

VET Training Advisor Capability and Competency Framework

Enabling the success of this critical navigating role in Aotearoa's VET system

Training Advisors are the critical learning navigators in the VET system for both learning completions and future workforce development.

“ Navigators are recognised as highly skilled, highly valuable individuals who are both at the centre and essential to the success of, any journey. They are required to understand the systems in which they operate and how to utilise the tools available to them to guide a group of people to safely and efficiently arrive at the intended destination. They must also have the knowledge and skills necessary to support those they are guiding to respond appropriately to challenges that arise during the journey. Their effectiveness therefore depends on a combination of their own knowledge and skills, the availability and quality of the tools they can access, and their relationships with the other people involved in the journey.

Allen + Clarke “Investigating training advisors in work-based learning in the construction and infrastructure sector.”, September 2024

Defining the Training Advisor role

The Training Advisor role has grown organically stemming from the code of practice for work-based learning and takes many forms in many types of organisation and many types of programme.

The opportunity is a shared definition of the role that can lift the value of Training Advisors with everyone they serve.

They have a critical part to play in the success of the sector, and therefore, deserve the same level of guidance that they provide to our ākonga.

A cross-sector workshop identified that the definition of the Training Advisor role is an important step for the sector. A shared understanding across providers and Training Advisors themselves of the requirements of the role will help everyone be more successful in terms of ākonga and employer outcomes, including completions, retentions and sector workforce development.

This framework was developed by representatives from across the sector via a combination of in-person and online workshops. The work was initiated off the back of the Allen + Clarke research upon which a working group then layered on their personal expertise and experiences. The process was facilitated by Martin Grant from Adaptation.

The framework aims to provide a base of well informed and considered knowledge in two primary use cases:

1. An organisation can contextualise the content to have an effective Training Advisor role in their unique setting based on their organisation type or size, technical area or other defining characteristics like the current responsibilities of their Training Advisors or People and Culture policies such as salary bands.
2. Training Advisors can use it to reflect on their understanding of their role and then use these insights in mapping their own professional development aspirations and pathway.

While the research was focused on work-based learning programme Training Advisers, the ‘navigating’ value of the role, and therefore the framework, applies in many learning contexts.

This framework is located [here in an editable format](#). The Allen + Clarke research is [here](#). The creation of this framework was facilitated by Martin Grant.

DEFINITIONS

Ākonga: There is a wide diversity of people supported by Training Advisors in diverse learning settings including apprentices, people on traineeships and those who have been on the tools for many years who are now wanting to gain qualifications who don’t see themselves as an ‘apprentice’ but an adult learner. Due to this diversity, this document uses ākonga as a broad term to capture anyone learning on any type of programme.

Capability: The broad, high-level abilities to perform a role or function effectively.

Competency: The levels of proficiency across specific aspects of their role within a capability area. These competencies can be developed as a progression from developing through proficient to advanced.

