

Emma Marks: Welcome to today's webinar on distance learning. My name is Emma Marks and I am the Assistant General Manager of Regulatory Operations at ASQA. Today, I also welcome Judith Keller who is the acting manager of Regulatory Operations in Brisbane.

Emma Marks: Now ASQA decided to conduct this webinar based on the feedback we received when we launched the distance delivery webpage. This webpage can be found under 'education resources' on our website and it has recently been updated to give some insights from stakeholders in the sector. The feedback and reaction to this webpage was immense. Site visits to this page after it launched even beat the ASQA homepage for a few weeks there, so there was a huge amount of interest. Now, this webinar today is also the largest ASQA has ever hosted and that is incredibly exciting, but as a presenter, it is also very nerve-wracking.

Emma Marks: So, before we start the session, I do need to go through some basics about how the webinar works. In terms of audio, you would've joined the session using your computer's speaker system by default. If you would prefer to listen to the webinar by telephone, select telephone in audio panel and the dial-in information will be displayed. For this webinar, all participants have their audio muted, so you should only hear Judith or I talking.

Emma Marks: Today's session will run for 60 minutes. We will devote the bulk of the session to giving you information and advice on how to plan, prepare, implement and review distance delivery techniques, so your RTO remains compliant with aspects of the Standards. It is a huge amount to get through, but we also allocated time at the end of the presentation to respond to some of your questions about distance learning. You can submit text questions by typing them into the questions' pane of your control panel and I've already been advised we've started to receive some already.

Emma Marks: From experience with the last session, we will get quite a lot of questions, so we'll aim to group them as themes. For any questions that we can't get to or for really popular topics, we'll consider these outside of the session and it may result in updating our FAQs in our website or other education resources. However, please keep the questions broad and relevant to the entire audience. We're unable to answer questions specific to individual situations. And finally, this presentation is being recorded. In the coming days, we'll upload this to our ASQA website and you will receive a copy of this. Next slide, please.

Emma Marks: So, distance delivery is a really big topic. Now, while in this session we are going to talk generally about distance learning, there will be a specific section on delivering during COVID-19. We will predominantly be discussing the Standards for RTO's requirements only. CRICOS delivery under normal circumstances has specific requirements about the amount of the delivery that can be provided by distance or online. While these requirements have been relaxed, it is a temporary measure only. So, when we're discussing some of today's topics if we refer to CRICOS, we'll be discussing those normal requirements that are

provided with a tier two. We'll discuss the temporary changes in the COVID-19 section.

Emma Marks: In terms of terms and definitions, we have used those that have been provided by NCVET. They published a report titled, 'Online delivery of VET qualifications: current use and outcomes in 2019' and it is a really good document, particularly to receive feedback on student experiences and attributes to good practice. This is available online on the NCVET website.

Emma Marks: Distance learning is an umbrella term and that covers the ways in which training can be provided by an RTO remotely to a student without face-to-face contact at a site. RTOs have been using distance learning for decades and what distance learning encompasses has changed, as technology becomes easier and cheaper. Perhaps the most common and widely recognized example of this is online learning.

Emma Marks: Now online learning is simply training that is delivered via the internet. Online learning often uses a learning management system, or LMS, particularly when an entire course is delivered online. So, LMS is the software and it can be where a learner accesses all of their resources and submits all of their assignments. They can also allow RTOs to track progression of a learner. However, there are quite a few technological advances in recent years and a RTO can create their own virtual learning environment without an LMS, like combining multiple tools. Now, I'm currently studying at the moment and where I'm studying they do use an LMS. They use Blackboard, but they also use other tools as well to complement Blackboard, so you can really mix it up.

Emma Marks: Online learning can be synchronous or asynchronous and you can use aspects of both in your delivery. Now synchronous online learning means that the students and the trainers participate at the time but in different locations. So, a webinar, particularly if the presenter and attendees can engage, a Zoom meeting, a Skype call or video, Microsoft Teams. There are really so many out there which people are now using and becoming quite familiar with. You can even have one-on-one training and most people now have a phone which has video capabilities and that's a really good service to have that one-on-one delivery. The key with synchronous learning is that it is real-time interaction using a specific resource at a specific time with specific people. Asynchronous online learning occurs when students and trainers are not necessarily expected to participate at the same time. So, that's your pre-recorded presentations, your self-paced modules, discussion boards, trainer notes. Asynchronous is probably what you would call self-paced learning.

Emma Marks: Now, distance learning can also include other types of delivery that are not conducted in the classroom, but are also not conducted online. When I first started in an RTO, we used distance delivery and that comprised of hard copy workbooks or textbooks, which was then supplemented with email and telephone contact from the trainer. I do suspect that RTOs who are really trying to get up and running to continuing operating will use non-web-based learning

methods quite a lot, at least to start. These can also be helpful though to learners who are in areas and locations where computer and internet access is difficult to come by. Next slide, please.

