

AUSMASA Trainer and Assessor VET Career Framework Guidance Manual

VET Capability

Digital capability



Digital capability



This section is part of the VET capability theme.

Digital capability does not follow a predictable pattern across career stages. A new entrant may arrive with high digital literacy from industry, while a long-standing trainer and assessor may have significant gaps in digital literacy. The career stages section describes where digital demands tend to shift in focus, not where capability can be assumed to sit.

What it takes to teach and assess well, and how that develops across a career.

What is it

Digital capability is not something trainers and assessors complete at a point in time and move on from. Instead, it is an ongoing element of the trainer and assessor roles, shaped by both changing industry technologies and evolving Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems.



Digital capability in VET spans 2 distinct areas:

- Vocational digital literacy, including confidence with digital systems, platforms and technologies used in industry. This is a currency issue as much as a digital one and requires ongoing attention throughout a career.
- Administrative and general digital literacy, including confidence with the systems required to function as a VET trainer and assessor. Systems include learning management systems (LMS), student management software (SMS), Microsoft Office applications, email and organisational platforms.

Why it matters

Digital capability gaps are often discovered only after trainers and assessors commence delivery. This can occur at the same time they are learning to teach, navigating new systems and completing the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Where assumptions about baseline digital skills did not match reality, trainers and assessors described feeling pressured and experiencing reduced confidence during an already demanding transition period.

This skill gap can also run in either direction. For example, a recent industry recruit may bring strong vocational digital skills but limited familiarity with administrative systems. Alternatively, a long-standing trainer and assessor may have organisational systems embedded as routine but find that their industry-level digital knowledge has not kept pace.

Neither experience nor career stage reliably predicts digital capability, and long-standing trainers and assessors are not immune to broader digital literacy gaps, as delivery has remained largely practical and face-to-face. These are not equally weighted expectations, and strengths and gaps vary across staff.

For more experienced trainers and assessors, digital demands are more often a source of ongoing strain than an acute challenge. Where digital difficulty goes unacknowledged, it can add to the cumulative pressure of workload and compliance demands. Some trainers and assessors described a tendency to interpret their own digital difficulties as personal shortcomings rather than as shared, structural ones.

Reinforcing the value of organisations naming digital capability as a normal development area rather than an assumed baseline. This positions digital capability as a wellbeing and retention issue, not solely a technical one.

Facilitating a culture in which digital uncertainty can be named honestly, without professional consequences, was described as one of the most effective enablers of digital confidence development among staff.

What we found

Digital capability in day-to-day Vocational Education and Training work

- In teaching and delivery, trainers and assessors described needing confidence across face-to-face, blended and remote environments. This includes preparing digital learning materials, navigating LMS platforms, managing submissions and facilitating technology-supported classrooms.
- Digital confidence in delivery varies widely. Some trainers and assessors adapt quickly, while others described feeling overwhelmed when managing multiple digital tools simultaneously while also delivering live training.
- This challenge is most acute in the new entrant and establishing phases, when tools are unfamiliar, and the cognitive load of learning to teach is already high.
- Digital resources are sometimes overused, with some organisations restricting hard copy materials and mandating digital use.
- Beyond teaching, trainers and assessors described regular interaction with SMS, assessment platforms, scheduling tools, communication systems and shared document environments. Having to navigate multiple platforms can create an ongoing learning demand across all career stages.
- The administrative digital burden compounds when systems do not integrate. Requiring the same information to be entered across multiple platforms.
- Data literacy is a growing expectation. Trainers and assessors are increasingly required to interpret student engagement data, attendance patterns, assessment outcomes and compliance dashboards. Having confidence using platforms does not automatically translate into confidence in interpreting their outputs.

Industry-specific digital systems

- Industry-specific digital knowledge is central to vocational credibility. Trainers and assessors whose industry digital knowledge has not kept pace can find it harder to contextualise training authentically, particularly when supporting students in digitally advanced operational environments.
- In automotive contexts, the electric vehicle (EV) transition has created significant currency pressure. Trainers and assessors need to remain current with:
 - original equipment manufacturer (OEM) diagnostic platforms
 - vehicle software
 - high voltage system monitoring
 - digital measurement tools that evolve regularly.
- In mining contexts, the shift toward automation, remote operations and digital safety monitoring requires familiarity with:
 - remote operation control systems
 - simulation platforms
 - fleet management software
 - digital safety and compliance systems.
- In safety-critical training contexts, digital competence with systems used to monitor, assess and record safety outcomes carries particular significance.
- In some regions, local businesses haven't adopted new technologies yet. This 'lag in adopting digital capability' means that trainers and assessors may lack the real-world experience or digital skills needed to teach these topics with confidence as demand increases.
- This lag is made worse because of the expense and difficulty that can arise for people in regional and remote areas to access the training they need.

