

## **VET Online Delivery: Case studies in constraints and opportunities**

Commissioned by the Australian Skills Quality Agency (ASQA) as part of its strategic review of online learning in the VET sector. More information on ASQA's strategic review program can be found [here](#).

**Prepared by Steven Hodge, Deniese Cox and Eunjae Park, Griffith University**

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## Background

ASQA's survey of VET provider's perceptions of the way their training and assessment was impacted by restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that some training packages and qualifications proved more difficult to deliver than others. Quantitative data analysis provided details of the key differences. In connection with practical training and assessment challenges (problems complying with rules and/or difficulties accessing workplaces), respondents to ASQA's 2021 survey ('the survey'), jointly administered with the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), of the VET sector's use, experience, and perceptions of online learning (for information on this, see Insights Paper 3 [here](#)), identified training packages and qualifications that posed particular challenges. The table below indicates which training packages were most impacted by the pandemic as reflected in number of responses highlighting impediments to delivery.

Figure 1. Table of Training packages most referenced as affected by COVID-19.

Training Package	Responses	Percentage (%)
CHC Community Services	146	31.5
SIT Tourism, Travel and Hospitality	66	14.3
HLT Health	39	8.4
SIS Sport, Fitness and Recreation	9	1.9
RII Resources and Infrastructure Industry	8	1.7
BSB Business Services	7	1.5
CPC Construction, Plumbing and Services	6	1.3
TLI Transport and Logistics	6	1.3
SHB Hairdressing and Beauty Services	5	1.1
CUA Creative Arts and Culture	4	0.9
SIR Retail Services	4	0.9
ACM Animal Care and Management	3	0.6
AUR Automotive	3	0.6
MEM Manufacturing and Engineering	3	0.6
MSF Furnishing	2	0.4
UET Transmission, Distribution and Rail	2	0.4
AVI Aviation	1	0.2
CPP Property Services	1	0.2
ICT Information and Communications Technology	1	0.2
MEA Aeroskills	1	0.2
PMA Chemical, Hydrocarbons and Refining	1	0.2
UEE Electrotechnology	1	0.2

In general, the nature of pandemic restrictions reduced options for providers to either converting face-to-face delivery and assessment to online or hybrid delivery, or restricting or ceasing delivery and assessment. The decision to restrict or cease delivery arose in large part due to the difficulties inherent in continuing work placements and also COVID-related restrictions on gatherings that affected training venues.

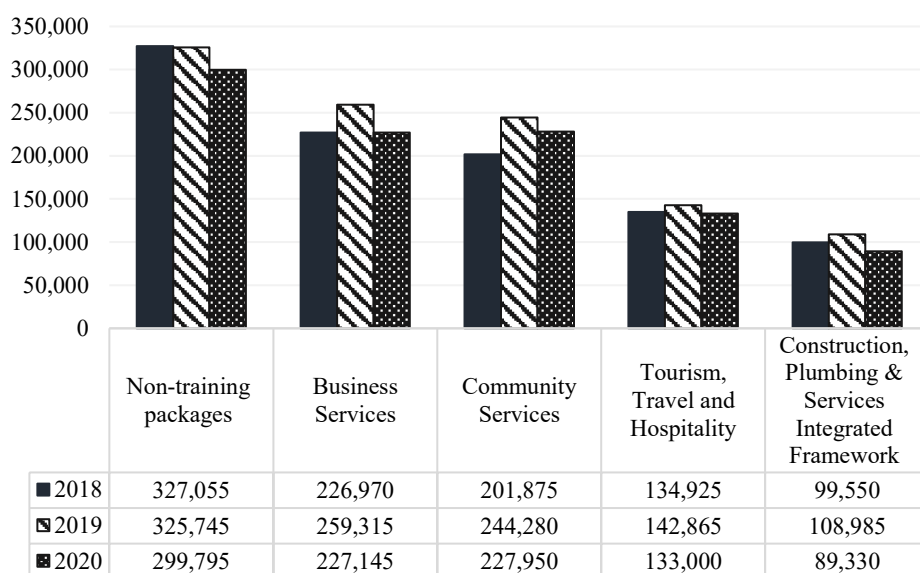
This report presents the results of research ASQA commissioned from Griffith University to develop case studies of two qualifications from the most-impacted training packages from the perspective of constraints on delivery and opportunities to incorporate online delivery. The case studies were developed to provide more granular insight into the challenges faced by providers and ways they did and could have responded. These qualifications are:

- CHC33015 – Certificate III in Individual Support
- SIT30816 – Certificate III in Commercial Cookery

The focus on Certificate III qualifications is due to the importance of practical learning and assessment at this level. As the level of qualification moves higher, knowledge and performance requirements tend to require less in-person engagement with equipment, people and workplaces. Of course, practical application is involved in higher competency-based qualifications, but often base-level practical skills are assumed and greater use of online delivery is feasible. The survey data pointed to particular challenges at the lower qualification levels consistent with the purpose of developing entry-level practical skills. The qualifications were selected to reflect contrasting industry settings keeping in sight the survey respondents' perceptions of difficulties with particular training packages.

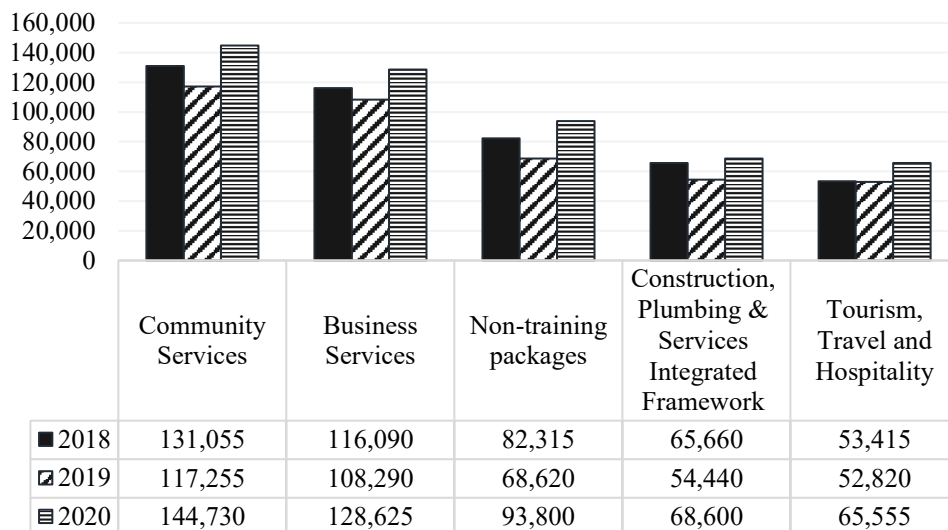
To provide context for the case study qualifications, figures available for the years preceding the pandemic place the two most impacted packages among the most commenced and continued between 2018 and 2020 (Figure 1). It can be observed that the two most impacted packages according to Table 1 appear in the top-five commenced packages in the lead-up to the pandemic. However, it is noteworthy that Business Services, which showed more commencements than Community Services was sixth in terms of impact.

