

Reviewing capability-building design

A design review tool to help organisations examine whether current capability-building approaches support well-being, inclusion and sustainable practice

Part of the AUSMASA Trainer and Assessor VET Career Framework



About this tool

Consultation identified that capability building activities often grow over time without being reviewed for cumulative workload, equity or impact. This tool responds to the capability design and sustainability risks described in the Wellbeing and Support section of the Guidance Document by supporting organisations in reviewing whether learning expectations are helping trainers practise well.

Who the tool is for

Leaders, managers, capability teams and those responsible for professional development design.

Use this tool:

- when introducing or reviewing capability initiatives
- when trainers report learning fatigue or overload
- during periods of system, cohort or delivery change
- alongside DEI, workforce or capability planning activities.

How to use this tool

Use the tool selectively as a conversation guide, not a scoring exercise. Focus on patterns, systems and design choices. Use insights to inform practical adjustments rather than additional documentation or new learning requirements.



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Name: _____

Role: _____

Date: _____

Organisation: _____

Complete the self-assessment below based on your current role and experience.

Capability-building design tool

1. Mapping current capability-building activity

Briefly identify the capability-building activities currently in place.

- What capability-building activities are currently offered or expected?
- Which are formal (e.g. structured learning, mentoring roles), and which are informal (e.g. peer support, "go-to" advice)?
- Which activities are time-bound, and which are ongoing?
- Where has capability building grown organically without clear design or boundaries?

2. Workload and equity impact

Reflect on how capability-building activities affect workload and equity.

- Which capability activities replace or reduce workload, and which are added on top?
- Where does learning rely on unpaid, discretionary or after-hours effort?
- Who finds it easiest to access capability opportunities, and who may miss out?
- Are some people carrying disproportionate learning, mentoring or support load because they are capable, visible or trusted?



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<p>3. Timing and context</p> <p>Consider how capability building aligns with career phase, transition and change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is capability support introduced during: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ entry into VET? ○ movement between career phases? ○ system, compliance or delivery change? • Where is capability development reactive rather than planned? • Are expectations adjusted during transition, or does learning intensity increase at the same time as workload? 	
<p>4. Design quality</p> <p>Examine how capability-building activities are designed in practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is learning embedded in real work, or layered on top? • Are expectations clear, bounded and realistic? • Is learning supported with examples, guidance and follow-up? • Is mentoring or coaching clearly defined, time-bound and recognised as work? 	
<p>5. Well-being and inclusion signals</p> <p>Reflect on signals that capability building is helping or harming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where does capability development reduce uncertainty or anxiety? • Where does it increase cognitive load, pressure or second-guessing? • What feedback are trainers giving — explicitly or indirectly — about learning expectations? • Who appears energised by capability opportunities, and who appears fatigued or disengaged? 	

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6. Redesign and decision points

Use the insights above to identify practical adjustments.

- Which capability-building activities should:
 - continue as they are?
 - be redesigned?
 - be paused or stopped?
- What one design change would most improve well-being without reducing quality?
- What support or resource shift is needed to make that change viable?

7. Translating redesign decisions into action

After identifying capability-building activities to continue, redesign, pause or stop, the next step is to translate those decisions into clear, bounded action. Use the prompts below to support follow-through without over-engineering.

- What is the specific design change being made? (For example: reducing frequency, embedding learning into delivery, adding protected time, clarifying boundaries)
- What will stop or change because of this decision? (Naming what will no longer be expected helps prevent drift.)
- Who needs to be aware of this change for it to work in practice? (For example: trainers, mentors, coordinators, capability teams)
- What support or resource needs to shift to make this change viable? (For example: time allocation, role clarity, system support)

8. Aligning capability design with existing planning

Capability-building redesign is most effective when it is linked to existing planning and review processes, rather than managed separately.

Consider how redesign decisions will connect with:

- the DEI Action Plan (5.3), particularly priority focus areas



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workforce or capability planning cycles • mentoring or support structures already in place • upcoming transitions or known periods of change <p>Where appropriate, capture redesign decisions as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a small number of agreed actions • a time-bound trial • an adjustment to existing practice 	
<p>9. Checking impact over time</p> <p>After redesign decisions are implemented, use a light-touch review to understand their impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has become easier as a result of this change? • Where has pressure reduced — or shifted? • What feedback are trainers giving, formally or informally? • Are there any unintended consequences that need adjustment? <p>Review does not need to rely on formal metrics</p> <p>Narrative feedback, observation and check-ins are valid sources of insight.</p> <p>If pressure remains high, this may indicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further redesign is needed, or • a system or workload issue that capability development alone cannot resolve. 	

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If this tool indicates that capability-building is adding pressure rather than supporting practice, organisations may choose to:

- pause before adding new learning requirements
- review whether expectations align with career stage, role scope and workload
- adjust timing, format or focus of capability activities rather than expanding them
- test small changes to design or sequencing before broader rollout

This tool supports thoughtful review and improvement over time. It does not prescribe solutions or require immediate 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