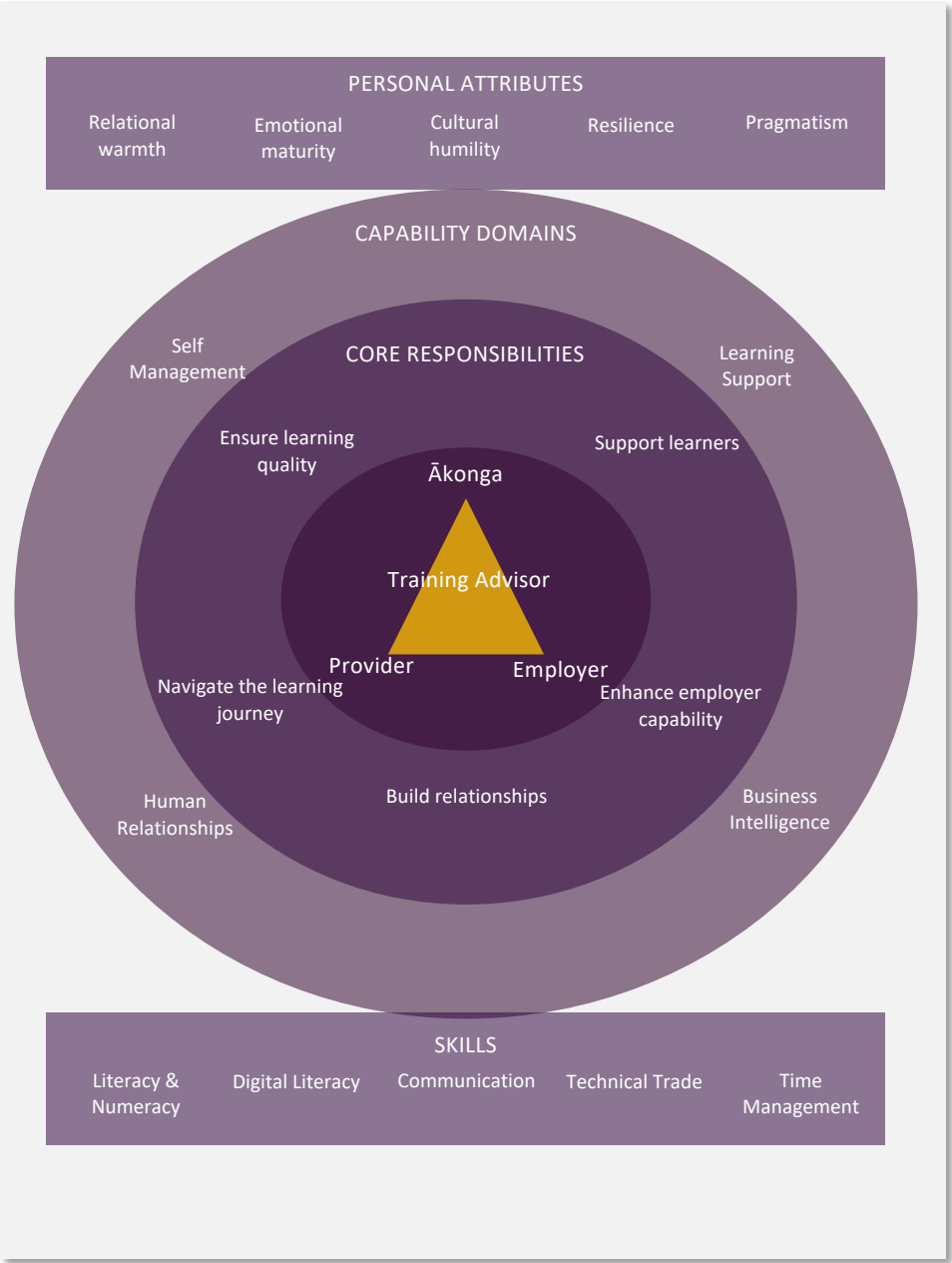
Skill: The task-specific, technical or practical abilities that can be learned and applied to complete specific activities.

Overview of the Role

The Training Advisor role has both complexity and relational depth.

The requirements in this framework will best prepare the person in the role to operate comfortably and effectively in this space.

The necessary capabilities and competencies are encompassed within a set of desirable personal attributes and a few fundamental skills.



Commentary

- The Training Advisor serves as a vital navigator for ākonga, employers, and training providers as they go through the complex journey of learning in the vocational education landscape.
- They are like conductors, bringing people and processes together in harmony, with a leadership stance of what best practice looks like.
- They build bridges between learning and working, ensuring all parties understand their roles within the ākonga's learning journey.
- As a trusted advisor to everyone involved, they provide the steady guidance needed to keep current ākonga on track while also helping employers develop their future workforce.
- They champion ākonga and industry needs, creating the relationships and pathways that transform people into skilled qualified professionals who stay in the sector in a rewarding career contributing to the sector's future success.
- Training Advisors will also help their employer build their business with future placement opportunities with the employers if they are operating in a work-based learning context. But, it is important to recognise business development is a byproduct of their primary reason for being.