Emma Marks: Planning for distance learning. So, distance delivery can be fantastic, particularly in the VET sector. Australia has a vast geographical area and it's a good thing to be able to develop vocation competencies no matter where you are located. In adult education, there are learners who need to or prefer to learn out of normal work hours because of their commitments. An RTO can offer greater flexibility in unit choice or even just in the order of units that are being delivered. It really does open up a lot of access.

Emma Marks: But in planning for delivery, the first thing you need to consider is can you actually do it. So, essential to any delivery method is the requirement to ensure that the integrity of the specific training package or an accredited course, requirements will be maintained. Training packages and better accredited courses are developed to meet the training needs of specific industries and are also reviewed and updated to ensure they remain current and relevant. The training package requirements and specifically when it comes to the assessment requirements of a unit, may mean that a unit cannot be delivered by distance people, or it might be able to be delivered by distance, but it's not really cost-effective or suitable to do so. For example, if the requirements might identify specific equipment that has to be provided which is really difficult to come by or is quite expensive. Some units require mandatory work placement or assessments to be conducted in a workplace and you do also need to consider those requirements.

Emma Marks: But remember that distance delivery does not mean that you have to deliver 100% by distance. You could provide theoretical training online and you then conduct some assessment this way and then have students go to class or a workplace to continue learning or be assessed in a practical setting with the resources that they need. You do just need to ensure that your documented training and assessment strategies clearly express how each part of the course will be provided so that all workplace skills and knowledge requirements are addressed.

Emma Marks: Now another thing to consider when deciding if you can delivery a course by distance is whether there are any additional regulatory or contractual requirements your RTO must meet. So, these are the requirements that sit outside the NVR Act or the Standards for RTOs. The delivery of some units or qualifications can lead to a licensed outcome and you will know if you're an RTO that has some of these training products. If you are delivery a VET course that has an additional licensed outcome, you must confirm with the applicable industry regulator that distance delivery is suitable. You must also check terms of any contract arrangements with any state and territory funding bodies that you might have to ensure those arrangements allow for distance delivery.

Emma Marks: Now, the next thing to consider is, will your learner cohort be suitable for distance delivery. This is quite important because it's not just about considering the existing vocational skills and competencies of your learners, but also about a cohort's capacity to learn in a particular way. For example, some of the stakeholder insights on our websites, one of these is from an RTO who delivers to students with very low language literacy and numeracy abilities. Now the RTO's identified that these learners can use a computer and in particular, they use social media, but they have a lot of difficulty in reading and comprehending complex content online. So these learners do need a face-to-face interaction in order to develop their knowledge and skills.

Emma Marks: Also, don't assume that everyone has access to unlimited internet or even that everyone has access to a computer. You might be thinking of developing a really good online resource, but if this requires a lot of bandwidth to view or can't be viewed, for example, on an iPad or even a phone, you might not actually be able to provide it to your students. Essentially, your RTO must understand who the target learner cohort is, including the characteristics of these students, before you begin designing a distance delivery learning program.

Emma Marks: And the final thing to consider when planning for distance learning is how much and what type of distance learning. So, every RTO knows that a training and assessment strategy and your training and assessment practices must consider the amount of training that's going to be provided. If you provide access to online learning content or to paper-based resources with a trainer contact for a certain period of time, say for example 12 months, that does not automatically mean that the amount of training provided is equal to that length of time. In this instance, the 12 months is the duration that a learner has access to course materials rather than the duration of the structured program being provided. You must consider what type of learning opportunities the resources supplied will provide and the frequency of access to these opportunities to determine the amount of training.

Emma Marks: So, for example, if your entire learning resource is a learning module that a person can read and understand, say in an hour, just because they can access that resource for 12 months, does not mean the amount of training is 12 months. But, if you have that module along with other readings, videos to watch, an activity to participate, perhaps required Zoom classes, quickly half-hour check-ins, all of that adds up to become your amount of training. As with all delivery modes, you must be able to describe how a student is able to reflect on and absorb the knowledge, practice the skills in difficult contexts, and learn to apply the skills and knowledge in the varied environments that a real world offers before being assessed. Next slide, please.

Emma Marks: Marketing. Your RTO is required to provide clear and accurate information to prospective students before enrolment. This information allows prospective students to make informed choices in deciding if your RTO, that the post-delivery mode and the VET course is suitable for them. Promoting or delivering the VET course by distance or online learning can be a really positive selling

point for many adult learners, however, marketing of the course must indicate the parts of the training and assessment which students would be unable to complete via distance delivery, including where work placement is required. So, please don't assume that a learner will know they have to attend work or practical placement for your course. Marketing information must also clearly describe any resources or services that a student must provide themselves. If there are particular resources or arrangements that a student must organize, it must be clearly and accurately described.

