Consultation Insights Report

Certificate III Individual Support

May 2026

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Government of South Australia

Department of State Development

Scope

The purpose of the consultation was to seek feedback on the proposed additional metrics for consideration in the 2026-27 allocation process.

Mechanisms for engagement included:

- **Online survey**
- **Online facilitated information session**

Background

In September 2025, Skills SA advised non-government RTOs that the Certificate III in Individual Support would transition to a managed allocation model.

The transition from an on-demand model to managed allocation for subsidised places is intended to support a sustainable pipeline of fit-for-purpose skilled workers for the care sector. It also reflects the government's broader commitment to better connect learners to employment outcomes and improve qualification completion rates.

Under this approach, RTOs with a demonstrated track record of high-quality training delivery, completion outcomes and effective employer partnerships were invited to deliver subsidised training places in 2025-26.

To inform the 2026-27 allocation process, the consultation invited feedback on five additional principles and associated metrics:

Principle	Metric
Not-for-profit status	Not-for-profit status of RTO
Improved student outcomes	Proportion of students indicating improved employment status after training
Quality training delivery	Student satisfaction with the overall quality of training
Quality training delivery	Satisfactory track record of meeting contract/compliance obligations. Specifically: • Compliant with the requirements of the Upfront Assessment of Need Guidelines • Skills SA audit corrective actions satisfactorily resolved • Skills SA reporting/acquittal obligations fulfilled • Training Accounts managed appropriately • Payment codes used appropriately • No outstanding Skills SA repayments
Quality training delivery	Delivery mode of training (in person, online or blended)
Quality training delivery	Work placement arrangements (documented work placement agreements between RTO and host employers)
Sustainable delivery	RTO course scope diversification
Sustainable delivery	Minimum class size

Consultation response

Registered training organisations who were in scope for an allocation of places in 2025-26 were invited to participate in the consultation.

22 survey responses

33 RTO representatives attended online session

Metrics participants considered most important

Survey responses

	High importance						Low importance	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not-for-profit status of RTO	3 14.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 4.8%	0 0.0%	1 4.8%	1 4.8%	15 71.4%
Proportion of students indicating improved employment status after training	2 9.1%	3 13.6%	4 18.2%	5 22.7%	4 18.2%	4 18.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Student satisfaction with the overall quality of training	3 13.6%	6 27.3%	6 27.3%	2 9.1%	4 18.2%	1 4.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Satisfactory track record of meeting contract/compliance obligations	8 36.4%	5 22.7%	5 22.7%	4 18.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
RTO course scope diversification	0 0.0%	1 4.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 31.8%	10 45.5%	4 18.2%
Minimum class size	0 0.0%	1 4.8%	1 4.8%	1 4.8%	1 4.8%	6 28.6%	9 42.9%	2 9.5%
Delivery mode of training (in person, online or blended)	5 22.7%	2 9.1%	1 4.5%	5 22.7%	8 36.4%	1 4.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Work placement arrangements (documented work placement agreements between RTO and host employers)	1 4.5%	4 18.2%	5 22.7%	4 18.2%	5 22.7%	1 4.5%	1 4.5%	1 4.5%

Summary of insights

Overall, participants consistently prioritised measures linked to quality, compliance and learner outcomes, with structural or commercial factors ranked lower.

Highest priority metrics

- Compliance and contract performance emerged as the most important metric overall. A strong track record of meeting obligations was ranked within the top three by 81.8% of respondents, making it the clearest priority.
- Student satisfaction with training quality was also highly valued, ranked in the top three by 68.2% of respondents, and frequently identified in consultation as a proxy for overall quality and learner support.
- Quality of training delivery (qualitative feedback) reinforced survey findings, with participants linking this directly to safe, competent graduates and confidence in provider capability.

Strong secondary priorities

- Employment and job outcomes were considered a key indicator of a "good provider", though survey results placed this metric mid-range overall, reflecting recognition that outcomes vary depending on learner pathways (e.g. progression to further study).
- Work placements and employer involvement were consistently highlighted in the consultation as important factors for work-readiness, training credibility and supporting employment outcomes.
- Learner support was closely associated with student satisfaction and seen as critical to achieving good outcomes.