Figure 2. Top 5 training packages commenced between 2018 and 2020



(Source NCVET, 2021)

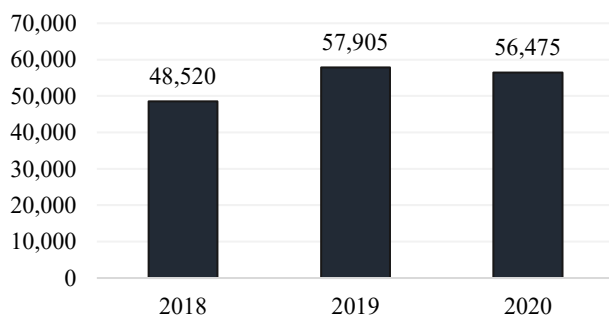
Figure 3. Top 5 training packages continued between 2018 and 2020



(Source NCVET, 2021)

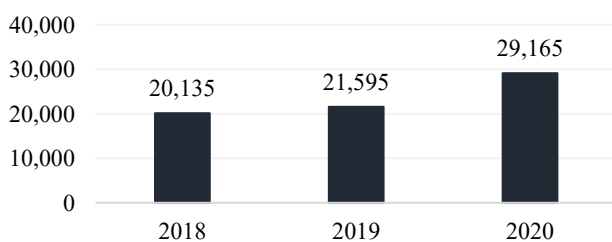
Figures available for the same date range that apply to the Certificate III in Individual Support reveal enrolment number trends in terms of commencing and continuing enrolments:

Figure 4. Number of students commencing the Certificate III in Individual Support between 2018 and 2020



(Source NCVET, 2021)

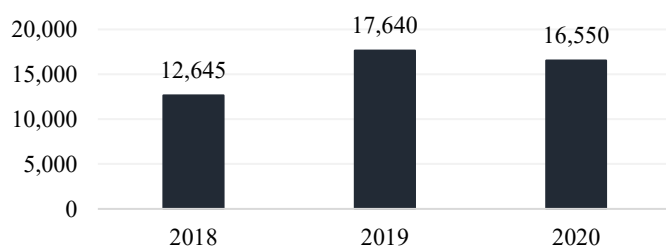
Figure 5. Number of students continuing the Certificate III in Individual Support between 2018 and 2020.



(Source NCVET, 2021)

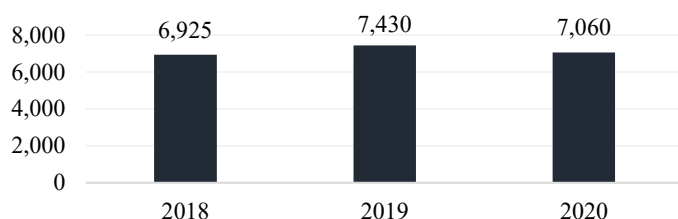
Figures for the Certificate III in Commercial Cookery commencements and continuation for the same period reveal the following:

*Figure 6. Number of students commencing the Certificate III in Commercial Cookery between 2018 and 2020*



(Source NCVET, 2021)

*Figure 7. Number of students continuing the Certificate III in Commercial Cookery between 2018 and 2020*



(Source NCVET, 2021)

These figures underline the importance of the Certificate III in Individual Support and Certificate III in Commercial Cookery for students, industry and the Australian economy. Disruptions caused by the pandemic are therefore of considerable concern and efforts to find innovative ways to deliver these qualifications despite these disruptions are of interest to system stakeholders. The case studies below address constraints on and opportunities for online delivery implicit in the rules and standards reflected in the selected qualifications. They include data from respondents to ASQA's survey of providers that provide insight into the experience of providers in the context of delivery challenges created by COVID-19. Analysis of opportunities is complemented by concrete indications of ways the qualifications may be delivered online.

### Case approach

The case studies presented in this report approach a specified qualification through the lens of constraints and opportunities for online delivery. Constraints refer to environments, equipment, resources and types of social interaction that may be experienced directly, in-person, although simulation is possible in some cases and occasionally this simulation can be taken online. Constraints are not considered in a negative way in the case studies. They create valuable conditions and contributions to learning about work and jobs that nevertheless impose limitations on the extent to which digital learning environments can serve the purposes of VET. Opportunities, in contrast, derive from the potential contained in units of competency for quality online training and assessment. This potential may be unrealised for a range of reasons, from biases to lack of awareness. Such

impediments to realising potential for online delivery are distinguished from constraints as such, which are considered really inherent in the VET setting. Risks to quality delivery may thus arise from two sources: underestimating constraints but also *failing to realise potential for online delivery when conditions call for innovation*. The case study approach assumes that appropriate balance (recognising and adapting to constraints while realising online potential) are more likely to produce optimal learning outcomes for VET stakeholders, including students, providers, employers, industry and the economy.

### *Constraints*

As defined above, constraints are largely described in units of competency. Thus a key aspect of the case approach is to determine, and where possible classify and analyse, content of units to determine inherent limits to online delivery. Four types of constraint become evident in units of competency:

**Specific social interactions.** Refers to situations in which students are required to engage in pre-specified types of interaction (e.g. interact with family and carers of a client, interact with customers in a workplace).

**Non-specific social interactions.** Refers to situations where a type of behaviour or skill is practiced or demonstrated in a simulated or actual environment with an actual person or people without the type of partner(s) being pre-specified (e.g. staff and customers in a workplace during the assessment and/or individuals who participate in role plays or other activities within a training organisation, communication with colleagues).

**Workplace access.** Refers to explicit requirements to practice and/or demonstrate skills in a non-simulated workplace (e.g. specified number of hours of work placement).

**Specialised equipment, resource or environment access.** Refers to practicing and/or demonstrating use of industry-specific equipment or resources, or operating in types of environments, whether in a simulated or actual workplace setting (e.g. specified environment using the equipment and resources mandated).

For each of these types of constraint, it can be indicated whether the unit explicitly contains it, and the simple binary of 'Required' and 'Not required' is employed to signal a specific constraining rule, material or condition. Note that an attribution of 'Not required' only takes into account directly expressed rules or content. In many cases where practice or demonstration of competency does not demand access to specific social situations, equipment or environments, it remains an option to leverage one or more of these specified opportunities to develop competency where the constraint is not expressed. For instance a unit that does not demand workplace access might still be undertaken in a workplace. Traditional delivery tends to reflect this practice since it developed from practice-based or 'apprenticeship' models of learning that assumed students would always learn occupations in the context of the occupation itself.

It should be noted that a constraint does not necessarily rule out online delivery in a given case. For example, non-specific social interactions can be reflected in appropriate virtual environments, while given adequate levels of resourcing, specific social interactions can be simulated – including in an online environment. The important point, however, is that where a constraint is identified and delivery is taken online the potential for risk to quality provision may be heightened. It could be that assessment of risk in these cases is essentially confirming constraints and appraising any online arrangements that have been implemented in relation to them.

Alongside units of competency, constraints may be elaborated in other documents, including the training package itself and companion volume implementation guides. Our review of key documents suggests that units of competency are the primary source of information about constraints. Other training package information (such as assessment advice pertaining to a given or to multiple qualifications) and companion volume guidance offer general indications about addressing constraints, while the detail of these constraints remains at the unit level. For example, the Community Services training package general statement on mandatory placement requirements states:

Work placements, when integrated with learning, can be used for 'on the spot' assessment and to capture a range of evidence to support a decision of competency. To successfully conduct training and assessment in the workplace, the RTO must provide the learner and workplace supervisor with an agreed, structured learning plan that indicates the purpose of the work placement and the minimum requirements for training and assessment in the specified units of competency.