Emma Marks: Now, some advice we received from RTOs that deliver by distance is to screen the applicants by phone as part of the enrollment process, so they know what distance learning really entails and to make sure it is the right fit for the student before they sign up. Also, make sure the student clearly understands your practices regarding response time for answering queries, turnaround times in assessment, the frequency that a trainer or assessor will contact them, and how that contact will be made, any real-time delivery or student engagement sessions, tracking student progression, and also how student support will be provided. Being upfront and clear right from the start is critical to manage expectations. If a learner hasn't studied by distance before it can be confronting, particularly when they're studying and they want support immediately but they can't just walk up to a trainer to ask for help. If you set the rules and explain the process from the beginning, you'll likely get less complaints.

Emma Marks: And on complaints, the two main types of complaints that ASQA receives from students about distance delivery and marketing are that they didn't know how long the course would take or what study requirements would be, and they were not made aware before starting the course that they needed to source their own work placements to complete practical assessments. So, these are two really important things that you do need to consider and make sure it's quite clear in your marketing. Next slide, please.

Judith Keller: We'll now turn to student support and progression. As Emma has mentioned previously, a primary consideration when planning for distance learning is the characteristics of your learner cohort. And equally important is having a process for identifying the support needs of individual learners.

Judith Keller: From a compliance perspective, being aware of the support needs of individuals is a first step towards meeting the requirements of clause 1.7 of the Standards for RTOs. Where the individual support needs of students are known at the commencement of the course, strategies can be developed to respond to these, and of course, tailoring support and services for a learner often facilitates their course progression and completion.

Judith Keller: In my experience in interviewing students and reviewing student surveys, timely and relevant student support is often correlated with higher levels of satisfaction expressed by learners about their course and the training provided. Whilst ASQA has often found a high rate of compliance with the requirements of clause 1.7 at audits, providing distance learning mainly that your RTO also needs

to provide access to a different or broader range of educational and support services than you've previously offered. This may include educational and support services for learners to enable them to engage in new or unfamiliar forms of learning.

Judith Keller: Differences between learners within a cohort may also need to be considered. For example, your organisation may make learning materials available in alternative formats for students who do not have internet access. Whilst for those who are able to access learning online, consideration should be given to the design and presentation of content to ensure that it is accessible and inclusive of all learners including those with individual needs that differ from other students in their cohort.

Judith Keller: There may also, as Emma has mentioned, be some specific services required to support some learners to achieve competency for particular units or requirements in their course. How your RTO determines the support needs of individual learners is open to your organisation to decide, and it is up to your RTO to determine how support will be made available to learners—whether directly or through arrangements with a third party.

Judith Keller: For many of us, when we first think about identifying the needs of learners, language, literacy, and numeracy skills or abilities often come to mind. The learners undertaking training involving different technologies, digital literacy, in particular, is a prerequisite skill that needs to be considered. Digital literacy for online and distance learning extends beyond whether a student can use a computer or not. And we also need think about the types of tasks that a student will undertake during their course and whether or not the individual has the knowledge and capability to complete those tasks. For example, if a student is required to record a video for assessment and then upload that file, do they know how to do it?

Judith Keller: In considering the digital literacy demands of your learners, it is important to evaluate the impact that limited digital literacy skills may have on your RTO's support systems. The question for your RTO to ask itself is, will additional support need to be provided to learners to equip them with the necessary skills to complete particular learning and assessment tasks? If the answer to that question is 'yes', then your organisation will need to think about how and when to provide the required support, and in what format, so that your learners will acquire or develop their digital literacy skills to meet the demands of the learning environment and their course. For example, an RTO may choose to offer training as part of the enrollment process on how to use particular technological resources, which can provide the student with both the technology knowledge and skills needed to make their learning experience more enjoyable.

Judith Keller: Regardless of the distance learning mode, it is important that students can make contact with their trainer to ask questions and to discuss course requirements. And contact options and such when we're offering distance

learning could include telephone, email, or by the RTO's learning management system messaging system so that students can have their questions answered. However, it should not be left entirely up to a student to seek support when they need it, in fact, some students may not recognise when they need support, so regular communication and interaction can assist in identifying new and emerging support needs so that your RTO can provide learners with timely access to relevant support services.

Judith Keller:

As Emma has also mentioned, it is also true that for some students changing delivery mode to distance learning may be challenging and you may find that a student who previously appeared to have few or no additional support needs now requires significant additional support. One possible way of identifying points of which support may be required by individual learners is through monitoring of student progression, including both student engagement with learning activities and their completion of tasks. Some online learning management systems include the ability to track and generate reports about a student's engagement with the course content whilst undertaking their learning. Using such information, you may be able to identify individuals who are not progressing through their learning program and then follow-up with the student to identify specific areas where they may require extra support, resources, or other assistance.