Delivery considerations

- Delivery mode and duration attracted strong views in the consultation, particularly the position for ensuring against fully online delivery. Participants favoured face-to-face or blended models with adequate training duration.
- However, in survey rankings, delivery mode sat mid-range, suggesting it is important but secondary to core quality and outcomes measures.

Lower priority metrics

- Not-for-profit status of providers was clearly the least important metric, ranked lowest by 71.4% of respondents.
- Class size and provider course diversification were also low priorities in the survey (predominantly ranked in the lower tiers), although consultation feedback noted practical concerns about financial viability of very small allocations.

Cross-cutting themes

- Participants emphasised a strong preference for "quality over quantity" across all metrics.
- There was consistent support for maintaining student and employer choice within the training market.
- Metrics were expected to balance accountability (compliance) with meaningful indicators of quality and outcomes, rather than focusing on provider characteristics or administrative factors.

Metrics participants suggested should not be considered

Survey responses

	Responses	Result %
Not-for-profit status of RTO	17	34.7%
Proportion of students indicating improved employment status after training	0	0.0%
Student satisfaction with the overall quality of training	0	0.0%
Satisfactory track record of meeting contract/compliance obligations	0	0.0%
RTO course scope diversification	13	26.5%
Minimum class size	14	28.6%
Delivery mode of training (in person, online or blended)	3	6.1%
Work placement arrangements (documented work placement agreements between RTO and host employers)	2	4.1%

Summary of insights

Overall, respondents showed a clear consensus that metrics should focus on quality and outcomes, with limited support for factors related to provider structure or administration.

Metrics with strongest support for removal

- **Not-for-profit status** received the highest support for exclusion, with 34.7% of respondents indicating it should not be considered.
  - Consultation feedback reinforced this position, with most participants arguing that business structure should not influence allocation decisions, as expectations around quality, compliance and outcomes should be consistent across all providers.
  - A minority view suggested not-for-profit status may provide additional assurance that public funding delivers community benefit, particularly in community services contexts, but this was not the dominant position.

- **Minimum class size** (28.6%) and RTO course scope diversification (26.5%) also attracted notable support for removal.
  - Through consultation discussion, participants questioned the policy rationale for including scope diversification, indicating it was not clearly linked to quality or outcomes.

Metrics with low support for removal

- There was minimal support for removing delivery-related metrics, including:
  - Delivery mode (6.1%)
  - Work placement arrangements (4.1%)
- This aligns with broader consultation feedback emphasising the importance of face-to-face or blended delivery and practical, work-based experience as key contributors to training quality and job readiness.

Metrics unanimously supported for retention

- No respondents supported removing the following core metrics:
  - **Student satisfaction**
  - **Employment outcomes (improved employment status)**
  - **Compliance / track record of meeting obligations**
- This indicates a strong consensus that these measures are fundamental indicators of provider performance and training quality.

Additional considerations raised in consultation

- Use of NCVER data as a primary metric was questioned, with participants noting it can be:
  - Retrospective (lagging by up to two years)
  - Insufficiently granular, particularly at the qualification level
- As a result, it was viewed as less suitable as a standalone or decisive metric and better used alongside more current and targeted indicators.

Elements that participants considered should be excluded from the satisfactory track record metric

Survey responses

	Responses	Result %
Compliant with the requirements of the Upfront Assessment of Need Guidelines	1	10%
Skills SA audit corrective actions satisfactorily resolved	0	0.0%
Skills SA reporting/acquittal obligations fulfilled	0	0.0%
Training Accounts managed appropriately	0	0.0%
Payment codes used appropriately	4	40.0%
No outstanding Skills SA repayments	5	50.0%

Summary of insights

Overall, participants supported retaining core indicators of compliance, quality and organisational capability within the satisfactory track record metric, while excluding lower-value administrative or technical elements that do not meaningfully reflect provider performance.