Capability Domains

The eleven capabilities under the four domains give the Training Advisor the ability to put their personal support into a complex commercial setting in a challenging sector.

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS	
Emotional & Interpersonal Intelligence	Be able to build and maintain trust-based relationships while reading and responding to emotional dynamics in both individuals and groups.
Cultural Intelligence	Be able to understand the cultural context and adapt approaches.
BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE	
Commercial Acumen	Be able to understand the employer's realities and navigate business structures and authorities to balance commercial realities with learner outcomes.
Industry & Technical Knowledge & Currency	Be able to apply current industry and technical knowledge flexibly across contexts while bridging technical expertise with training requirements.
Business Relationship Cultivation	Be able to develop sustainable ākonga pipelines through trust-based relationships while facilitating strategic workforce conversations.
LEARNING SUPPORT	
Learning Pathway Support	Be able to assess and provide learning needs-based support guiding diverse ākonga through complex pathway decisions and transitions.
Pastoral Care	Be able to provide or refer for pastoral care support meeting Tertiary Pastoral Care code requirements while maintaining appropriate professional role boundaries.
Compliance & Quality Assurance	Be able to conduct valid and reliable assessments as required while collaborating with assessors and verifiers to fulfil NZQA, TEC and other legal requirements.
SELF-MANAGEMENT	
Personal Workload Management	Be able to manage competing and complex caseloads while maintaining quality, optimising personal productivity.
Personal Wellbeing	Be able to maintain sustainable work-life boundaries while managing the emotional demands of the role.
Autonomy and Resilience	Be able to make sound decisions in ambiguous or isolated situations balancing independence with appropriate escalation.

