Audiometry Qualification Review Project

Consultation Strategy

September 2024

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1.   Introduction

1.1 Project details

Project full name and code:	Audiometry Qualification Review Project
Project shortform name:	Audiometry
Project Manager:	Evan Cooper
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1.2 Purpose of the Consultation Strategy

The purpose of the Consultation Strategy is to support the review of Audiometry qualifications within the *HLT Health Training Package*. The strategy includes identification and mapping of key stakeholder groups, and outlines consultation objectives, methods and timing of consultation activities. It also includes communication objectives, methods and an action plan for each stage of the project.

The strategy is underpinned by the HumanAbility Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Engagement Principles.

1.3 Audience

The audience for this strategy is the Project Manager, Technical Committee, Consultation Manager, Project Team, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and key stakeholder groups.

2.   Background

2.1 Project overview

The aim of this project is to review and update two audiometry qualifications - *HLT47415 Certificate IV in Audiometry* and *HLT57415 Diploma of Audiometry* to ensure they are aligned with current industry needs, regulatory requirements, and safety and wellbeing outcomes for clients. The project also aims to create clear and sustainable career pathways to support growth in the industry.

The review of the qualifications is urgently needed to address several challenges including technological advancements, evolving professional standards, increasing demand for specialised services, a shortage of qualified professionals and a complex regulatory environment.

In Australia, the training and certification of audiometrists is facilitated by only two training providers: TAFE and the Australasian College of Audiology (AuCA).

The qualifications currently offered within the Australian audiometry education framework include the Certificate IV and the Diploma in Audiometry. The Certificate IV in Audiometry is aimed primarily at community health workers and those in community settings, providing

foundational skills. While it offers potential for expansion into more supervisory roles, especially in regional and remote areas, it faces limitations due to its lack of pathways for further education within the audiometry industry. The Diploma in Audiometry offers a more comprehensive education, equipping individuals with deeper knowledge and skills for advanced practice in hearing centres. Entry into the Diploma does not require completion of the Certificate IV, allowing direct admission, which broadens access but also bypasses a structured skill progression.

There is an urgent need for the standardisation of the curriculum across educational providers to ensure consistency in the skills of graduates. Specific core units, such as *HLTAUD005 Dispense hearing devices*, need revision to incorporate the latest technological advances and current practices.

The qualification review will help to realign both Certificate IV and Diploma programs with the evolving demands of the industry and the latest technology. This will ensure that the workforce is well-prepared to meet increasing healthcare needs across Australia.

2.2 Importance of stakeholder engagement for project success

Successful stakeholder engagement is critical to the project. It is important to hear from a diverse range of voices including training providers, employers, industry bodies, unions, government agencies, people working in Audiometry roles, and students.

HumanAbility will engage with key stakeholders through consultation activities to gather insights and feedback that will play an important role in shaping the project and inform changes to the Audiometry qualifications.

3.   Stakeholder engagement objectives and scope

3.1 Stakeholder engagement objectives

- Establish and coordinate a Technical Committee with representatives from key stakeholder groups including training providers, audiometry sector employers, unions, industry bodies, and government agencies.
- Foster collaboration and dialogue among stakeholders from diverse sectors including training providers, audiometry sector employers and workers, unions, industry bodies, government agencies and students.
- Gather diverse perspectives and insights to inform changes to the audiometry qualifications.
- Provide effective, timely and transparent communication with stakeholders about consultation opportunities, progress and outcomes of the project.
- Ensure stakeholders feel valued, included and heard throughout the project.
- Monitor and review the impact of the project.

3.2 Scope of stakeholder engagement activities

In Scope

- Consultation with key stakeholders across the audiometry sector to review and update two qualifications - *HLT47415 Certificate IV in Audiometry* and *HLT57415 Diploma of Audiometry,* to reflect current skills, knowledge and practice requirements as well as job roles and units of competency.

- Engagement methods and schedule of activities as outlined in Section 5.

Out of Scope

- Engagement methods and activities outside of the project lifecycle and/or not listed under Section 5.

4. Stakeholder identification and analysis

4.1 Stakeholder identification

Stakeholder groups have been identified and mapped in accordance with the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) principles and practices of engagement.

The table below outlines the key stakeholders, the benefits of their involvement.

The mapping exercise identifies how we will engage with each stakeholder group and what methods will be applied - as outlined in Section 5.

Further stakeholder analysis, in consultation with the Technical Committee, will identify key stakeholder organisations and individuals to consult throughout the project lifecycle, including the methods of engagement.

A stakeholder register will be developed to capture intended and actual consultation outcomes.