While this other information acknowledges unit-level content, it can also facilitate alternative ways of considering constraints. For instance, the Community Services training package gives the following advice:

Community services assessors will need to use case studies, role plays, scenarios or simulations in the context of work where workplace assessment is not feasible or relevant. Given the nature of the many community service roles the need for interaction with real people (whether they be real clients or not) is often a requirement. To access their knowledge, having the learner reading case studies and writing down how they might interact with a person in distress, or an aged person could be conducted. Even so, it is not always sufficient to show that the learner has acquired the skill. Where having the learner interact appropriate with real people is a condition of assessment, real people would mean that if skills were not being demonstrated in the workplace with real clients, colleagues or families then they would need to be simulated (e.g. role played) with fellow learners. Isolated online demonstration of skill would not be acceptable when 'real people' are a condition of assessment. The assessment would need to involve interaction with real people to demonstrate competency in the relevant components of the unit.

This advice acknowledges constraints while describing modes of training and assessment that serve as an alternative to workplace experience. Note that scope for simulation does not necessarily mean digital environments would provide appropriate settings for competency development or measurement. Nevertheless, where simulation is indicated as an option, online delivery potential may be enhanced.

In summary, constraints are specified in units of competency, while other documents that may be consulted to design training and assessment strategies underline the importance of constraints detailed in units but can also facilitate recognition of potential that may be of interest in designing quality online delivery. In the cases below, a section is devoted to 'constraints' that focus on unit of competency content, while potential for online delivery may be helpfully informed by these other kinds of information (e.g. Companion Volumes). Constraints are summarised using a table that differentiates types of constraint identified against individual units of competency.



### *Survey data*

Survey data is drawn on to illustrate provider views on constraints and opportunities and challenges related to online delivery. In some examples, constraints are appraised realistically and responses described that are entirely appropriate. However, some responses suggest that constraints may not have been fully analysed, potentially leading to decisions that may not be appropriate to the conditions. In other examples, challenges of inherent in online delivery are realistically appraised and opportunities identified and taken up. However, there are examples in which challenges might have been overestimated and opportunities neglected.

The survey data are included to provide insight into the experiences of providers in relation to constraints, their responses to these constraints, and what opportunities they identified and how they may have taken them up. The survey data thus serve as a reflection on analyses of constraints and touchstone for analyses of opportunities.

### *Opportunities*

Each case addresses opportunities for online delivery. Here, constraints are taken into account (noting that these might rule out online delivery or simply create additional challenges to it) and content of units of competency analysed to highlight ways online delivery can create a quality learning environment. A tool for capturing analysis of opportunities has been developed as a reflection of how a provider might approach the task of deciding what content from units of competency within a qualification might be amenable to quality online delivery. The tool is presented as a table to present opportunities as clearly as possible.

It should be stressed that there is no algorithm for determining the ideal level of online delivery for a given VET qualification. A principle of the VET system is that industry sets the standards (reflected in units of competency) and providers develop the strategies that will allow their students to develop and demonstrate performance and knowledge that satisfy those standards. Another principle is that a competency-based system is focused on outcomes not inputs, and therefore providers are given latitude to deliver training and assessment in a way that suits students and employers while meeting industry standards. The system is marketised, too, with the benefit claimed that innovation of delivery is encouraged rather than conformity to a single model of curriculum and teaching. Given these principles and conditions, it is to be expected that while units of competency may specify industry-appropriate constraints, *how* these are accommodated and competency is developed and assessed is not prescribed. Thus, when addressing ‘opportunities’ in the case studies, we only suggest what is possible and do not believe hard-and-fast rules can be developed and applied. It is only constraints described in units of competency that produce limitations that must be accommodated.

When preparing a training and assessment strategy for a qualification, providers methodically review elements, performance criteria, knowledge evidence, and performance evidence within each unit and consider the units of the qualification as a whole. They identify relationships between learning elements and assessment elements for the purpose of conceptualising how each of those components can be most effectively enacted. Availability of resources naturally impacts the different decisions made by providers, and so to do the preferences, knowledge, and skill level of individual trainers to utilise their available resources. Resource availability – including those to create online learning experiences and the expertise of trainers and assessors – should be taken into account as a limiting variable when planning online delivery.

Synchronous and asynchronous online tools are important examples of resources that affect learning and assessment. Research has found that the availability of online tools is less influential on

practice than the beliefs of VET providers and trainers about what teaching strategies are important or not important, along with the knowledge of those trainers to then enact those strategies with the online tools available to them (Cox, 2020). During this project, we have observed a belief among some providers that some qualifications ‘cannot’ be facilitated online, whereas those same qualifications are being successfully facilitated online by other providers. Therefore, a simple tool to support providers during their review of the performance criteria, knowledge evidence, and performance evidence of each unit would be one that encourages them to think component-by-component (especially in terms of performance criteria, performance evidence and knowledge evidence) about what can be facilitated online. This will help remove constraints brought about by barriers within a few units (e.g. those with work placements) affecting the online learning opportunities for the qualification as a whole.

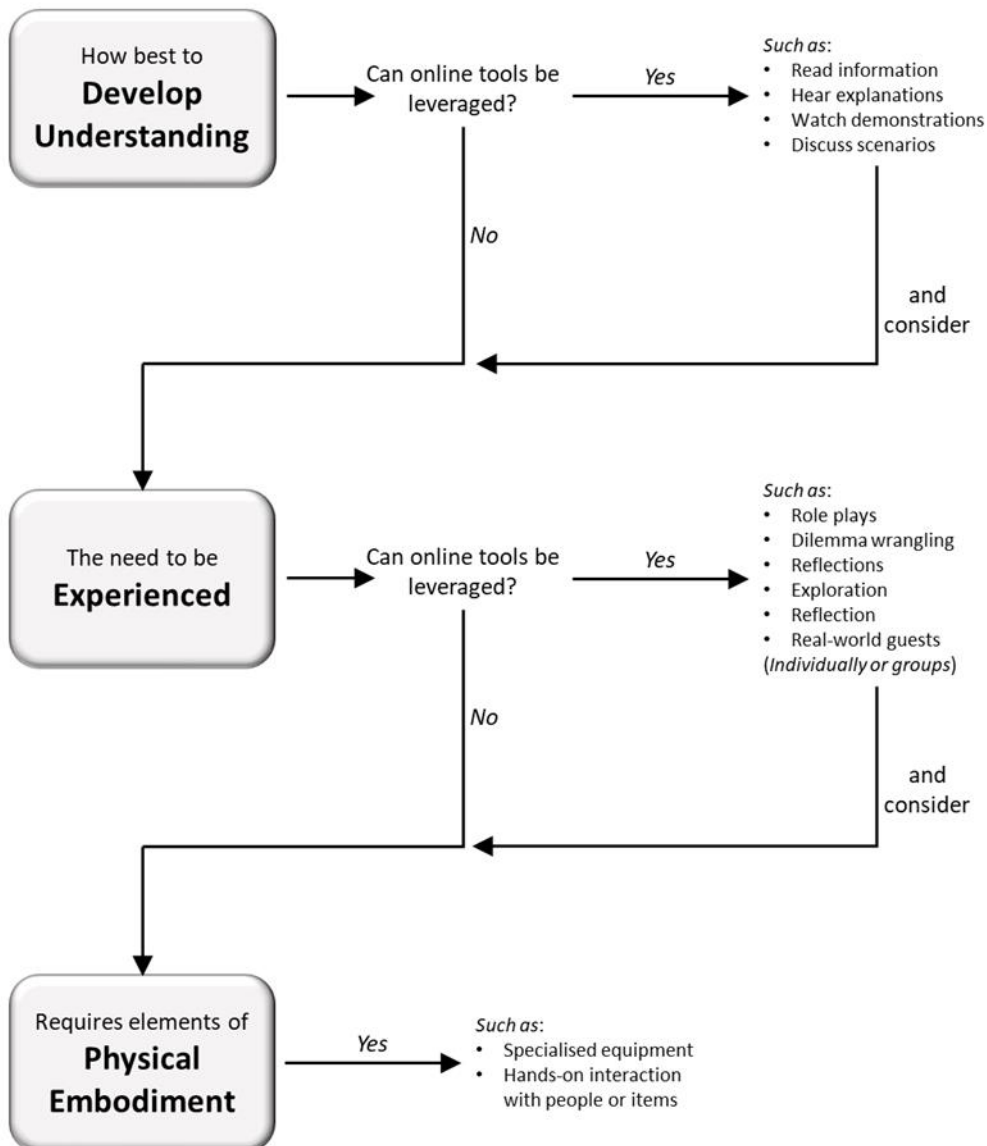
The table demonstrates one approach to such a review. The columns enable users to consider which learnings and evidences can be facilitated online and which cannot because of the need for a real or realistic in-person workplace setting. The 1-2-3 scale represents (1) a little of the content can be enacted this way, (2) some of the content, and (3) much of the content.