Judith Keller:

In addition, proactively contacting students, giving prompt feedback on work submitted, and encouraging real-time interaction can assist in maintaining student motivation to complete their studies. RTOs may also consider setting up virtual classrooms by using video conferencing to allow increased collaboration between peers and encourage friendships among students that would otherwise occur in a classroom-based course. And as Emma has also mentioned, there are many other examples of insights and practical approaches to providing student support, engagement, and monitoring progress whilst delivering distance learning, that have kindly been shared by members of the Australian VET community and these can be found in the distance learning section of the ASQA website.

Judith Keller:

If your organisation is a CRICOS provider, you may currently be using a distance delivery mode for training and assessment, provided, of course, that the training package requirements allow for this. With regard to monitoring progress, CRICOS providers must meet the additional course progression requirements that stand to date of the National Code. This means that for overseas students, they are required to be enrolled in a full-time registered course to undertake study. For VET courses, a full-time course is a minimum of 20 scheduled contact hours per week, unless otherwise specified by ASQA. Course contact hours are the hours for which students enrolled in the course are scheduled to attend class, participate in course-related information sessions, supervised study session, and mandatory and supervised work-based training and examinations. Students are also expected to progress through their course so that they can complete the course within the registered course duration.

Judith Keller: Some of the common complaints that ASQA received from students undertaking distance learning with reference to student support and progression are that they complete their assessments but cannot progress to the next unit of competency until those assessments are marked. These delays can lead to a student not completing their course in a suitable timeframe. The students undertaking studies via online delivery, a common complaint is that they are not provided with the required support and this raises concerns that trainers and assessors are often not responding to emails or phone calls promptly. Next slide, please.

Judith Keller: We'll now talk about training and assessment in distance learning. As Emma and I have reviewed the key points on the previous slides, we've already made several comments about the delivery of training and assessment by distance, therefore, I'll only refer to those points briefly here, with more detailed comments about conducting assessment using distance delivery modes and I noticed that we've already received some questions around assessment and distance delivery and we'll endeavor to respond to some of those questions as we move towards the end of the presentation. Emma will also speak specifically about delivering training and assessment during COVID-19, very soon.

Judith Keller: As many of you will be aware, the regulatory requirements pertaining to the delivery of training and assessment are outlined in the clauses within Standard 1 of the Standards for RTOs. Compliance with the requirements of Standard 1 clauses applies regardless of the mode of delivery, whether that's distance learning or otherwise. What this means is, is where your RTO chooses to deliver training and assessment by distance learning or changes its course delivery mode to distance learning, the delivery method used must ensure quality outcomes for learners, including delivery and assessment practices that align to the training package requirements.

Judith Keller: Arguably, one of the most significant benefits of providing training and assessment using a distance delivery mode is the opportunity for a training provider to use a range of different technologies and tools to develop and deliver training. We've already spoken about learning management systems, however, you may also consider using technology such as augmented reality, video calls, simulation tools, social media, online conferencing, forums, just to name a few. Having access to a greater range of delivery tools can also enable the delivery of more individualized learning experiences for students with extra avenues for creating innovative and industry-current learning environments.

Judith Keller: In deciding which technologies and distance learning resources to use, it is essential to think about the suitability of the technologies and resources for the VET course, and as Emma has already mentioned, the characteristics of the learner cohort. And, of course, the capacity of your RTO to effectively facilitate learning programs and experiences using the chosen technology or resources. In addition, it is essential to ensure that learning resources facilities and equipment are sufficient and will be accessible taking into account the number and characteristics of learners enrolled in the course.

Judith Keller: Resources should be engaging for the learner and promote interactivity. Consideration may be given to develop content in a variety of ways to encourage learners to absorb the knowledge and to take time to be able to practice their skills. Variety also helps responding to the different learning styles of different students. Course content may, for example, be designed and arranged differently in a distance or online learning environment and could include a combination of different types of learning activities, such as online discussions between learners, additional reading and research, and recorded or real-time webinars that enable learners to engage with their peers.

Judith Keller: Structure is often also important in distance learning. When undertaking distance learning students can be encouraged to complete learning tasks through the inclusion of check-point style activities and summative-assessment activities which enable the student and their trainer to confirm that they are developing the competencies and are sufficiently prepared to undertake assessments. Completion of these tasks also allows the trainer to check for comprehension and to provide the learner with additional support when needed. Students enrolling in higher-level qualifications may also be supported to apply their developing knowledge and skills through open industry learning experiences and assessment tasks.

Judith Keller: As with all resources designed and developed for distance learning, content needs to be accurate and up-to-date and must meet the training package requirements. Whether your RTO uses training materials that have been developed in-house or externally, it is essential to regularly check that the content is still industry current. Any lengths to external resources should also be checked regularly to ensure that they are current and accessible to learners.

