



VET career development stages guide

Career stages in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) workforce - what they look like and what they need

Part of the AUSMASA Trainer and Assessor VET Career Framework

About this reference guide

VET careers in automotive and mining typically develop across 4 stages: new entrant, establishing, advanced and expert. Each stage has its own characteristics, focus and support needs. Understanding where someone is in their career helps managers have better conversations, provide more targeted support and make more effective use of the experience and capability in their team.

The career phases outlined in this guide are intended as a reference point, not a prescription. Career progression is not defined solely by time working in the sector, and people will move through stages differently and at different paces. The intent is to provide a shared language for thinking about and discussing career development in VET.

How to use this guide

Use it as a starting point for career conversations, not as a performance assessment tool. The stages are approximate and overlapping. A trainer can exhibit characteristics of more than one stage simultaneously. What matters is the conversation it opens, not the category it assigns



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Technique	New entrant	Establishing	Advanced	Expert
What characterises this stage	- Recent transition from industry into VET - Focus on managing delivery and assessment obligations - Completing or progressing through the TAE - Building confidence with systems, processes and learner groups - High support needs, this is a vulnerable stage for departure	- Independent delivery across a range of units - Teaching practice is developing and becoming more confident - Beginning to look beyond immediate delivery demands - Building relationships within the team and with industry - Starting to take on small responsibilities beyond the role	- Confident and capable across delivery and assessment - Contributing beyond the classroom in meaningful ways - Often carrying responsibility not reflected in title or pay - Strong professional identity as a VET practitioner - At risk of disengagement if contribution is unrecognised	- Deep vocational and pedagogical expertise - Known and respected within the organisation and sector - Influence extends beyond a single team or program - Career defined by contribution rather than advancement - Critical knowledge and relationships at risk if not transferred



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Technique	New entrant	Establishing	Advanced	Expert
Primary focus	- Establishing competence in delivery and assessment - Completing the TAE - Navigating compliance and administrative requirements - Building rapport with learners and colleagues	- Deepening and refining teaching and assessment practice - Building active industry connections - Taking on lateral contributions as opportunities arise - Beginning to consider longer-term career direction	- Contributing beyond delivery in curriculum, compliance, mentoring or industry engagement - Supporting and developing colleagues - Building external networks and reputation - Preparing for leadership or specialist roles	- Mentoring and knowledge transfer - Sector influence through advisory and representational roles - Sustaining quality and standards across the organisation - Succession and legacy, ensuring what they know is shared and sustained within the organisation



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Technique	• New entrant	• Establishing	• Advanced	• Expert
What the organisation can provide	- Structured induction covering both delivery and administrative obligations - A dedicated mentor or buddy - Realistic workload in the first year - Regular check-ins and psychological safety to ask questions - Early glimpses of what a VET career can become	- Opportunities to contribute beyond delivery, validation, projects, and mentoring newer colleagues - Access to professional development - Early career conversations about aspiration and direction - Industry engagement support	- Formal recognition of contribution beyond the role, title, time or pay - Regular career conversations that go beyond performance - Acting opportunities and EOI processes for senior roles - Inclusion in significant decisions where their expertise is relevant	- Meaningful contribution opportunities that reflect their expertise - Succession planning, structured handover of specialist knowledge - Recognition of their role as a sector asset, not just an employee - Phased transition options as they approach retirement or a career change

Learn more about the Trainer and Assessor VET Career Framework

Explore more practical tools, guides and resources supporting VET capability, wellbeing, industry engagement and career development