Figure 8. Table showing analysis of opportunities for quality online delivery within units of competency.

Units of Competency	Knowledge Learnings + Evidences						Performance Learnings + Evidences					
	Online (Synch and/or asynch)			Workplace (Real and/or realistic)			Online (Synch and/or asynch)			Workplace (Real and/or realistic)		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
<i>*(1) Little; (2) Some; (3) Much</i>												

Note that ‘real or realistic’ in the analysis summary refers to the difference between situations where the actual workplace is implicated (real) as opposed to situations where well-designed simulation may be effective (realistic). These scales are not an either-or representation. That is, they are not indicating that one performance criterion, for example, is suited to either online or workplace, but rather to what degree can elements of that criterion be facilitated online, and to what degree is a workplace context required. To arrive at ratings on the four scales included in the tool, a flow-chart has been prepared to represent a possible logic for identifying opportunities for online delivery. Figure 7 below shows this decision-making process, Note, however, that this process is not the only one possible for analysing opportunities.

Figure 9. Possible decision-making process for analysing online delivery opportunity



While the tables prepared for the case studies point to opportunities implicit in the content of individual units of competency, 'clustering' of units for delivery and assessment (Clayton, Guthrie, Every and Harding, 2015) is an established practice that is described in many companion volumes (e.g. SkillsIQ, 2020). Rather than linear delivery of units in sequence, that is, units being delivered as discreet teaching experiences and students wholly completing four units, for example, before moving to the next four units, some providers reported clustering. Other evidence indicates that the practice involves 'stretching' units. Thus providers adopt an approach where they merge similar and complementary learnings from different units for concurrent learning (clustering), and allowing some elements to remain incomplete until logistically convenient (stretching). The concept of stretching means that incomplete units do not necessarily stall overall progress. Rather, all of the training and assessment elements that require simulated or actual workplace experience are held over until such attendance is feasible. Meanwhile, training and assessment that can be facilitated online continues.

Clustering is an approach that appears to have been taken up by more providers who innovated their delivery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is unclear whether clustering practices expanded because providers were innovating or because they were increasing their level of online

activity and the latter lent itself to clustering. Either way, the tables reflecting analysis of online delivery potential can facilitate clustering in that units with greater possibility for online delivery and fewer constraints could be combined where content overlaps.

## Case studies

### Case study 1. CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support

The Certificate III in Individual Support is a qualification from the Community Services training package. Information for constructing Training and Assessment Strategies for Certificate III in Individual Support qualifications derive from the training package (qualification specifications, units of competency and associated statements of assessment requirements, general advice on training and assessment) and companion volume implementation guides.

Referring to the Certificate III in Individual Support, the Community Services training package explains that,

*This qualification reflects the role of workers in the community and/or residential setting who follow an individualised plan to provide person-centred support to people who may require support due to ageing, disability or some other reason. Work involves using discretion and judgement in relation to individual support as well as taking responsibility for own outputs. Workers have a range of factual, technical and procedural knowledge, as well as some theoretical knowledge of the concepts and practices required to provide person-centred support.*

*To achieve this qualification, the candidate must have completed at least 120 hours of work as detailed in the Assessment Requirements of the units of competency.*

*Packaging Rules: Total number of units = 13 (7 core units + 6 elective units)*

This case study will focus on the core units, noting that the qualification design allows for three specialisations (Ageing, Disability and Home and Community) with each determined by the selection of electives. Thus the Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) comprises the core units plus four specialised units (Facilitate the empowerment of older people, Provide support to people living with dementia, Meet personal support needs, Comply with infection prevention and control policies and procedures). Two other elective units are required in addition to complete the qualification.

The table below presents the core units. Five of the seven come from the Community Services training package and two (at the bottom of the list) derive from the Health package.

*Figure 10. Table of core units of competency from the Certificate III in Individual Support qualification*

CHCCCS015	Provide individualised support
CHCCCS023	Support independence and well being
CHCCOM005	Communicate and work in health or community services
CHCDIV001	Work with diverse people
CHCLEG001	Work legally and ethically
HLTAAP001	Recognise healthy body systems
HLTWHS002	Follow safe work practices for direct client care

### Constraints

Analysis of constraints for each core unit is summarised in Table 4 below. As explained in the Background section above, the basis of the analysis was content in units of competency that suggested a distinct limit on online delivery, focusing on types of constraint. Given the importance of interpersonal relations and the physicality of the work described in the qualification overview, it is to be expected that training and assessment will require access to specific kinds of social interaction, resources, equipment and environments that allow direct in-person practice and demonstration. As Table 4 shows, these expectations are concentrated in one of the units, CHCCCS023 Support

independence and well being, while others are less bound to physical environments, for example CHCLEG001 Work legally and ethically. Yet other units reflect an expectation of opportunities for social interaction – such as CHCCCOM005 Communicate and work in health or community services – but simulation of appropriate environments is signalled as an alternative means of learning, practise and demonstration.

Figure 11. Table summary of training and assessment constraints for core units of competency

Unit(s)	Specific social interactions	Non-specific social interactions	Workplace access	Specialised equipment access
Provide individualised support	Required <sup>1</sup>	Not required	Not required	Required <sup>2</sup>
Support independence and well being	Required <sup>3</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>3</sup>	Not required
Communicate and work in health or community services	Not required	Required <sup>4</sup>	Not required	Not required
Work with diverse people	Not Required <sup>5</sup>		Not required	Not required
Work legally and ethically	Not required	Required <sup>6</sup>	Not required	Not required
Recognise healthy body systems	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required
Follow safe work practices for direct client care	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required

The unit of competency that incorporates the most extensive demands is CHCCCS023 Support independence and well being. As the unit description points out, the competency covers

the skills and knowledge required to provide individualised services in ways that support independence as well as physical and emotional wellbeing. This unit applies to workers in a range of community services contexts who provide frontline support services within the context of an established individualised plan.

