



STAR RATING SCHEME

INFORMATION BROCHURE

July 2008

The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence promotes the importance of trades and skills and recognises excellence in trades and skills education and training through:

- SkillsOne – an integrated platform of television programming, interactive website and media partnerships;
- the Star Rating Scheme, which awards high performing training organisations with gold star ratings; and
- the Trades and Skills Teaching Awards which recognise excellence in trades & skills education and training.

Distinguishing excellence in trades and skills training

Employers are asking:

Where can I find a training provider who will be flexible enough for my business?

Which training provider has the most contemporary equipment?

How do I know which training provider will give the best support to my apprentice?

The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence has established a scheme to distinguish excellence in trades and skills training by evaluating trade areas within training providers. Those organisations which are considered excellent have their achievements recognised by receiving a one, two or three gold star rating.

Employers and apprentices will benefit from information that helps them differentiate between the many providers offering training in trade skills. Ultimately, the scheme will raise the bar for trade skills training in Australia.

Providers who participate will receive support in promoting their products and services, cross-fertilisation with industry, and expert feedback which will help drive further improvement and grow their business.

What is The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence?

The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence promotes the importance of trades and skills and recognises excellence in trades and skills education and training through:

- SkillsOne – an integrated platform of television programming, interactive website and media partnerships;
- the Star Rating Scheme, which awards high performing training organisations with gold star ratings; and
- the Trades and Skills Teaching Awards which recognise excellence in trades & skills education and training.

The Institute's focus is currently on the following trades and skills areas:

- Automotive
- Building & Construction
- Electrical
- Hospitality & Personal Services
- Manufacturing
- Metals & Engineering
- Mineral Resources
- Rural & Farming

About the Star Rating Scheme

Individual faculties, schools, teams or divisions within RTOs are evaluated by The Institute using industry experts and industry designed criteria. Those considered excellent are recognised with a One Gold Star, Two Gold Star or Three Gold Star rating by The Institute. Applicants that have not made sufficient progress to be awarded a star rating will receive no rating but will be encouraged to address improvement opportunities and reapply. The Institute also publishes a capability statement for each RTO which explains the school or faculty's strengths and the level of service an employer can expect to receive.

The Scheme uses criteria defined by industry, and an evaluation team made up of accredited evaluators and industry-nominated experts. It offers highly credible feedback at school and faculty level of RTOs in regard to training delivery and outcomes that deliver to industry requirements.

Evaluations are carried out against three broad criteria:

1. A focus on the needs of enterprises and learners
2. Excellent trainers and assessors, and contemporary resources
3. Empowered enterprises and learners

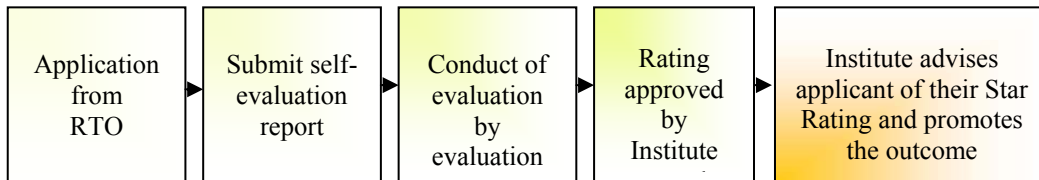
The full criteria can be downloaded from The Institute's website www.itse.com.au

The criteria are the same across all industry areas, but industry-specific examples of good practice have been developed for each industry to provide the context for the evaluation.

The evaluation process

The evaluations are coordinated by the relevant Industry Reference Group. The process commences with a self evaluation by the applicant. This is followed by a site visit by an evaluation team who verify the information provided in the self evaluation report and prepare a recommendation for a rating.

An overview of the process is depicted in the following diagram:



What participants receive

Independent feedback from the evaluation team is provided to all participants to help drive improvement within their team.

Recipients of a rating will also receive a valuable promotional package. Promotional assistance will include some or all of the following:

- A media release
- A TV infomercial about the RTO to be aired on SkillsOne Television
- Inclusion on a website honour roll
- An article on The Institute’s digital web platform SkillsOne.com.au
- Announcement story on SkillsOne News which appears on SkillsOne.com.au
- Three Gold Star recipients will also receive an invitation to join an exclusive Circle of Excellence, providing access to professional development and networking opportunities.

