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ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Qualifications Strategy

Effective from 1 January 2017

Compliance with the ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Qualifications Strategy is a performance expectation in all funding agreements between ACT Health and specialist alcohol and other drug treatment and support services

This policy was developed with input from the ACT ATOD Workers Group and the Drug Services Forum

1. Background and Introduction

The ACT AOD Qualifications Strategy (previously the Minimum Qualification Strategy) was introduced in 2006 and aims to ensure the development and maintenance of a competent and professional alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) workforce in the ACT. It also aims to ensure that all ATOD workers in the ACT have a shared minimum knowledge and skill base.

While it is acknowledged that there is an extensive depth of expertise and skills within the ACT ATOD workforce, the Qualifications Strategy supports workers to have accredited credentials specific to their field. The Qualifications Strategy is based on nationally recognised standards through the provision of industry endorsed and delivered training.

ACT Health provides funding to support the development and implementation of the Qualifications Strategy through the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) including the provision of subsidised training places to eligible workers.

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This policy document outlines the Qualifications Strategy policy with reference to key training components, eligibility criteria, priority allocation and roles.

2. About the Qualifications Strategy

In order to meet the Qualifications Strategy requirements all specialist ACT ATOD services (funded by ACT Health) will require relevant staff to successfully complete:

1. A qualification in ATOD or addiction studies which is equivalent to, or above, the Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs (CHC43215).

OR

2. A health, social, or behavioural science related tertiary (university) qualification plus the 'Alcohol and Other Drug Skill Set':

CHCAOD001	Work in an alcohol and other drugs context
CHCAOD004	Assess needs of clients with AOD issues
CHCAOD006	Provide interventions for people with AOD issues
CHCAOD009	Develop and review individual AOD treatment plans

AND

3. A First Aid qualification equivalent to the following units:

HLTAID001	Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation
HLTAID002	Provide basic emergency life support
HLTAID003	Provide first aid

3. Application

The Qualifications Strategy is mandatory for all workers employed by specialist ACT ATOD services funded by ACT Health who directly provide AOD services to clients (e.g. assessment, counselling, group work, case work).¹

4. Timeline

Workers should either:

- Meet the minimum Qualifications Strategy requirements; or
- Have an agreed plan and timeline with their agency to engage with the Qualifications Strategy within 12 months of employment and completed within 3 years.

5. The Qualifications Strategy is not an entry requirement

The Qualifications Strategy is not an entry requirement for employment.

6. Subsidies and Support

ACT Health provides funding to support the development and implementation of the Qualifications Strategy through ATODA including the provision of subsidised training places to eligible workers.

¹ If a service identifies a worker who is not involved in the direct provision of AOD services, but wishes to undertake the training through the Qualification Strategy, they must contact ATODA to discuss additional requirements (e.g. a service will need to make sure that the worker can fulfil the service delivery focused assessments).

7. Prioritisation of Training Places

Access to subsidised training places will be provided in line with the following priorities:

1. New workers who directly provide AOD services to clients (who are yet to meet the Qualifications Strategy requirements)
2. Existing workers who directly provide AOD services to clients who have previously undertaken the required training but would like to refresh their skills
3. Other workers (on a case by case basis)²

8. Services' roles in supporting the implementation of the Qualifications Strategy

Worker payment to participate in the Qualifications Strategy and backfill

As part of the services' commitment to a continuous learning culture, ACT Health expects:

- That subsidies for training and assessment places through the Qualifications Strategy will be available to services who pay their workers to participate; and
- Backfill costs where incurred by services for workers participating in the Qualifications Strategy to be met from within the services operational budgets.

Contributing to Qualifications Strategy planning activities

Services will need to report on their participation in the Qualifications Strategy to ACT Health through their reporting requirements as outlined in Service Funding Agreements.

Additionally, each service will be asked to contribute information to ATODA on expected demand from their workers for Qualifications Strategy training (i.e. the anticipated number of workers that will need to undertake First Aid, the AOD Skill Set and / or the remaining units from the Certificate IV in AOD within the upcoming 12-month period).

9. Training Providers

Industry providers with specialist expertise in ATOD training will be sourced for the ATOD specific components of the Qualifications Strategy. Given the lack of industry providers in the ACT, this training may continue to be sourced from an interstate provider.

10. Governance and Implementation

Compliance with the ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Qualifications Strategy is a

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ACT Health funds ATODA to develop and implement the Qualifications Strategy with the ATOD sector. ATODA will utilise the following advisory structures to inform the Qualification Strategy implementation:

- Workers Group
- Drug Services Forum

Communication

ATODA will maintain communication mechanisms for the Qualifications Strategy including via the ATODA website and eBulletin. An information package will also be developed six monthly to describe funded training opportunities and application processes.

Monitoring and evaluation

ATODA will monitor and evaluate the Qualifications Strategy through a range of mechanisms including:

- Implementation data (e.g. enrolment and completion rates)
- Undertaking evaluative activities as required. In the past this has included surveys following each training session and external evaluations.

The ACT ATOD workforce will be surveyed regarding the Qualifications Strategy once in a three year period through the ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Sector Workforce and Remuneration Profile