The four elements constitute the competency are (a) recognise and support individual differences, (b) promote independence, (c) support physical wellbeing, and (d) support social, emotional, and psychological wellbeing.

<sup>1</sup> Knowledge evidence: Roles and responsibilities of different people and the communication between them: carers and family, person being supported, health professionals, individual workers, and supervisors. Performance evidence: There must be evidence that the candidate has used individualised plans as the basis for the support of 3 individuals.

<sup>2</sup> Performance criterion 2 provide support services: 2.3 assemble equipment as and when required according to established procedures and the individualised plan. Assessment conditions include use of suitable facilities, equipment, and resources and involvement of real people when using relevant equipment. Simulated assessment: Isolated online demonstration of skill would not be acceptable when “real people” are a condition of assessment.

<sup>3</sup> Performance evidence: There must be demonstrated evidence that the candidate has safely supported at least 3 people to enhance independence and wellbeing, performed the activities outlined in the performance criteria during a period of at least 120 hours of direct support work in at least one aged care, home and community, disability, or community service organisation. Assessment conditions: Skills must be demonstrated in a relevant workplace with the additional simulations. Assessment must involve some real interactions with the person and their families/carers. Simulated assessment: Isolated online demonstration of skill would not be acceptable when “real people” are a condition of assessment.

<sup>4</sup> Performance evidence: There must be evidence that the candidate has demonstrated effective communication skills in 3 different work situations and clarified workplace instructions and negotiated timeframes with 2 colleagues.

<sup>5</sup> Skills and knowledge required to work respectfully with people from diverse social and cultural groups and situations, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Performance evidence: There must be evidence that the candidate has recognise and respected the needs of people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds in at least 3 different situations.

<sup>6</sup> Performance criterion 2 Identify and meet ethical responsibilities: 2.4 recognise potential ethical issues and dilemmas, and discuss with an appropriate person, 2.7 recognise unethical conduct and report to an appropriate person. Performance evidence: The candidate has identified and communicated at least 2 potential work practice improvement designed to enhance workplace responsiveness to legal and ethical requirements.

The Performance Evidence requirements specified in the accompanying Assessment Requirements document for the unit are the most explicit across the core units in terms of requiring direct, physical presence and activity in an industry setting:

The candidate must show evidence of the ability to complete tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage tasks and manage contingencies in the context of the job role. There must be demonstrated evidence that the candidate has:

- Safely supported at least 3 people to enhance independence and wellbeing
- Performed the activities outlined in the performance criteria of this unit during a period of at least 120 hours of direct support work in at least one aged care, home and community, disability or community service organisation

The Assessment Conditions statement in the same document adds that:

Skills must have been demonstrated in a relevant workplace with the addition of simulations and scenarios where the full range of contexts and situations have not been provided in the workplace. Where simulation is used it must reflect real working conditions and contingencies by modelling industry operating conditions and contingencies, as well as using suitable facilities, equipment, and resources, including:

- Individualised plans and any relevant equipment outlined in the plan
- Modelling of industry operating conditions including real interactions with the person and their carers

Overall, assessment must involve some real interactions with the person and their families/carers.

In this case, simulation is proposed for situations where workplace conditions are limited and thus learning and assessment opportunities constrained. The simulation option here appears to be geared to opportunities made available by the provider which include conditions unlikely to be replicable in the online environment.

The Knowledge Evidence for the same unit is extensive and appears amenable to online training and assessment. Terms, concepts, procedures and principles could be delivered online with application reserved for practice and demonstration within the work placement component or simulated environment. Potential for online delivery of this unit is considered in the section on Opportunities below.

#### *Survey data*

In open-ended responses to ASQA's survey, the Community Services training package topped the list of areas impacted in delivery by the pandemic. The qualitative data included several comments specific to the qualification, often identifying aspects of the Ageing specialisation. Of these, the bulk expressed concerns about the work placement component associated with the CHCCCS023 Support independence and well being unit. Access to the specified environment was highly problematic for some providers:

NO provider or facility would take work placements at this time during covid-19. So the learners could not achieve their required hours at all it came to a dead halt. Disability and Aged Care [were most affected].

Many workplaces were completely closed to students (e.g. aged care facilities for Individual Support students), meaning that students could not complete any placements for an

extended period as there was no option to complete via alternate means. Students had to put courses on hold. Very difficult for students, particularly those who could not find work because they had no[t] finished their certificate.

Almost all placement organisations refused to take students therefore students could not complete or be awarded as there are placement hours attached to units. We are still waiting on many aged care facilities to reopen for student placements. Some students have already withdrawn from the aged care course having completed all other aspects of their training. A significant number of education support students are still unable to access a placement opportunity in schools. There are more examples.

These responses are proportionate to the explicit training and assessment demands of the qualification. As is clear from these quotes, lack of access to actual workplaces for student placements halted delivery and there was little recourse than to wait until external conditions changed.

A number of respondents reflected on the challenges and options inherent in the situation:

Online facilitation is a different skill to f2f so see the reasoning for reverting to f2f. In aged care it is very difficult to shower an elderly person online. ALSO our philosophy was NOT to replace practical assessments with online assessments.

Schools and aged care stopped outside retreats and volunteers although schools reconnected mid year so practical assessments were possible. Some simulation was possible but most deferred until schools and youth groups reopened

Some of the practical assessments can be conducted online, such as presentation and group activities. However, lots of practical assessments can only be done in a face-to-face environment, such as practical skills in aged care and health care simulation skills lab. Both CHC and HLT training packages have been hugely impacted.

The student doesn't gain the opportunity to obtain real time practical experience like on the job training. Aged care is a clear example where students complete the nominated hours online and then placement. They don't get real life experiences in some cases. These courses should be run like apprenticeships (group class sessions and then on the job placement)

These responses identify and weigh up the possibility and efficacy of shifting to online training and assessment. Here, there is a mix of philosophical positioning (which may or may not stem wholly from analysis of unit requirements) and indication of alternatives, including online delivery and simulation.

One response highlighted a specific challenge associated with moving any delivery of this qualification online:

Large number of aged care workforce have English as a second language which affects their ability to shift online as well as having access to a computer.

Here, consideration of the student cohort underpins reservations about online delivery.

### *Opportunities*

This part of the case study addresses the Certificate III in Individual Support from the perspective of maximising online delivery while minimising risks to quality delivery. The qualification is thus viewed in terms of opportunities to take training and assessment online given the constraints identified



through key document analysis and relevant survey response data. As indicated in the background section, design and development of training and assessment strategies cannot be reduced to algorithms. What is offered below is one interpretation of the possibilities for online delivery contained in the Certificate III in Individual Support. Table 5 presents a review of the core units of competency from Certificate III in Individual Support. It illustrates that the qualification as a whole should not be categorised as unsuitable for online facilitation.

Figure 12. Table displaying the Indications of online delivery potential in core units of the Certificate III in Individual Support.