Judith Keller: So, now I'm just going to speak about conducting assessment using distance delivery methods, particularly with reference to demonstrating practical skills and workplace observations. As we've mentioned previously, all assessments, whether conducted by distance or another mode, such as face-to-face, must conform to the requirements outlined in clause 1.8 of the Standards, including all assessment requirements specified in the relevant training package for each unit of competency.

Judith Keller: In some cases, assessment may not be able to be easily adapted to be conducted at a distance due to mandatory conditions and the assessment conditions. Often these conditions describe, for example, the specific equipment and materials, contingencies, physical conditions, relationships with other people, and timeframes that must be in place during assessment. However, as in other cases, you may be able to make effective changes to your organisation's assessment system to gather the required evidence from a distance. For example, where a student is to be observed performing particular tasks or demonstrate skills in a work environment, the evidence-gathering process, a medium used to gather evidence, may be able to be adapted to include video recordings, for example, from a phone or other device, or use live video-conferencing, or video-streaming technologies. In this instance, the assessor

may also be able to use the same observation checklists that they would have had they been physically present to observe the student onsite or in the workplace.

Judith Keller: As always, assessment must be conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and rules of evidence. In particular, ensuring that judgments about competency are based on valid, current, sufficient, and authentic evidence. In cases where the assessor cannot directly gather all of the required evidence to support a competency judgment, the evidence may be able to be gathered or reported by other people, most commonly, RTOs will ask a workplace supervisor to gather that evidence and ASQA has published a guide for RTOs on using other parties to collect assessment evidence of such circumstances.

Judith Keller: For some units of competency, the assessment conditions specified in the training package allow for assessment normally conducted in the workplace to be carried out in a simulated environment. If your RTO is planning to use a simulated environment for assessment purposes as part of a distance delivery strategy, there are several questions that you will need to consider. Firstly, how will you ensure that the simulated environment reflects the conditions found in the real workplace to be as realistic as possible? Secondly, does the simulated environment have all of the equipment and resources mandated in the assessment conditions for the unit? And, are the assessment activities realistic and reasonable in terms of scale? Where simulation is allowed, you must review the training package requirements to determine that the learner can accurately replicate a simulated workplace environment from a remote location.

Judith Keller: So, I'm now just going to speak about work placement. Many qualifications still include a requirement for mandatory work placement before a determination is made about a learner's competency. The tools used to gather evidence of work placement for distance learners are, in my experience, usually similar to those for face-to-face learners often being logbooks and RTO records of contact with workplace supervisors to monitor student progress. And Emma will be speaking further about these matters, specifically related to work placement during COVID-19 in a couple of minutes from now.

Judith Keller: Finally, I'd just like to speak about two other considerations relevant to the delivery of training and assessment by distance, specifically are trainer-to-student ratios and authenticity of assessment. ASQA regulatory officers are often asked by RTOs, what is an appropriate number of students to a trainer? Which the exception of ELICOS courses, there is no specific answer to this question. Essentially, in determining trainer-to-student ratios, your organisation needs to consider the complexity of the requirements of the training product being delivered and, of course, the learner cohort and how delivery will occur.

Judith Keller: In the case of self-directed online learning, for example, where students do not need to be online at the same time, your organisation trainers may be able to support a higher number of learners than would normally be the case in a classroom environment. However, the most important consideration is at all

times is that students remain supported and have sufficient access to their trainer to assist them in their learning.

Judith Keller: With regard to authenticity of assessment, this can be a bit of an area of concern where assessment or the gathering of the evidence for assessment purposes occurs at a distance from the assessor. If you are an assessor in this scenario, the key question is, how can you be assured that the evidence gathered belongs to the student being assessed and provides evidence of that person's skills and knowledge? ASQA User's Guide to the Standards of Registered Training organisations provides a case study about ensuring authenticity in the online environment, which includes details of one possible approach. It is also important to note that regardless of the delivery method used, you must be able to demonstrate how you have verified the identity of all students.

Judith Keller: And finally, the most common complaints relating to assessments that ASQA receives from learners undertaking distance or online learning relate, first of all, to online-learning platforms. Some students report that these platforms are not adequate and do not allow for appropriate records to be retained. For example, ASQA receives complaints that students have submitted assessments using the RTOs LMS, however, the platform loses the assessment after being uploaded.

Judith Keller: Another common complaint is that students are told that they can simulate an assessment at home using family or friends to role play, but the student and the role-play participants are not provided with sufficient instructions to guide how the role play should be structured and would be assessed in the manner that meets the training package requirements.

