



ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Qualifications Strategy

Version 3.0

Effective from August 2024

1. Background and Introduction

The ACT ATOD Qualifications Strategy 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 a 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.

Compliance with the ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Qualifications Strategy is a performance requirement in all funding agreements between the ACT Health Directorate and services specifically funded to deliver specialist alcohol, tobacco and other drug treatment, support, and harm reduction interventions.

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

2. Requirements to meet the Qualifications Strategy

In order to meet the requirements of the Qualifications Strategy all ACT services specifically funded by the ACT Health Directorate to deliver specialist alcohol, tobacco and other drug treatment, support and harm reduction interventions will require relevant staff to successfully complete the requirements under A and B:

A. 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

A health, social, or behavioural science related tertiary (university) qualification plus the 'Alcohol and Other Drugs Skill Set' (or equivalent)

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

An Explanatory Note will be developed through a consultative process—to be undertaken after August 2024—and attached to this document to clarify the requirements as they relate to:

- staff who hold an Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate IV or Diploma in a related field (e.g. Certificate IV in Community Services, Certificate IV in Mental Health);
- staff with specialised roles and qualifications working in the ATOD sector (e.g. social workers, counsellors);
- qualifications or training for specific skills that are not included in the Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs (or equivalent) but that may be necessary for the delivery of specific interventions (e.g. smoking cessation);
- staff seeking Recognition of Prior Learning or course credits; and
- staff employed in Peer Worker roles (particularly in relation to the future development of ATOD Peer Worker-specific qualifications).

AND

B. A current First Aid qualification equivalent to the following units:

HLTAID009	Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation
HLTAID0010	Provide basic emergency life support
HLTAID0011	Provide first aid

3. Workers covered by the QS

The Qualifications Strategy is mandatory for all workers employed by services specifically funded by the ACT Health Directorate to deliver specialist alcohol, tobacco and other drug treatment, support and harm reduction interventions, and who directly provide ATOD services to clients (e.g. assessment, counselling, group work, case work).

4. Timeline

Workers should either:

- Meet the 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 fulfil requirements 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

Workers who wish to meet the Qualification Strategy through attainment of the Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs (CHC43215) should take advantage of the Fee-free TAFE scheme offered jointly by the Australian and ACT Governments (until 2026).

ATODA (through its funding from the ACT Health Directorate) offers subsidised training places to eligible

workers (see below) to support the development and implementation of the AOD Skill Set units of the Qualifications Strategy.

7. Prioritisation of Training Places

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

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

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

Worker payment to participate in the Qualifications Strategy and backfill

As part of their commitment to a continuous learning culture, the expectation is that services will actively support workers to participate in training and assessment as necessary—for example, and as appropriate to the context: allowing workers to attend during work hours; organising rosters to enable attendance; etc. Backfill costs, where incurred by services for workers participating in the Qualifications Strategy, are to be met from within the services' operational budgets.

Contributing to Qualifications Strategy planning activities

Each service will be asked to contribute information to ATODA on anticipated demand for Qualifications Strategy training, for the purposes of planning for training provision.

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

ATODA will develop and implement the Qualifications Strategy in partnership with ATOD services. ATODA will utilise the following advisory structures to inform the Qualifications Strategy implementation:

- ACT ATOD Executives Group
- ACT ATOD Workers Group

Communication

ATODA will maintain communication mechanisms for the Qualifications Strategy including via the

¹ If a service identifies a worker who is not involved in the direct provision of ATOD services but wishes to undertake the training through the Qualifications 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). Workers employed by ACT-based organisations but providing ATOD services in NSW-based programs may be considered for subsidised training places, but only if places remain following allocation to ACT-based workers.

ATODA website and ACT ATOD Sector Bulletin. An information package will also be developed ahead of available training 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.

Review and version tracking		
Version	Effective from	Next Review Date
V1.0	1 July 2010	n/a
V2.0	1 January 2017	n/a
V3.0	August 2024	31 August 2026

Previous versions of this policy were developed with input from the ACT ATOD Workers Group and the Drug Services Forum. Version 3.0 has received additional input from the ACT ATOD Executives Group and the ATOD Policy Team of the ACT Health Directorate; and has been endorsed by the ATODA Board at its meeting in August 2024.