Units of Competency  <i>*(1) Little; (2) Some; (3) Much</i>	Knowledge Learnings + Evidences						Performance Learnings + Evidences					
	Online (Synch and/or asynch)			Workplace (Real and/or realistic)			Online (Synch and/or asynch)			Workplace (Real and/or realistic)		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
CHCCCS015 Provide individualised support			✓		✓			✓				✓
CHCCCS023 Support independence and wellbeing			✓		✓			✓				✓
CHCCOM005 Communicate and work in health or community services			✓	✓				✓				✓
CHCDIV001 Work with diverse people			✓	✓				✓	✓			
CHCLEG001 Work legally and ethically			✓	✓				✓			✓	
HLTAAP001 Recognise healthy body system			✓	✓				✓	✓			
HLTWHS002 Follow safe work practices for direct client care	✓				✓			✓				✓

The table highlights units that impose greater constraints on online delivery due to rules and nature of content, and those which invite a more complete online delivery approach. Note that none of the units rule out some component of online delivery. Rather, the online delivery for more constrained units would fall closer to Fresen's (2018) 'web-supported' model (e.g. CHCCCS023 Support independence and wellbeing) while for others a 'web-dependent' approach may be appropriate (e.g. HLTAAP001 Recognise healthy body systems).

As mentioned in the Background section, the table allow an interpretation of online learning potential to be presented. The columns enable users to consider which learnings and evidences can be facilitated online and which cannot because of the need for a real or realistic in-person workplace setting. The 1-2-3 scale represents (1) a little of the content can be enacted this way, (2) some of the content, and (3) much of the content. CHCCCS015 Provide Individualised Support is a good example. *Much* of the performance criteria can be *learned and understood* through online strategies such as observing videoed scenarios, practicing through role play, and active dilemma wrangling discussions with trainer and peers. (See performance criterion 2.1 "Conduct exchanges with the person in a manner that develops and maintains trust".) However, it is anticipated that *some* hands-on

workplace experiences would be required to transition *some* of the criteria from conceptual understanding to actionable knowledge (See performance criterion 2.3 “Assemble equipment as and when required according to established procedures and the individualised plan”). Moving to assessment of that unit, the performance evidence clearly requires *much* workplace contextualisation (such as, “used individualised plans as the basis for the support of 3 individuals”). However, *some* of the accompanying knowledge evidence can be facilitated online. For example, learners could complete short answer questions about “service delivery models”. To complement the workplace-grounded performance evidence that has been recorded by a workplace supervisor, a trainer could use online tools, such as a video call, to discuss a workplace event with the student. Trainers could ask students to ‘reason aloud’ in their recounting of the event for the purpose of demonstrating knowledge of the “rationale and processes underpinning individualised support planning and delivery”.

To illustrate the possibilities for online delivery within a more constrained unit, the following scenarios were developed for CHCCS023 Support independence and wellbeing.

- Pre-recorded video content is one medium through which real-world or realistic scenarios can be engaged with by learners individually or in groups. For example, for element 4.1, during a live online class learners can be shown a video where indicators of note are present in the behaviour and speech of a client/patient. Learners are asked to contribute ideas and jointly develop a plan for that client/patient. They then role play different approaches to having that conversation with the client/patient, with the trainer guiding learners through language, tone, body language, and so on. Another example, this time for 2.3 and 2.4, a video could be shown of a person struggling with a situation that is exacerbated by their being unable to access appropriate support services. From that trigger event, learners could be asked to ‘rewrite the ending’. That is, to actively go online and seek out what support services and resources are relevant to the situation/s being presented, and then write or role play introducing those services to the client/patient.
- Enabling learners to draw on their lived work placement experiences can also be facilitated online. In this way, they’re crowd-sourcing real scenarios to engage with and learn from. For example, if the focus is element 4, support social, emotional, and psychological wellbeing, learners would be asked to contribute relevant scenarios that they have observed occurring at their work placement. They then work in pairs or small groups to compare-and-contrast those lived experiences. This can be facilitated synchronously during a live online class, or asynchronously over a period of days. They are guided by the trainer to identify similarities and differences in the situation of the client/patient, similarities and differences in the intervention of the experienced carer that was observed, what the learners perceive was done well and what should have been done differently, and finally, the lessons learned.
- Moving now to assessment, it is anticipated that this unit will leverage the accepted practice of assessors liaising closely with workplace supervisors to plan and oversee assessment tasks occurring within normal work activities. It is our understanding that the assessor does not physically need to be present for all tasks, nor would it be practical for them to be so. Situations will arise organically and unpredictably within the work placement, and the learner and their supervisor can then review and record the learner’s performance as it occurs or immediately after a relevant occurrence. Evidence can be captured such as patient records and other documentation, although these must be de-identified to prioritise client/patient confidentiality. Evidence for some elements can be observed by the assessor

via video recording or a live-streamed video call. However, patient confidentiality is a limiting factor. It is also possible in some circumstances for the client/patient to be interviewed about their experience of being cared for by the learner under assessment.

### Case study 2. SIT30816 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery

The Certificate III in Commercial Cookery is a qualification from the Tourism, Travel and Hospitality training package. Like the Certificate III in Individual Support, the Commercial Cookery qualification has a practical focus that creates challenges when approaching it in terms of scope for online delivery. Like the other qualification, it requires access to specific social and physical environments. A difference with the Certificate III in Commercial Cookery is that students need access to a range of specialised equipment as found in a commercial kitchen. Another difference is that workplace access requirements are not expressed as a number of hours, but rather in terms such as a number of 'complete food service periods' that reflect actual industry work conditions.

The Certificate III in Commercial Cookery qualification description states that,

*This qualification reflects the role of commercial cooks who use a wide range of well-developed cookery skills and sound knowledge of kitchen operations to prepare food and menu items. Using discretion and judgement, they work with some independence and under limited supervision using plans, policies and procedures to guide work activities.*

*This qualification provides a pathway to work as a commercial cook in organisations such as restaurants, hotels, clubs, pubs, cafés, and coffee shops.*

*No occupational licensing, certification or specific legislative requirements apply to this qualification at the time of publication.*

This case study will focus on the 21 core units in the qualification. One elective unit is required in addition to deliver the full Certificate III in Commercial Cookery. Two units in the core set are derived from the Business Services training package. The table below presents the core units.

*Figure 13. Table of Core units of competency from the Certificate III in Commercial Cookery qualification.*

SITHCCC001	Use food preparation equipment
SITHCCC005	Prepare dishes using basic methods of cookery
SITHCCC006	Prepare appetisers and salads
SITHCCC007	Prepare stocks, sources, and soup
SITHCCC008	Prepare vegetable, fruit, eggs, and farinaceous
SITHCCC012	Prepare poultry dishes
SITHCCC013	Prepare seafood dishes
SITHCCC014	Prepare meat dishes
SITHCCC018	Prepare food to meet special dietary requirements
SITHCCC019	Produce cakes, pastries and breads
SITHCCC020	Work effectively as a cook
SITHKOP001	Clean kitchen premises and equipment
SITHKOP002	Plan and cost basic menus
SITHPAT006	Produce desserts
SITXFSA001	Use hygienic practices for food safety
SITXFSA002	Participate in safe food handling practices
SITXHRM001	Coach others in job skills
SITXINV002	Maintain the quality of perishable items
SITXWHS001	Participate in safe work practices
BSBSUS201	Participate in environmentally sustainable work places
BSBWOR203	Work effectively with others

### Constraints

Analysis of constraints for each core unit is summarised in Table X below. As explained in the Background section above, the basis of the analysis was content in units of competency that suggested a distinct limit on online delivery, focusing on types of constraint. Given the importance of access to specialised equipment (such as found in commercial kitchens), resources (e.g. bulk quantities of food) and environments (e.g. noisy, pressurised), interpersonal relations and the physicality of the work described in the qualification overview, it is to be expected that training and assessment will require access to specific kinds of social interaction, resources, equipment and environments that allow direct in-person practice and demonstration. As indicated, while workplace access is required to complete the qualification, this requirement is not specified in terms of hours.