Judith Keller: All right. So, we'll move to the next slide. Next slide, please. Where we will talk about reporting and record keeping. The first point I would make is, is where a change to delivery mode is permanent, your RTO is required under the Standards to notify ASQA within 90 days of beginning delivery where that changes by distance, and this includes to online learning. And this can be done by asqanet. If your RTO has moved to distance delivery, you may also need to update your training and assessment strategies for relevant courses. And further updates may also be needed as you monitor and review the implementation of your distance-delivery strategies and make improvements or changes to your RTO's practices.

Judith Keller: With respect to record keeping, retaining records of student's online activity, progress and engagement, or attendance is essential and it's particularly important to evidence for international students that they have undertaken their 20 scheduled course contact hours per week. As with other assessment modes when using distance delivery, you must securely retain all completed assessment items for each unit or module, or six months from the date the decision of competence of the individual unit or module is made for each student. Where evidence of this assessment is retained in a learning management system or a cloud-based system, your RTO must ensure that it

retains ownership and control over those records for the duration required. It is also essential that your RTO retain a record of qualifications and statements of attainment issued for 30 years with sufficient data to be able to re-issue a qualification or statement during this period, regardless of the storage method used.

Judith Keller: One of the questions ASQA regulatory offices are often asked is, can our RTO issue qualifications or statement of attainment in electronic formats? In short, the answer to this question is yes. However, if issuing certification documents electronically, your RTO must ensure that the document is protected against fraudulent issuance and that the person who's issued the testamur is authorized to do so, including a unique identifier such as a document number that is matched with a qualifications issuance register will allow an RTO to keep a record of all testamurs issued. PDF documents can also be marked with digital signature to maintain integrity and authenticity of the document. And you may also consider sending the student a printed copy of the testamur in addition to the electronic version. Next slide, please.

Emma Marks: Thank you so much, Judith. So, all of the information that we've provided today so far is relevant to so if you're switching to distance delivery temporarily during COVID-19. However, there are some other additional queries that we've received that we do want to address as well.

Emma Marks: Now your strategies for training and assessment do need to reflect the changes that you've made, however, a strategy does not need to be one document. You can combine multiple documents for a strategy and this could include an attachment that outlines the temporary changes to the delivery mode and structure. The key is to keep a record of these changes. If you have changed delivery modes half-way through a course, advise your learners as soon as possible and keep them up-to-date at all times. You will likely need to reassess your learners to identify any new support needs and if this is a new change, make regular contact with your learners, be more frequent with your contact than normal and continue to monitor their progression.

Emma Marks: If you are a CRICOS provider, you must have student consent for online learning. However, for all students, if they are enrolled to study face-to-face and you are temporarily moving to online because of COVID-19, please remember that some students may not want to learn in this way and may want to delay further learning until you can restart classes again.

Emma Marks: We do appreciate that work placement is really difficult right now. The AISC created an emergency sub-committee which is meeting weekly to discuss and respond to challenges during COVID-19. Practical placement is something that the sub-committee is well aware of and you can view the meeting outcomes on their website where this is discussed. We are working on the sub-committee on this in identifying areas and problems.

Emma Marks: My advice if you are unable to provide work or practical placement is to focus on the training and development of skills within your classroom or online. Use your training rooms and simulated materials to practice. Work placement is an assessment requirement, not a training requirement, so that means students should have developed the competencies before they go into placement.

Emma Marks: Look at the assessment requirements and understand how much simulated assessment you can do. Please remember that classrooms aren't banned and you and your students can still meet safely as a mode of delivery. You might find that you have to cluster learning for groups of units and then delay some assessment. But advice that I've received from an RTO that offers aged care is to maintain regular contact with your industry and keep employers updated on student progression. And this is so that when your employers are ready to start taking students again, they'll know that your students are ready to be placed. They'll also know how much learning they've received and how much training they've received.

Emma Marks: Generally, and thankfully, restrictions are starting to lift. So this person I spoke to in aged care advised that part of her class was able to start practical placement a couple of weeks ago and another group of students will be doing placement in a few weeks' time. So, the whole class couldn't go out all at once, but it could be done with smaller groups. So, consider if smaller groups can go out and what this means is you might actually have to vary your delivery structure even within your class.

Emma Marks: And specific to CRICOS, during this time all ASQA-regulated providers may use a distance delivery mode for training and assessment, provided training package requirements allow for this. This allowance includes CRICOS providers delivering VET or ELICOS courses. ASQA is an ESOS agency under the ESOS Act. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment is responsible for administering the Act, CRICOS and PRISMS. And as they're the policymakers, they're also the department that publishes really good and comprehensive information for providers about CRICOS delivery during COVID-19. So, they keep a document updated on their website which is called, COVID-19 Information for VET, ELICOS, and Higher Education Providers. I do encourage you to access this as it gives you specific information, in particular, about the student consent for online learning. Next slide, please.