4.2 Stakeholder categories and analysis

Stakeholder group	Organisation	Benefits of involvement
Consultation with Health Industry Advisory Committee		Direct experience and understanding of the audiometry qualifications Provide advice to HumanAbility via expert representatives across the sector
Technical Committee with expert representatives from across the sector	Note: See Terms of Reference for full Technical Committee list. The Technical Committee for this project is predominantly made up of national body representatives. This qualification is only delivered by two NSW based RTOs on behalf of all states/territories. National body representatives were	Direct experience and understanding of the audiometry qualifications and related occupations Provide advice to HumanAbility as expert representatives from across the sector

Stakeholder group	Organisation	Benefits of involvement
	selected to ensure all states and territories were represented.	
RTOs and educational experts	• The Australasian College of Optical Dispensing (ACOD), trading as Australasian College of Audiometry (AuCA) • TAFE NSW • A selection of TAFEs and RTOs nationally	Direct experience and understanding of the qualifications/needs of the industry. Note: The RTOs identified *are those with the qualifications currently on scope. Consultation will include a broader collection of training providers nationally to understand delivery barriers and why it is not included on scope*
Assurance and regulatory bodies	The Australian College of Audiology (ACAud) inc HAASA	Have direct influence on the audiometry systems Ensure Audiometrists meet requirements/ standards/ certification
Industry peak bodies	• ACAud inc. HAASA	Advocate for improved training and pathway opportunities for audiometry roles
Unions	• Health Services Union	Advocate for improved training and pathway opportunities for audiometry roles
Government agencies -state	• Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) - Audiology Services	Develop state-based audiometry strategies, have high impact through funding models and place-based initiatives
Government agencies - national	• Hearing Australia	Develop national audiometry strategies
Employers across the audiometry sector (private and public)	Employers including, but not limited to: • Specsavers • Amplifon • Connect Hearing • Broadway Audiology • Medical Audiology Services • Tasmanian Centre for Hearing • Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) - Audiology Services • Audika	Direct experience in attracting, recruiting, and retaining the workforce

Stakeholder group	Organisation	Benefits of involvement
SMEs across the audiometry sector (private/public)	Including but not limited to: • Ear Science Institute • Heating Matters Australia	Direct experience and understanding of audiometry sector, occupations and training requirements
Consumers/consumer advocacy groups	• Hearing Matters Australia	Direct beneficiaries of project outcomes / enhanced quality and consumer experience
Priority cohort - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	• National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) • Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO) network	Provides First Nations people with the opportunity to actively contribute to project outcomes. Consultation designed in partnership with National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
Industry Training Advisory Boards		Understanding of the qualification
Research organisations, including NCVER		Relevant data and research papers may inform project outcomes
Senior Officials	Commonwealth and state/territory Senior Responsible Officers	Ensuring issues raised throughout consulation are addressed appropriately.

5. Strategic approach

5.1 Engagement methods

Method	Purpose	Who	Frequency
Consultation with the Health Industry Advisory Committee (IAC)	To provide advice on the establishment of Technical Committee, suggestions for engagement and feedback on project deliverables	Key influencers	At scheduled IAC meetings (during the lifecycle of the project)
Consultation with the Technical Committee	To support development and provide advice. The Committee will include representatives from key stakeholder	As listed in 4.2	As needed throughout the project lifecycle

Method	Purpose	Who	Frequency
	groups and national coverage. The Committee will provide input and feedback on the project consultation strategy		
1:1 interviews	16 virtual interviews – 2 interviews in each state/territory, metro, regional and remote settings To undertake a deep dive interview process – exploring the challenges / needs / skills associated with the qualification This will include interviews with employers to discuss settings, current roles, functions and tasks for the industry, ensuring that nuances between different jurisdictions and regulatory requirements are identified A selection of RTOs/TAFEs that do not currently have the qualification on scope to understand why it is not included.	Employers and SMEs as listed in 4.2	September – October 2024
Functional Analysis workshop online	One virtual functional analysis workshop will be undertaken with participants being drawn from across	Employers, SMEs and training providers as listed in 4.2	October 2024 *Note: see the website for details*

Method	Purpose	Who	Frequency
	all states and including metropolitan, regional and remote settings.		
Consultation workshops – in person	Up to 12 face-to-face workshops, including 1 to 2 workshops in each state/territory, metro and regional area To facilitate group discussions to understand challenges and workshop possible solutions	All stakeholders	November – December 2024 **Proposed workshop locations/dates** Perth - 4/11/24 Adelaide - 6/11/24 Alice Springs - 8/11/24* Darwin - 11/11/24 Cairns - 13/11/24* Brisbane - 14/11/24 Newcastle - 25/11/24* Sydney - 26/11/24 Albury - 28/11/24* Melbourne - 2/12/24 Canberra - 4/12/24 Hobart - 10/12/24 *Denotes a combined workshop with Optical Dispensing and Pathology Collection Projects* *Note: dates and times subject to change – see website for full details*
Consultation workshops – online	5 virtual workshops to be held at different times of day (morning, afternoon, evening) to maximise the opportunity for stakeholders to participate To facilitate group discussions that will	All stakeholders	November 2024 – January 2025 **Proposed online workshop dates** 21/11/24 12/12/24 17/12/24 15/01/25 16/01/25