Competency Progressions*

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT (~ 12-18 MONTHS)	ADVANCED
Emotional & Interpersonal Intelligence	Identify and describe emotional dynamics in individuals. State professional boundaries and ethical standards. Recognise competing expectations from stakeholders.	Apply conflict resolution techniques in complex situations. Analyse power dynamics between stakeholders. Demonstrate balanced responses to competing expectations.	Evaluate and create preventative approaches to conflict. Design strategies to challenge discrimination. Evaluate emotional intelligence across interactions for improvement
Cultural Intelligence	Recognise cultural diversity in communication approaches. Describe basic cultural frameworks and Te Tiriti principles.	Apply cultural frameworks to diverse learner situations. Analyse cultural complexities in various settings. Adapt approaches based on cultural context.	Create culturally responsive strategies. Evaluate cultural practices for continuous improvement. Formulate new approaches to cultural challenges.
BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE			
Commercial Acumen	Identify business structures and authorities. Describe commercial realities affecting learners. Recognise basic business operational needs. .	Apply understanding of business strategy to learner outcomes. Analyse commercial pressures versus learner needs. Demonstrate balanced decision-making.	Evaluate employer practices and create improvement strategies. Formulate constructive challenges to employer practices. Design advocacy approaches for employers and the sector
Industry & Technical Knowledge & Currency	Describe technical expertise relevant to training. Identify connections between industry and training requirements.	Apply industry knowledge flexibly across different contexts. Analyse technical requirements for specific learner needs. Demonstrate current industry understanding.	Evaluate future industry trends with current training. Create informed conversations with industry leaders. Evaluate industry developments for training implications
Business Relationship Cultivation	Identify potential learner pipeline opportunities. Describe trust-based relationship principles. Recognise employer workforce needs.	Apply relationship-building strategies for sustainable pipelines. Demonstrate facilitation of workforce conversations. Analyse employer workforce investment opportunities.	Create strategic influence over employer workforce investment. Evaluate and design innovative relationship approaches. Formulate long-term sector development strategies.
LEARNING SUPPORT			
Learning Pathway Support	Identify learner support needs and available services. Describe pathway options and requirements. Recognise when case escalation is needed.	Apply assessment techniques to prioritise learner needs. Analyse complex pathway decisions for diverse learners. Demonstrate effective support through transitions.	Create innovative pathway solutions for complex cases. Evaluate pathway effectiveness and design improvements. Evaluate support approaches across learner diversity.
Pastoral Care	Identify pastoral care needs and appropriate referral services. Describe Pastoral Care Code requirements. Recognise professional role boundaries.	Apply pastoral care support within professional boundaries. Demonstrate wider care support while maintaining balance. Analyse complex pastoral care situations.	Create holistic pastoral care networks with service providers. Evaluate pastoral care effectiveness. Design comprehensive support frameworks.
Compliance & Quality Assurance	Identify NZQA, TEC and legal requirements. Describe collaboration processes with assessors. Recognise learning quality indicators.	Apply valid and reliable assessment techniques. Demonstrate monitoring and reporting of KPIs. Analyse compliance requirements in context.	Create innovative compliance and quality approaches. Evaluate assessment validity and design improvements. Evaluate quality assurance across all activities.
SELF-MANAGEMENT			
Personal Workload Management	Identify competing demands and caseload priorities. Describe quality maintenance requirements. Recognise workload capacity limits.	Apply productivity and time management techniques. Demonstrate effective management of complex caseloads. Analyse workload distribution for optimal outcomes.	Create realistic caseload negotiation strategies. Evaluate workload management effectiveness. Design innovative personal productivity approaches.
Personal Wellbeing	Identify emotional demands of the role. Recognise signs of work-life imbalance. Describe basic wellbeing practices.	Apply sustainable work-life boundary strategies. Demonstrate effective management of emotional demands. Analyse personal wellbeing needs.	Create resilient practices for challenging situations. Evaluate wellbeing strategies and design improvements. Formulate comprehensive wellbeing frameworks.
Autonomy and Resilience	Identify when consultation or escalation is needed. Recognize ambiguous situations requiring decisions. Describe growth mindset principles.	Apply sound decision-making in isolated situations. Demonstrate appropriate balance of independence and consultation. Analyse complex situations for decision-making.	Create innovative solutions to ambiguous challenges. Evaluate decision-making effectiveness. Design professional development approaches using growth mindset.

* The progressions have been informed by [Bloom’s Taxonomy of Measurable Verbs](#)

Primary Responsibilities & Key Relationships

The responsibilities and relationships of the role centre around the Training Advisor being a strategic connector who builds relationships, navigates complexity and ensures quality outcomes.

Primary Responsibilities / Core Functions

- Support ākonga: Ensure ākonga are safe, well-supported, and cared for throughout their learning building their confidence and self-belief to support their growth.
- Navigate the learning journey to support completion and retention: Guide all parties through qualification pathways, requirements, and support services to ensure ākonga progress through their qualifications, achieve successful completion and move forward into a career in the sector.
- Ensure learning quality delivery: Monitor and support learning to meet standards and qualification requirements.
- Enhance employer capabilities and competencies: Develop employers' understanding of the requirements of their role in an ākonga's development and their future workforce development based on the Training Advisor's own knowledge of their people in roles across the firm.
- Build relationships: Foster productive partnerships with and between ākonga, employers, and training providers

Primary Relationships

- The Ākonga: Individual learners throughout their journey including their whānau/family members
- Employer Representatives: Multiple employer employees across levels - from leadership to direct supervisors and trainers, also contractors where learners may work under their supervision
- Training Organisation Colleagues: Internal team members including Trainers/Tutors, Relationship/Account Managers, Assessors and Verifiers.

Extended Network

- Ākonga Support Service Providers: Student support services, pastoral care providers, learning support specialists, and other wraparound services as needed
- Industry Bodies/Professional Organizations
- Other Training Providers
- NZQA

Personal Qualities

The Training Advisor as an individual requires a unique combination of personal qualities, practical skills, and experiences that enables effective navigation of complex human and system dynamics.