Emma Marks: So, we have covered quite a lot in this webinar and we will be regularly running more on relevant and needed topics. There will be a post-survey, so if you have suggestions for a future topic, please include it in your survey response before submitting. Before I talk about how to get further information, if you do want to submit a question to this webinar on distance learning, remember to keep it broad and relevant to the topic, use the question pane in your control panel to do so. We won't be able to answer all questions and we're already starting to get quite a lot coming through, but we will try to answer some of the commonly answered questions. If there is a question that we are unable to address today,

we'll look at updating the ASQA website including the distance delivery webpage to cover these. Right, next slide, please.

Emma Marks: A reminder that the most up-to-date information is on the ASQA website which is asqa.gov.au. You can also contact our info line on 1300 701 801, or email inquiries at [asqa.gov.au](mailto:inquiries@asqa.gov.au). Now the ASQA distance delivery webpage which is under education resources does include external links to specific industry-area resources as well. Quite obviously, what we've discussed today isn't absolutely everything you need to know about distance delivery and it is really not possible to do in a one-hour session. Please remember though that the Standards do require RTOs to ensure that all trainers and assessors undertake professional development in vocational education and training. So, if you are planning on delivering by distance or you are already delivering by distance, you do need to ensure that your trainers have skills in these areas. Don't assume that just because a trainer is highly competent and capable delivering face-to-face that they will be able to easily transfer those skills to distance.

Emma Marks: However, we are quite lucky in the VET sector that we have the TAE training package which includes units and qualifications about distance-based learning, eLearning, and digital education, so please look at myskills.gov.au if you are interested in these. Next slide, please.

Emma Marks: And I believe Judith will be joining me back for this one here as we start to go into some questions. So we've got a few minutes here so I will actually start with the first in terms of themes, and I just noticed a whole bunch have come through, but one theme that I picked up is in relation to notifying ASQA. So, there's been two different types of questions. One is whether or not if an RTO changes to distance delivery as a temporary measure how do they inform ASQA of this? And the other one is if you are starting to take distance delivery and you're going outside of your normal locations do you need to notify ASQA of this? So, the answer to both is yes. For temporary notifications on ASQA's website is a temporary notification form and if you got to the COVID-19 page there will be a dropdown box that you can select for that. So, that is if you are temporarily switching to online delivery you can inform us of that information.

Emma Marks: If it is going to be a permanent move or you're actually going to go into other states in your delivery, firstly have a look on training.gov.au, just to see that your qualifications, what states you're registered to deliver in. If you're wanting to go outside states that you're registered to deliver in, that's where you'll have to fill in a material change form and just inform us of that and Judith provided that earlier but it's on the asqanet. So it's a really simple form to fill in. It's just notifying us of that but then it will also reflect the multiple states that you can deliver in.

Emma Marks: Judith, do you have a question?

Judith Keller: Yes. There's been a couple of questions about training and assessment strategies and whether or not your organisation needs to develop a separate

training and assessment strategy for distance delivery? And I'm making an assumption and responding to the question that the questions are about the actual documentation of your training and assessment strategies. If you already have a training and assessment strategy that is for face-to-face learner cohort, it is expected that you would document its strategy also for your distance delivery, because you may, for example, use different resources, you may have a different sequencing of assessment, there may be other requirements that is specific to that particular strategy, however, you may not necessarily need to recreate the whole training and assessment strategy document because your training assessment strategies and documenting those can be made up of multiple documents. So, you may have a separate document that specifically references the resources that would be used in the delivery to a distance learning cohort. You may have different assessment materials, of course, and you will be identifying those assessments. Your student support arrangements may be different as well. But it could be information that's supplementary to your existing strategies or the delivery of a particular course.

Emma Marks:

Okay. Thank you. And this has given me a bit of a chance to go over some other questions that I've got here. One question, and I'll just address this one very quickly is about when will we be able to start face-to-face training? So, this is a COVID-19-specific question. There is no restriction in delivery as face-to-face. So, as a training organisation, you can continue to deliver in classrooms, however, we do strongly encourage that you make sure that you can maintain suitable distance when you're in classrooms and also that you increase your cleaning, that you have additional measures such as signs up outside so that you can direct people so that they do maintain a certain distance outside. You might choose to structure your classes a bit differently so that there is less people on-campus, just to have some additional safety. There are, of course, some measures where you can't have that real 1.5 or 4 square meters, or the actual distance apart, particularly, for example, if you're doing aviation, those sorts of things, and that's quite okay. So, you do still just need make sure that you increase your cleaning, that everybody is safe and healthy and well, and absolutely the obvious thing is if somebody is unwell, they must not attend your center.

Emma Marks:

Would you like to do another one, Judith?