Figure 14. Table summary of training and assessment demands for core units of competency.

Unit(s)	Specific social interactions	Non-specific social interactions	Workplace access	Access to specialised equipment/resources/environment
SITHCCC001 Use food preparation equipment	Not required	Required <sup>7</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>1</sup>
SITHCCC005 Prepare dishes using basic methods of cookery	Not required	Required <sup>8</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>2</sup>
SITHCCC006 Prepare appetisers and salads	Not required	Required <sup>9</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>3</sup>
SITHCCC007 Prepare stocks, sources, and soup	Not required	Required <sup>10</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>4</sup>
SITHCCC008 Prepare vegetable, fruit, eggs, and farinaceous	Not required	Required <sup>11</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>5</sup>
SITHCCC012 Prepare poultry dishes	Not required	Required <sup>12</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>6</sup>
SITHCCC013 Prepare seafood dishes	Not required	Required <sup>13</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>7</sup>
SITHCCC014 Prepare meat dishes	Not required	Required <sup>14</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>8</sup>
SITHCCC018 Prepare food to meet special dietary requirements	Not required	Required <sup>15</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>9</sup>
SITHCCC019 Produce cakes, pastries and breads	Not required	Required <sup>16</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>10</sup>
SITHCCC020 Work effectively as a cook	Not required	Required <sup>17</sup>	Required <sup>11</sup>	Required <sup>11</sup>
SITHKOP001 Clean kitchen premises and equipment	Not required	Not required <sup>18</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>12</sup>
SITHKOP002 Plan and cost basic menus	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required
SITHPAT006 Produce desserts	Not required	Required <sup>19</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Assessment requirements for all core and elective units: other people must be present during assessment. Assessment in the specified environment mandated with specialised equipment such as fixtures, large, and small equipment, cleaning materials and equipment, industry-realistic ratios of kitchen staff to customers, and etc.

<sup>8</sup> Assessment requirements & conditions same as above with specialised equipment such as fixtures, large, and small equipment, cleaning materials and equipment, staff and customers in an industry workplace during the assessment process or individuals who participate in role plays or simulated activities within a training organisation, and etc.

<sup>9</sup> Assessment requirements & conditions same as above with specialised equipment such as fixtures, large, and small equipment, cleaning materials and equipment, food, staff and customers in an industry workplace during the assessment process or individuals who participate in role plays or simulated activities within a training organisation, and etc.

<sup>10</sup> Same as above (3)

<sup>11</sup> Same as above (3)

<sup>12</sup> Same as above (3)

<sup>13</sup> Same as above (3)

<sup>14</sup> Same as above (3)

<sup>15</sup> Same as above (3)

<sup>16</sup> Same as above (3)

<sup>17</sup> Assessment requirements & conditions same as above with a minimum of 48 complete food service periods in a commercial kitchen

<sup>18</sup> Assessment requirements & conditions same as above within specific food preparation and storage areas including equipment

<sup>19</sup> Same as above (3)

SITXFSA001 Use hygienic practices for food safety	Not required	Not required	Not required	Required <sup>20</sup>
SITXFSA002 Participate in safe food handling practices	Not required	Not required	Not required	Required <sup>21</sup>
SITXHRM001 Coach others in job skills	Not required	Required <sup>22</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>16</sup>
SITXINV002 Maintain the quality of perishable items	Not required	Not required	Not required	Required <sup>23</sup>
SITXWHS001 Participate in safe work practices	Not required	Required <sup>24</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>18</sup>
BSBSUS201 Participate in environmentally sustainable work places	Not required	Required <sup>25</sup>	Not required	Not required <sup>19</sup>
BSBWOR203 Work effectively with others	Not required	Required <sup>26</sup>	Not required	Required <sup>20</sup>

While the SITHCCC020 Work effectively as a cook unit specifies 48 complete food service periods must be demonstrated, the majority of units require access to specialised equipment, resources and/or environments. For example, SITHCCC005 Prepare dishes using basic methods of cookery requires access to fixtures, large, and small equipment, cleaning materials and equipment. The majority of units also require social interactions, although simulation is identified as a way to give students appropriate experience. However, given the need to access specialised equipment, resources and environments, there are significant constraints on the extent full units could be considered for fully online delivery.

#### *Survey data*

ASQA's survey highlighted that the Tourism, Travel and Hospitality training package was the second most impacted after the Community Services package. The qualitative data contained a relatively large number of references to the challenges of delivering the Certificate III in Commercial Cookery units. Reflecting the extent of specialised equipment, resource and environment requirements described in the units, many responses related to these constraints:

The main difficulties was the practical delivery for our practical kitchen components which require the students to be hands-on. It was having to restructure our course fast, and in a way that students wouldn't miss their time in the kitchen to learn the required skills and demonstrate the training package. The qualifications that were most effected was our Certificate III and Certificate IV in Commercial Cookery.

Students were stuck in lock down out of state and unable to return which again we had to plan and negotiate further kitchen hire.

Student has limited resources to practice and demonstrate competency for some tasks.

<sup>20</sup> Simulated industry environment with specialised fixtures and equipment

<sup>21</sup> Same as above (14); all personnel at all levels use skills in the workplace during the course of their daily activities.

<sup>22</sup> Coaching four different colleagues this can be: individuals participating role plays or simulated activities within a simulated environment

<sup>23</sup> Simulated environment with specialised equipment

<sup>24</sup> Mandatory cooperation with employers and their colleagues and/or anyone in the workplace

<sup>25</sup> communication and teamwork skills to recognise procedures; to support team work and participation in a sustainable organisation; individual or team discussion about potential for increased resource efficiency within current work area

<sup>26</sup> required to work in a group environment promoting team commitment and cooperation, supporting team members and dealing effectively with issues, problems and conflict; assess to an actual workplace or simulated environment with office equipment and resources

Due to the restrictions, we were unable to conduct practical classes in our kitchen facilities. SIT training package was most affected. SIT30816 - Certificate III in Commercial Cookery

Problems with visits to the facilities, placing our students at facilities. Employers was not happy to take students for placements. Students were not happy as we were not placing them, not visiting them on time and their course got delayed for months now. We are forced to conduct simulations while restrictions are effective and this resulted in half capacity, this means more wages, more batches, more staff, more coordination. The affected courses are CHC33015, CHC30113, SIT30816, SIT40516.

Licensing requirements attached to delivery premises where practical delivery and assessment occurred were also closed due to COVID restrictions. No practical trainer and or assessment could occur in these venues. Alternative venues were either also closed, far too expensive to hire, or not suitable for training and assessment. SIT30816, SIT31016, SIT40516, SIT40716 [were most impacted units].

Apart from difficulties securing work placements for students, adherence to COVID restrictions added another level of complexity for providers:

ECE, Health and Cookery - Due to restrictions and social distancing we had to pause manual handling units, first aid units & cookery units. As soon as it was possible to safely invite small groups back we had to provide additional practical training and assessment times and complete with smaller groups of students invited in, as these were required to be completed before they went out on Work placement in these programs.