What supports digital capability development over time

- Where digital expectations were discussed openly during recruitment or early in induction, trainers and assessors were better prepared, and organisations were better positioned to offer appropriate support.
- Structured orientation that focuses on providing training on essential systems before live use was described as helpful. Orientation that focuses on practical tasks directly connected to teaching work, rather than a comprehensive overview of a system's features, is more effective.
- Timing matters. Orientation delivered too far in advance can result in the information being forgotten. Alternatively, if it is delivered at the moment of first need, then this can also create pressure. Instead, the most effective time to provide an orientation on a system was found to be shortly before first use. This principle applies at entry and whenever a significant system change occurs. System transitions require deliberate support regardless of how experienced the workforce is.
- Peer support was consistently identified as one of the most effective mechanisms for building digital confidence. Colleagues understand the specific systems used in that context, making their support immediately transferable to practice.
- Advanced and expert trainers and assessors often take on an informal digital support role for colleagues. This contribution was frequently unacknowledged despite being a meaningful and regular part of the role. Where this contribution remains unrecognised, it represents a workload and retention risk.
- Practical, task-focused development was preferred over generic digital literacy training. Short sessions addressing a specific, immediate need were transferred more effectively than extended, comprehensive programs.

- Addressing administrative digital burden through the following reduces digital pressure without requiring individual capability uplift:
 - role design
 - separating teaching and administrative functions
 - automating marking processes
 - removing trainers and assessors from enrolment and credit transfer tasks.

Emerging technologies and the shifting landscape

- Digital capability requirements are not static. Learning platforms update, registered training organisation (RTO) systems change, and new technologies are introduced in both education and industry.
- System changes create fresh learning demands even for trainers and assessors who are proficient with the existing tools.
- Experienced trainers and assessors adapt more quickly to new and emerging technologies than they did initially, but support remains necessary.
- Simulation tools and virtual reality are at an exploratory stage in most contexts. The capability demands they create for trainers and assessors, both in operating the tools and making sound assessment judgements, warrant consideration in future development planning.
- The pace of technology change creates challenges for trainers and assessors in regional and remote contexts. As a result, currency activities may be less accessible, and local industry adoption of new technology may lag that of major operations.

What helps

Building trainer and assessor digital capability through clear expectations, ongoing support and practical systems.

Make digital expectations visible from the outset

- Discuss the digital systems and platforms used in the role during recruitment and early in induction.
- Reassure new entrants that variation in starting digital capability is understood and that support will be available.
- Establish a 'no judgement' culture, where digital uncertainty can be named honestly.

Provide structured orientation timed to first use

- Orientate trainers and assessors to essential systems shortly before they need to use them, not weeks in advance and not at the moment of first need.
- Focus orientation on practical tasks directly connected to teaching and assessment work, not comprehensive system overviews.
- Apply the same structured orientation approach whenever significant system changes occur. Career stage does not reduce the need for preparation.
- Where major system transitions are planned, build preparation time well in advance and provide accessible support during and after going live.

Build peer support into digital development

- Create conditions where digitally confident trainers and assessors are available to support colleagues and where that contribution is recognised rather than absorbed into an already full workload.
- Formally acknowledge the digital support contribution of advanced and expert trainers and assessors who help teams navigate new tools.

- Prioritise practical, task-focused peer learning over formal digital training programs where possible.

Address administrative digital burden through role design

- Where multiple systems require duplicate data entry, identify opportunities to automate or consolidate.
- Review which administrative digital tasks can be removed from trainer and assessor responsibilities without affecting compliance or quality outcomes.

Actively maintain industry-specific digital currency

- Treat industry-specific digital knowledge as a vocational currency issue. It requires the same ongoing attention as other aspects of currency.
- Support access to OEM training programs, online manufacturer academies and industry partner development activities.
- For regional trainers and assessors, consider how currency activities can be brought to them rather than requiring travel, such as peer-led development programs and roadshow-style initiatives.
- Return to industry programs are an effective mechanism for maintaining digital currency alongside broader vocational currency.

Industry impacts

Automotive contexts

Automotive industry impacts

- The EV transition is a dominant digital currency pressure. OEM diagnostic platforms, vehicle software and high-voltage system monitoring evolve regularly and require active industry engagement to maintain.
- Access to current EV systems and equipment remains a barrier for many trainers and assessors, particularly in regional areas and smaller providers without OEM relationships.
- Supplier and manufacturer training programs are among the most valued currency mechanisms. They provide direct access to current technology that cannot be replicated through online learning alone.
- Where local EV demand has not yet materialised, trainers and assessors face a lag that is difficult to address through industry engagement alone. Proactive development programs that bring current knowledge to regional trainers and assessors were identified as an effective response.

Strategies to increase digital capability

- Provide regular training in OEM platforms, vehicle software and high-voltage systems to maintain digital capability.
- Use shared resources, partnerships and simulations to improve access to EV tools and equipment.
- Prioritise supplier and manufacturer training to ensure access to current technology.
- Deliver targeted development programs to regional trainers and assessors where local EV exposure is limited.

