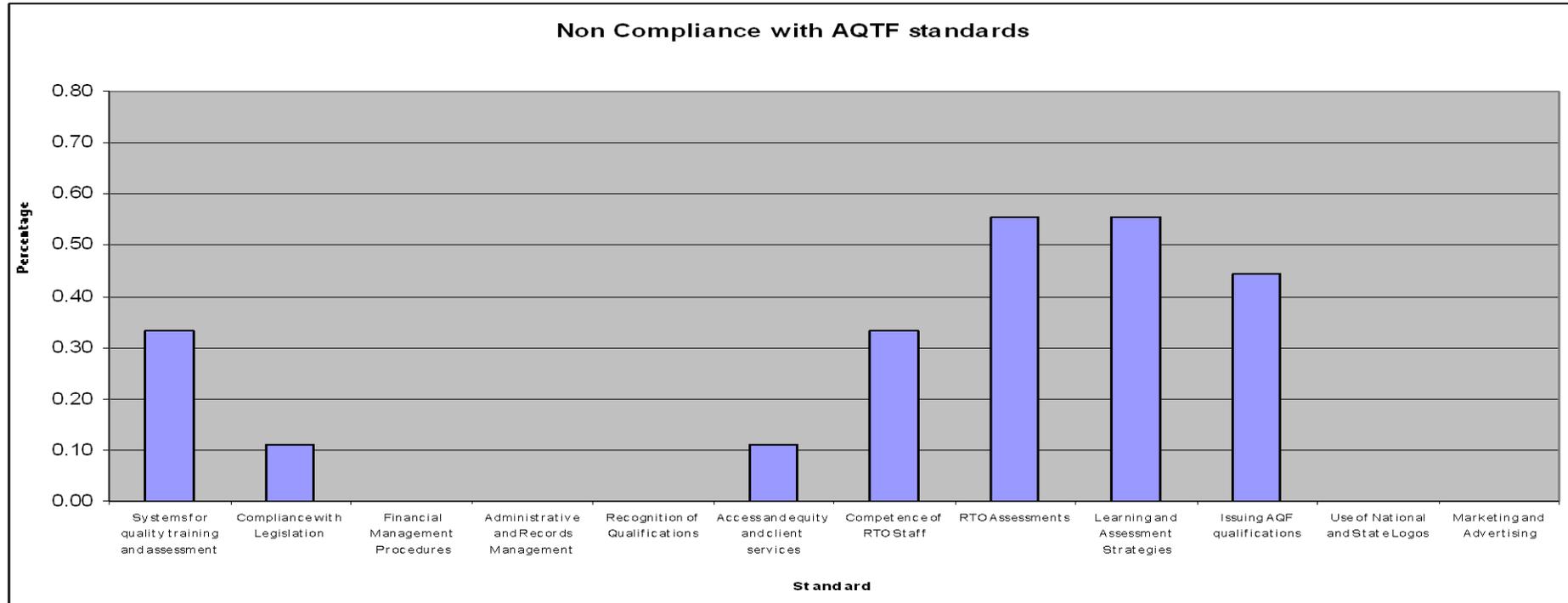
- 3 of the 9 RTOs (33.33%) were found compliant with all standards at the end of the site visit.

- 1 of 9 RTOs remains non compliant (11.11%). This RTO has given an undertaking that they will not be training until the organisation is found compliant.

Standard 8 and 9

- 5 of the 9 RTOs (56%) were found non compliant against standards against 8 and 9 (Learning and Assessment Strategies)

Standard 10

- 4 of the 9 RTOs (44%) were found non compliant against standard 10 (AQF Qualifications).

Non Compliance with AQTF sub standards

Standard 8.1

- 5 of the 9 RTOS (56%) were found non compliant against AQTF standard 8.1 (Quality of Assessments).

Standard 10.2

- 4 of the 9 RTOS (44%) were found non compliant against AQTF standard 10.2 (AQF Qualification).