Elements with strongest support for exclusion

- Feedback showed clear support for excluding administrative and financial compliance items, which were not considered indicative of overall quality:
  - No outstanding Skills SA repayments – selected by 50% of respondents
  - Payment codes used appropriately – selected by 40% of respondents
- Consultation discussions reinforced this position, suggesting that these elements:
  - May reflect one-off administrative errors rather than systemic issues
  - Should be assessed with context and judgement, particularly where there is no evidence of repeated non-compliance or patterns of behaviour

Limited support for excluding core compliance measures

- There was very low or no support for removing core indicators of compliance and capability:
  - Upfront Assessment of Need compliance – selected by only 10%
  - Audit corrective actions, reporting/acquittals, and training account management – 0% selected for exclusion
- Participants consistently viewed these as fundamental to understanding whether a provider is well-governed and capable of delivering quality training safely and consistently.

Key principle – distinguishing systemic performance from administrative issues

- A clear theme across survey and consultation feedback was the need to distinguish between:
  - Systemic performance issues (e.g. repeated compliance failures, poor governance), and
  - Minor or isolated administrative issues (e.g. coding or transactional errors)
- Participants indicated that only the former should materially influence a provider's "satisfactory track record".

Related considerations raised through consultation

- Compliance history, governance and quality performance were strongly endorsed as the core components of a meaningful track record metric.
- Employment and client outcomes were also highlighted as important indicators of provider effectiveness, particularly in reflecting the real-world impact of training.
- Participants emphasised the need to interpret outcome-based metrics in context, noting that:
  - Providers working with disadvantaged or more complex learner cohorts may have different completion or satisfaction profiles
- There was also caution that:
  - Short-course satisfaction measures may be biased or inflated, and
  - Should not be relied on in isolation without supporting evidence of quality and outcomes.

Additional themes/metrics that should be considered when determining allocations (free text in survey and open discussion in online session)

Overall, respondents supported broadening the allocation approach to include a more balanced and multi-dimensional set of metrics, shifting beyond enrolments and completions to better reflect training quality, workforce outcomes, and alignment with industry needs.

Themes and areas of focus include:

Training quality and compliance

- Respondents strongly supported measures that assess the integrity, consistency and rigour of training delivery, including appropriate course duration, robust assessment practices and sustained performance over time. This reflects a clear concern about low-quality, high-volume delivery and a desire to protect the integrity of the qualification.

Employment and workforce outcomes

- There was broad agreement amongst respondents that allocations should reflect the real-world impact of training, including employment in the relevant sector, sustained employment outcomes, and progression to further study or traineeships. Participants emphasised that the system should prioritise job-ready graduates rather than completion volumes alone.

Industry engagement and pathways

- Both survey and consultation feedback highlighted the importance of strong employer connections, including active partnerships, meaningful work placements and evidence of pathways into employment. These elements were seen as critical to ensuring training is responsive to workforce demand and produces work-ready graduates.

Delivery model and provider capability

- Participants supported including measures of delivery approach and capability, particularly the balance between face-to-face and blended learning, use of practical training environments, and trainer capability. Consultation feedback reinforced the consistent view that online-only delivery is not suitable for this qualification.

Equity, access and regional coverage

- There was strong support for recognising providers that deliver to disadvantaged learners and regional communities, alongside those with strong student support capability. Participants emphasised that metrics should not disadvantage providers working with higher-needs cohorts and should ensure equitable access to training.

Provider performance and system value

- Suggested measures included past performance (with appropriate context), compliance history, alignment with workforce demand, and evidence of innovation or continuous improvement. These were seen as important for assessing the overall contribution of providers to the training system.

Additional themes from consultation

Supporting local South Australian delivery

- Some participants expressed a preference for ensuring South Australia-based providers are represented in the provider mix, particularly where this supports local workforce outcomes.

Use of third-party data sources

- Participants suggested incorporating external performance data, such as learner and employer survey results, to strengthen the evidence base and provide independent validation of provider performance.

Validation through observation and qualitative assessment

- There was support for supplementing quantitative metrics with qualitative assurance mechanisms, such as site visits or “drop-in” observations, to verify that reported delivery quality aligns with practice.

Procurement-style approach with informed judgement

- Participants supported a more structured, procurement-style application process, combined with maintaining a “human in the loop” to apply judgement, context and qualitative insight when determining allocations.

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