Certificate iii in commercial cookery mostly affected. Because of the restrictions, students did not able to attend the practical class. All types of the gathering were restricted.

[We offer] Cert III and Cert IV in Commercial Cookery where a huge component of practical training and Work Based Training is included. Due to COVID-19 restrictions in Victoria we could deliver the theory component of the units and then scheduled the practical in the kitchens and WBT as and when the restrictions were lifted.

Students could not be allowed to come for practical's and than we could only allow a smaller number of classes and students at one time leading to huge pressure on physical infrastructure and increased training cost. Cookery training was affected but it bounced back after a few months. The whole training plans had to be made and re made regularly due to uncertainty of COVID restrictions and students also got caught up interstate.

Delays in training and assessment were often the result of difficulties accessing appropriate work places and complying with COVID restrictions:

Didn't have opportunities for online simulated environments in Cookery, whereby the students had to wait till the restrictions were lifted to be able to complete the practical learning in the commercial kitchen and therefore, had experienced delays in completion of some UOCs.

The practical training and assessment were conducted ONLY when the restrictions were lifted. The qualifications affected due to COVID-19 were Cert III and Cert IV in Commercial Cookery and Cert III in Automotive technology.

Commercial Cookery -all classes had to be delayed and it was difficult to catch up the students in an organised manner. Many students due to financial or mental health problems were absent often.

Another difficulty stemmed from the fact that many students studying commercial cookery are employed, and COVID severely impacted employment levels in hospitality:

Our commercial cookery certificate IV was greatly affected by Covid-19. This was due to students losing their jobs as their workplaces in hospitality were closing and deeply effected by the restrictions, along with students not able to undertake their workplacement lead to them unable to pay their fees. We had to place students that had to complete their placement in that term, to the jobs that we did have available in order for them to complete their course in the timeframe.

The picture provided by respondents highlights the amount of constraints built into the Certificate III in Commercial Cookery, and the extremely demanding environment providers, students and employers were placed in.

#### *Opportunities*

The core units within SIT30816 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery are fundamentally practical in nature. They require hands-on interaction with specialised equipment, first-hand experience of an active commercial kitchen environment, and physical practice with, and enactment of, learnings. However, for many units there are also opportunities to engage with some learning online. These online learning opportunities could be leveraged to deepen learner understanding of many foundation concepts and principles, before then practicing and applying those learnings in a commercial kitchen environment. SITXFSA002 Participate in safe food handling practices is a good example of this.

Notably, the process of reviewing each unit for its online opportunities and constraints has revealed an interesting consideration. That is, each unit should not be considered in a vacuum, they must instead be considered within the context of the qualification at hand. BSBWOR203 Work effectively with others is one example. In the context of commercial cookery, communication with colleagues is enacted in fast-paced, loud, physically active environments. This means that while some online learning including via role play will be relevant, learners will need some physical presence in a commercial kitchen to complete this unit and authentically learn how to work effectively with team members in those busy environments. This same unit is present within Certificate III in Travel, which is by nature intended to prepare learners for an office-based occupation. Reviewing the unit in that context could result in significantly more online opportunities being leveraged. SITXHRM001 Coach others in job skills is another example of a unit whose online learning opportunities could be interpreted differently depending on the nature of qualification context.

The analysis of opportunities presented in Table 8 below reflects a way to balance the many factors to draw out potential for online delivery despite the significant constraints present in the qualification.

Figure 15. Table displaying Indications of online delivery potential in core units of the Certificate III in Commercial Cookery.

Units of Competency  <i>*(1) Little; (2) Some; (3) Much</i>	Knowledge Learnings + Evidences						Performance Learnings + Evidences					
	Online (Synch and/or asynch)			Workplace (Real and/or realistic)			Online (Synch and/or asynch)			Workplace (Real and/or realistic)		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
BSBSUS211 Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices		✓		✓				✓				✓
BSBWOR203 Work effectively with others		✓		✓				✓				✓
SITHCCC001 Use food preparation equipment	✓					✓	✓					✓
SITHCCC005 Prepare dishes using basic methods of cookery	✓					✓	✓					✓
SITHCCC006 Prepare appetisers and salads	✓					✓	✓					✓
SITHCCC007 Prepare stocks, sauces and soups	✓					✓	✓					✓
SITHCCC008 Prepare vegetable, fruit, egg and farinaceous dishes	✓					✓	✓					✓
SITHCCC012 Prepare poultry dishes	✓					✓	✓					✓
SITHCCC013 Prepare seafood dishes	✓					✓	✓					✓
SITHCCC014 Prepare meat dishes	✓					✓	✓					✓
SITHCCC018 Prepare food to meet special dietary requirements		✓				✓		✓				✓
SITHCCC019 Produce cakes, pastries and breads	✓					✓	✓					✓
SITHCCC020 Work effectively as a cook		✓				✓		✓				✓
SITHKOP001 Clean kitchen premises and equipment		✓				✓	✓					✓



SITHKOP002 Plan and cost basic menus	✓	✓	✓	✓
SITHPAT006 Produce desserts	✓	✓	✓	✓
SITXFSA001 Use hygienic practices for food safety	✓	✓	✓	✓
SITXFSA002 Participate in safe food handling practices	✓	✓	✓	✓
SITXHRM001 Coach others in job skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
SITXINV002 Maintain the quality of perishable items	✓	✓	✓	✓
SITXWHS001 Participate in safe work practices	✓	✓	✓	✓

This qualification incorporates significant real-world exposure to, and time working in, an active commercial kitchen environment. Many of the 21 core units have a physicality to them that requires students to actively interact with specialised equipment and situations. These cannot be replicated online. However, online opportunities abound to develop learner understandings of fundamental concepts ahead of those hands-on elements. Some units have substantial knowledge understandings that can be developed online, and online tools can be leveraged to provide support to students as they experience activities in a commercial kitchen.

- For example, for unit SITHCCC013 Prepare seafood dishes, an educator could make an instructive demonstration video about preparing and filleting fish. A range of short supplementary videos could address the peculiarities of different fish species. Those supplementary videos enable students to engage as needed on a just-in-time basis.
- Unit SITHCCC018 Prepare food to meet special dietary requirements, lends itself to scenario-driven online challenges whereby students role play discussing dietary needs with customers, and then present their proposed solution including the reasoning and ingredient list.
- Units such as BSBSUS211 and BSBWOR203 include elements of effective communication. Guest chefs could be asked to join a breakout room of a live online session. Students could take turns to move through the breakout rooms, practicing presenting ideas or feedback to real chefs who would respond realistically. Students can practice responding to authentic 'chef speak' (tone, volume, verbosity) online.
- Other online tools such as photographs and videos taken in active commercial kitchens can be utilised for learners to name observed problems, mistakes, or hazards. Videos of challenging scenarios can be utilised and learners asked to rewrite the ending, that is, identify how a situation could have been better navigated. Learners can also bring challenging situations that they experience in their work placements back to the online class

for the group to wrangle with or debrief and jointly learn from. Crowd-sourcing real scenarios helps learners online feel connected to each other and the authenticity of their learning.

Notably, units in this qualification tend to have an element of foundation knowledge or understandings that accompany hands-on physical interaction with specialised. Some units do lend themselves to a linear understanding-practice approach, others have multiple short understanding-practice-understanding-practice cycles. Online tools can be leveraged particularly for the understanding stages to better equipping the learners for the practice stages.

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