Providers who are evaluated also receive a capability statement. This is a short document that outlines the strengths and unique features of the applicant. Capability statements can be used by the provider for promotional purposes and they are published on The Institute website as a guide for employers and apprentices in choosing a provider.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to an RTO or a faculty, school, team or division within an RTO delivering training within any of the eight industry areas represented by Industry Reference Groups.

In order to be evaluated as a separate entity, the school, faculty, team or division of an RTO applying must have substantial authority within the

RTO to manage its training and assessment processes and set strategic direction for those activities covered by the evaluation criteria.

If a faculty or school offers trade qualifications covered by more than one IRG and wishes to be evaluated for all qualifications, separate applications to each relevant IRG are required.

How much time will it take?

Completing the self-evaluation template should only take half a day to a day (one person coordinating and consulting with key staff), depending on the size of the faculty, school team or division. A site visit to a single site will generally take one day.

What are the fees for an evaluation.

The fees for evaluations will be reviewed by ITSE in July 2008. Until The Institute has completed 150 evaluations, the fee per evaluation is \$3,000 plus annual licence fees of \$1000 in years 2 and 3.

An RTO that has an additional campus/site within the same industry area evaluated concurrently will pay only the annual licence fees of \$1000 – the upfront fee of \$3000 will be waived.

A discount may be approved by the Scheme Administrator in certain circumstances where concurrent evaluations are conducted across different industry areas. For example, where manufacturing and engineering are delivered within the same department.

When do I pay my fee?

The Scheme Administrator will invoice your organisation after you submit your self-evaluation documentation.

How do I know evaluators have the capability to evaluate my trade or skills area?

Evaluators are selected based on a set of recruitment guidelines. The guidelines ensure that evaluators have integrity and credibility.

All accredited evaluators receive training and ongoing skills development to ensure consistency in evaluation team performance and calibration between evaluators and teams.

Evaluators also use the same tools and templates to ensure consistent and rigorous evaluation processes.

How will employers be able to identify an outstanding provider?

Employers are able to check on The Institute's website to find out the various ratings which have been allocated. They will be able to find all relevant information about the provider on the website, including their capability statements.

How is the scheme promoted to employers?

A comprehensive communication strategy combining television, interactive web platforms and traditional print media is used to promote the scheme and to provide employers and apprentices with the information they need to make informed choices.

The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence has developed a user generated, multi-media communication platform incorporating SkillsOne Television and SkillsOne.com.au.

SkillsOne Television showcasing trade skills through a series of television interviews and case studies, while SkillsOne.com.au is a cutting edge, user generated digital web platform. It allows viewers and web users to access content about SkillsOne Television programs and provides a resource for students, school leavers, teachers, career counsellors, RTOs and employers.

In addition, The Institute and its Industry Reference Groups, promote the scheme through their extensive employer networks.

How will participation in the scheme help my RTO?

- The scheme provides a structured way for providers to assess how well they are meeting the needs of clients
- Feedback is provided to participants to help drive further improvements
- Recipients of a gold star rating receive significant promotional and marketing support, including a capability statement outlining the unique features of their school or faculty, school, team or division
- Participants benefit from cross-fertilisation with industry and building networks within and across industry sectors, including through membership of a Circle of Excellence for those receiving three gold stars.

What if we get a lower than expected rating?

At least until January 2008, the RTO will have the choice of having their rating and capability statement published by The Institute.

Feedback is provided to the RTO about their strengths and opportunities for improvement in order to get a higher rating next time.

Is it a double-up with AQTF 2007?

No. Even though the principles underpinning excellence in the VET sector are standard, the Scheme has a very different focus from the AQTF 2007 in that it has been purpose built by industry to recognise excellence within specific areas of training organisations:

- It applies to faculties, schools teams or divisions within eight identified trade skill shortage areas, rather than whole Registered Training Organisations.
- It is voluntary and has no compliance aspects.
- The criteria have been defined by industry and relate only to the most important outcomes for businesses and learners.

It is expected that work done in various faculties, schools, teams or divisions of an RTO for the Star Rating Scheme will contribute usefully to an application the RTO might make within the AQTF 2007 Excellence Framework.

How do I apply for a Star Rating Scheme evaluation?

Complete the application form at:

http://www.tradeskills.com.au/star_rating_scheme_02.html

More information

For more information about the Star Rating Scheme visit www.itse.com.au or contact the Scheme Coordinator on 02 8314 7304 or email helen.singleton@itse.com.au .