



Fact sheet 2: Improving post-school transitions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students – the need for flexibility

Flexibility is a significant factor in the successful delivery of vocational learning and VET for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, applicable to all aspects of how learning is structured, delivered and assessed.

Flexibility recognises diverse learners need differentiated learning strategies; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners are not all the same. Flexibility should not be equated with reduced academic standards or quality.

Flexibility is needed in identifying and addressing the learning strengths and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities, and in approaches to teaching and assessment.

Courses delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students should be culturally responsive, related to future pathways and interests informed by knowledge of skills shortages, and delivered by culturally competent personnel.

Courses should suit small groups and consider the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with a range of numeracy and English literacy skills.

Consideration must be given to building the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the world of work. Employers and the workplace can be very different from school where young people are nurtured and encouraged to participate.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people need to be equipped with the skills to operate in a cross-cultural employment environment where economic productivity is the key.

Strategies schools can employ

- Flexibility in work experience and work placements to include part-time, casual, structured holiday and volunteer work.
- Flexible pedagogical approaches, for example allowing group work and intensive block training.
- Flexible entry requirements for VET courses, where appropriate, taking into account other qualities in addition to traditional criteria. This could include for example demonstrated attitudes such as high level of interest in the specific area, evidence of commitment or achievement in other areas such as community service and sport.
- Flexible assessment in VET where possible and appropriate, for example finding alternatives to standard written assessment tasks.
- Continue to review and adjust strategies to meet the shifting needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Use evidence and experience to inform adjustments.
- Where delivery is being undertaken by a separate registered training organisation (RTO), co-design of learning activities should be undertaken with the school and, in particular, culturally competent teachers familiar with the learning styles, needs and aspirations of individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Partner with training providers and employers who are culturally responsive and provide a culturally safe learning/workplace.
- Flexible course structures, where appropriate, including adjusting timetables and training calendars to account for community and cultural responsibilities.