Personal Attributes

- Relational warmth: Ability to build trust and rapport with diverse people.
- Emotional maturity: Managing complex situations without becoming overwhelmed or over-involved.
- Cultural humility: Genuine respect for diverse backgrounds and learning style.
- Resilience: Thriving in constantly changing environments with competing demands.
- Pragmatism: Balancing ideal outcomes with practical realities.

Skills

- Literacy and Numeracy: Strong written and numerical skills to support documentation and learner assistance.
- Digital Literacy: Proficient in digital tools and platforms.
- Communication: Effective listening, verbal and written communication across diverse stakeholder groups.
- Trade Technical: Trade-specific skills that enable correct learning journey navigation.
- Time Management: Proficient in successfully balancing competing demands on time.

Qualification and Experience Areas

- Industry and trade level technical knowledge
- Vocational and adult education
- Mentoring or coaching
- Business or commercial experience
- Experience with diverse learners
- Case management
- Conflict resolution
- Cultural intelligence particularly Māori and Pasifika

Essential Duties

The Training Advisor's operational duties span seven key areas that translate the primary responsibilities into day-to-day practice.

These duties encompass the full cycle of ākonga support from initial planning through to completion, while maintaining compliance standards and managing multiple relationships across multiple caseloads.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES	
Ākonga Learning Journey Management	For example, develop and maintain individual Learning Management Plans with ongoing adjustments, monitor ākonga progress and implement interventions when needed and support ākonga agency and ownership of their qualification journey, etc.
Tripartite Engagement and Communication	For example, conduct regular ākonga visits and employer site visits according to guidelines, facilitate productive discussions between ākonga and employers, work with the provider management structures, systems and processes, etc.
Documentation and Compliance	For example, complete required artifacts and maintain accurate ākonga progress records, meet all TEC and NZQA requirements within regulatory frameworks, document all engagements comprehensively while adhering to privacy protocols, maintain contact management systems for effective engagement, etc.
Progress Monitoring and Assessment	For example, evaluate ākonga progress against goals and provide constructive feedback, monitor and report on educational performance indicators, conduct mandatory Modern Apprenticeship Coordinator (MAC) visits as required, etc.
Support Services Coordination	For example, facilitate connections to appropriate support services and resources, coordinate pastoral care within professional boundaries, identify and address learning support needs, etc.
Planning and Forecasting	For example, project training plans at appropriate timescales (weekly to quarterly), anticipate ākonga needs and upcoming pathway milestones, predict completions, challenges, and progression rates, etc.
Caseload Management	For example, manage multiple ākonga with varying needs and timelines, prioritise interventions based on risk and urgency, balance competing demands from different stakeholders, coordinate schedules for site visits and meetings across diverse locations, etc.

Example Job Description: Training Advisor in Work-Based Learning Context

Title: Training Advisor

Reporting To: National Training Advisor Manager

Purpose:

You will serve as a vital navigator for ākonga, employers, and training organisations as they go through the complex journey of learning in the vocational education landscape.

You are like a conductor, bringing people and processes together in harmony, taking a leadership stance of what best practice looks like.

You will need to build bridges between learning and working, ensuring all parties understand their roles within the apprentice’s learning journey.

As a trusted advisor to everyone involved, you will provide the steady guidance needed to keep ākonga on track while also helping employers develop their future workforce.

You will have to champion both ākonga and industry needs, creating the relationships and pathways that transform people into skilled qualified professionals who stay in the sector in a rewarding career contributing to the sector’s future success.

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Ensure learning quality delivery: Monitor and support learning to meet standards and qualification requirements.

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Essential Duties

- Ākonga Learning Journey Management
- Tripartite Engagement and Communication
- Documentation and Compliance
- Progress Monitoring and Assessment
- Support Services Coordination
- Planning and Forecasting
- Caseload Management

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