Mining contexts

Mining industry impacts

- Automation, remote operations and digital safety monitoring are reshaping the digital capability requirements. Trainers and assessors need familiarity with systems they may not encounter through classroom delivery alone.
- In safety critical contexts, digital competence with monitoring, assessment and recording systems is not optional. Gaps in this area have direct implications for the quality of safety training delivered.
- Enterprise RTOs within mining organisations can offer digital development access and current equipment exposure that external providers cannot easily replicate.

Strategies to increase digital capability

- Provide training in automation, remote operations and digital monitoring systems to build capability beyond classroom exposure.
- Strengthen digital competence in safety critical monitoring, assessment and recording systems to support high quality safety training.
- Develop partnerships to access enterprise RTO environments, enabling exposure to current systems and equipment.

When it is working

Indicators that digital capability is being supported effectively

- New trainers and assessors are informed about digital expectations before they commence. Variation in starting capability is acknowledged, and support is offered from the outset.
 - Trainers and assessors can ask for digital help without professional embarrassment. A 'no judgement' culture is visible in practice, not just stated in policy.
 - System orientation is timed close to first use and focused on tasks directly relevant to teaching. Not generic overviews delivered too early.
 - When significant system changes occur, structured preparation is provided for all staff regardless of career stage.
 - Digitally confident trainers and assessors are available to support colleagues, and their contribution is formally recognised.
- Administrative digital burden is actively managed. Role design separates teaching and administrative functions where possible.
 - Industry-specific digital currency is treated as a professional development (PD) priority. Access to current industry systems and technology is actively supported.
 - Regional trainers and assessors have access to digital currency development that does not require them to travel to metropolitan areas.
 - Casual and sessional trainers and assessors are included in digital orientation and development.

What this looks like across the career stages

Expectations around digital capability shifts as trainers and assessors progress through their careers can be supported by strategies specifically aligned to their career stage (refer to Table 1).

Table 1 Strategies to support digital capability across the career stages.

Career stage	Focus	Support requirements
New entrant	Set the staff up properly from the start.	• Provide structured training on key systems before staff are expected to use them live. • Make digital orientation a planned part of induction, alongside mentoring and wellbeing support. • Allow a settling-in period before a full teaching load so staff can build confidence without delivery pressure.
Establishing	Build confidence through practical support.	• Move beyond simply completing tasks to learning how to adapt digital tools for different teaching situations. • Use buddy systems to encourage informal peer support and build confidence in solving common technical issues independently.
Advanced	Use digital tools to improve teaching quality.	• Use digital tools thoughtfully to improve curriculum design and assessment quality. • Involve trainers and assessors in team decisions about how systems are used. • Offer return to industry opportunities to help trainers and assessors stay current with both industry technology and education technology.
Expert	Recognise and support digital leadership.	• Encourage experienced staff to support colleagues during digital transitions and system changes. • Recognise that while this contribution is often informal, it plays an important role in successful digital adoption.

Success stories

Return to industry program: maintaining vocational digital currency

Consultation described an annual return-to-industry program that allows trainers and assessors to immerse themselves in current operational environments for up to two weeks during non-delivery periods.

The program builds capability in new and emerging skill areas, including evolving digital systems, while also strengthening relationships with local industry.

Trainers and assessors returned with renewed vocational confidence and updated knowledge of how digital systems were actually being used in current operations. Not just how they had been configured when training resources were originally developed.

Digital assessment workflows: preparation, determining outcome

Targeted interview feedback described an organisation that adopted fully digital assessment workflows, with observation records and competency sign-offs completed in real time on mobile devices in the field.

Where the transition was supported by structured orientation, a clear rationale, and accessible peer support during the learning period, trainers and assessors described the change as reducing the administrative burden of paper-based recording over time.

Where other organisations had introduced similar tools without equivalent preparation, the experience was described as adding pressure rather than reducing it.

Success stories

Trainer and assessor-led EV capability program: bringing current knowledge to regional trainers

Targeted interview feedback described a national program through which experienced automotive trainers and assessors with current EV knowledge delivered structured development to colleagues in EV diagnostic systems, high-voltage safety, and OEM-specific platforms.

The initiative included a regional roadshow component. Taking training directly to areas where local industry demand had not yet generated the conditions for trainers and assessors to maintain currency through industry engagement alone.

The program was described as bringing current EV capability directly to trainers and assessors in areas where access to industry-based currency activities was limited.

Continue exploring

You'll find additional tools, resources and related guidance in the **Digital Capability** section of the AUSMASA Trainer and Assessor VET Career Framework, including practical self-assessment tools, supporting guidance and links to related topics.





**Mining and
Automotive**
Skills Alliance

The Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance (AUSMASA) is a Jobs and Skills Council funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

© Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance (AUSMASA)