Judith Keller:

Yes, I will. So, this particular question is about assessment evidence uploaded into a learning management system and the question is, do we have to download the documents uploaded by the learner in the LMS and provide comments in the document, or is it okay if we provide comment in the LMS about the documents submitted? I guess the key here is around the assessor actually reviewing the assessments that are submitted by the students into the LMS. Whether or not you retain those assessments electronically or you choose to download them is a decision for your own organisation. It is important, as we've mentioned, that students do receive feedback on their assessments, and once again, I'm aware from my own experience that different learning management systems have different arrangements in terms of how that

assessor would provide feedback to the student. So, whether it's that they actually provide the comments directly into the document and the student receives a marked-up copy back or whether or not there's a separate document that's provided back to the student. So, in short, the answer to your question is no, you do not have to download the documents, however, as I mentioned during the presentation, you are required to keep evidence of the assessments and they need to be retained for at least six months from the date of which a determination about competency is made.

Emma Marks: Okay. And some of the questions that I've received relate to record retention. So, firstly, do you need to have documental evidence that you have reassessed all students learning needs for online delivery and assessment even if it is just a temporary measure? It really comes down to the student. So, if you are delivering to a learner cohort whereas you're going through, it's quite clear that students are logging online, they're asking questions, it's very clear that they are active in the online environment, then you may not need to reassess those learners. However, if you've got a learner cohort which has lower language literacy and numeracy abilities or in switching over to online delivery, you're recognizing that students are not logging in, they're not progressing, they're not actually maintaining an engagement, that's where you really should be reassessing learners to reconsider what support do you need to do for them and what other things do you need to consider for them.

Emma Marks: One of the other questions that we have received about record retention is in relation to ASQA auditors and are auditors aware that changes can be made to our delivery for a short period to assist us to continue training our students? Absolutely 100% yes. So that is something absolutely everybody within ASQA is well aware of. The information has been publicly provided on our website, so everybody does know the sorts of information and the flexible arrangements that are available at this time.

Emma Marks: Judith, do you have some questions?

Judith Keller: Yes. So this question relates to assessment conditions and where it says skills must be assessed in the workplace. And the question is about where the student does not have access to a workplace for a long period of time due to lockdown but still wants to complete the training as soon as possible, but completion of the course may result in the student attaining a job and in such circumstances can we conduct the assessment under simulated environment? The answer to that question is, I think as I mentioned in the presentation is that it depends on what the training package actually allows. The training package specifies the conditions under which a simulation may be conducted. Certainly in some training packages simulation is not permitted, whereas in others it is, and in all instances, the students should have the necessary knowledge and skills before being assessed as well, so that's also a consideration. There's another question around that too. So it is important that the student does have the opportunity to practice prior to being assessed and that maybe, for example, that the practice aspect is part of the training could occur in simulated

arrangements, however, whether or not the student can actually be assessed in a simulated environment will depend on the specific training package requirements.

Emma Marks: And I think we've got time for one more question. Do you have a specific one, Judith? Or would you like me to just select one from my list?

Judith Keller: Happy for you to select one, thank you.

Emma Marks: Actually, one question that I've got is actually quite a complex question, so this will be one where I think both of us can engage in this. And the question is, as an RTO can we employ offshore qualified trainers, as long as they have the TAE or equivalent? And for me, and I'll get Judith to jump in at any time as well. For me it comes down to what current skills and knowledge does the trainer have in the industry area that they are also delivering? So if the students that they are delivering are located in Australia, does that trainer and assessor have current industry skills and knowledge in Australia to be able to demonstrate that they meet all the requirements. So, it's not just in relation to the TAE qualification, they do need to have currency in the vocational area that they are delivering. Is that your advice as well, Judith?

Judith Keller: Yes, I would agree, Emma. In fact, many organisations are using trainers and assessors who may be located offshore and in fact, are delivering in the offshore environment.

Emma Marks: Excellent. Thank you very much for that. Still getting quite a few coming in, but they are still relating to similar thing in terms of notification, so just to re-clarify, if you're doing a temporary delivery change to distance delivery during COVID-19, there is a form on ASQA's website, so on our homepage, there is a section called COVID-19, if you select that, then there is a form there called notification, that is where you would inform ASQA of temporary changes. If you are making a more permanent change then there is a material change form which is via asqanet. It is again also just a notification form, so it's not an application in any process, just a notification which you would do via asqanet. If we could go to the next slide, please.

Emma Marks: So, I'd like to thank everybody for attending today's webinar. Our recording of this session will be emailed to attendees within the next few days. It will also be published on our website. Now as a reminder, there is a post-webinar survey, so if you have a suggestion for a future topic, please include it in your survey after the webinar closes. Also, if you have any further questions, you can contact ASQA's info line. The contact details are on this slide and regularly visit the ASQA website for the most up-to-date information.

Emma Marks: I'd like to thank you all again and in particular, thank Judith and the team who has helped us prepare for and deliver this presentation. Thank you also to the, at last count that I saw, 905 attendees who attended this presentation, it has

been a really good topic to discuss and we hope to see you soon. Thank you very much.