Method	Purpose	Who	Frequency
	help to understand needs, challenges, gaps, solutions and improvements for the qualifications		*Note: dates subject to change – see website for full details*
Online portal (consultation tool) on the HumanAbility website	To engage all participants. This is a two-way channel that enables project documents, including a consultation paper to be publicly available and capture stakeholder feedback, comments, and submissions	All stakeholders	Open throughout consultation period
External meetings and events	To leverage opportunities to promote the project, gain buy-in and encourage participation	All stakeholders	As required
Professional development workshops	3 virtual sessions To conduct professional development workshops on the new qualification and good practice for delivery and assessment. A recording of the virtual professional development workshops will be made available on the HumanAbility website.	Targeting trainers and assessors	July 2025 *Note: see the website for details*
Senior Official's Check	To ensure any issues raised through consultation have been addressed appropriately.	Commonwealth and state/territory Senior Responsible Officers	6 Jan 2025 – 31 Jan 2025

5.2 Timing

Project stage	Timing	Engagement methods
Project set up and initial drafting	July – Augusts 2024	- Consultation with Health IAC – to gather insights on Technical Committee membership and stakeholder identification - Consultation with Technical Committee to gather advice on Consultation Strategy and initial draft products/deliverables - Written communications/publications
Public and government consultation and incorporating feedback	September - March 2025	- All methods as above - Technical Committee to gather advice on incorporating feedback - Include information in the consultation log about whether feedback was incorporated or if not, that the stakeholder was responded to - Written communications/publications
Final submissions and reporting	June 2025	- Technical Committee to gather advice on final draft products/deliverables - Consultation with IAC - Written communications/publications
Senior Official's Check	6 Jan 2025 – 31 Jan 2025	- Draft materials and completed consultation log provided to Commonwealth and state/territory Senior Responsible Officers for review - Feedback incorporated into final documentation
Endorsement and release	June – July 2025	- Written communications/publications - Professional development workshops

5.3 Consultation questions

Consultation questions will be developed by the project team and refined by the Technical Committee.

Consultation with stakeholders will be structured to:

- Understand the different functions performed (e.g. metropolitan vs regional or remote settings, or boutique services vs large franchises)
- Understand the current audiology industry changes and the skills, knowledge, practice and requirements needed for the qualifications.
- Understand the current challenges, gaps, alignment needs, opportunities and potential solutions
- Identify and inform any changes for the qualification and units of competency and skill sets.
- Provide advice on the development of resources, guidance on delivery and pathways information.

- Understand why RTOs/TAFEs do not have the current qualification on scope and what prevents them from delivery of the future qualification on their jurisdiction.

6. Communications

6.1 Communications objectives

- Raise awareness of the project and its objectives among audiometry industry stakeholders.
- Promote consultation opportunities, key dates, project progress and outcomes to stakeholders through a variety of communications channels.
- Foster the involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders to gather rich and valuable industry insights, experience and expertise to inform the project
- Build trust and credibility with stakeholders through effective, timely, transparent and accessible communications

6.2 Communications methods

Communications channel / tool	Purpose / Details
Internal communication (meetings/email)	To keep internal stakeholders informed of project updates
Frequently asked questions	To outline the potential questions and answers that might come up during consultation (preparation)
Information sheet	To outline the key details of the project, timelines, consultation activities and how to participate. Include QR Code and link to website/project page.
HumanAbility website	To provide a dedicated webpage where all project information and activities can be accessed easily. This webpage will include an engagement portal for stakeholders to register interest, provide submissions and feedback, and access project updates.
Email/email template or campaign/mail merge	To send emails/email template letters, information and updates to stakeholders to participate in consultation / share consultation opportunities.
News alerts	To provide project participants and other key stakeholders with branded news alerts via email when there is a project update.
HumanAbility newsletter articles	To provide project updates in HumanAbility's general newsletter.
Social media	To publish project consultation opportunities, updates, and other activities on HumanAbility's social media channels including LinkedIn, Facebook, and X (Twitter) to reach as many and diverse stakeholders as possible. Social media posts will link to the HumanAbility webpage to encourage engagement on the project. Stakeholders can increase HumanAbility's social media reach by sharing content on their social media channels.

Communications channel / tool	Purpose / Details
Industry news media	To leverage relationships with key stakeholder organisations with newsletters to share HumanAbility project consultation opportunities and other activities.
	To contact and link in with industry networks, peak bodies, existing workforce committees/groups and IAC networks to promote the opportunity to participate in the project consultation. Identify and connect with communications departments of industry stakeholders to encourage promotion of consultation activities • Email key messages about the project, image/s, information sheet • Tag organisations in social media where relevant – link to website consultation page • Link in with industry events/meetings and hand out material (e.g. info sheet)
Events/speaking engagements	To host regular HumanAbility events/speaking engagements e.g. via webinar or in person – providing updates to industry and project stakeholders
Resources	To publish resources - the companion volume will be updated to reflect the new qualifications, skill sets and units of competency, along with guidance on delivery, pathways and mapping information.

7. Feedback and Consultation Log

Stakeholder feedback will be gathered during the consultation via workshops and interviews/surveys. Stakeholders may also submit feedback via the Training Product Advice Service (web form) and the training product project email address trainingproducts@humanability.com.au, which appears on the project page.

Surveys will be the primary mechanism for structured, individual feedback during public consultation. This ensures that feedback can be quantified, analysed qualitatively (thematic analysis) and that the outcomes/response can be tracked as required by the Training Package Organising Framework.

Individual feedback will be captured in the Consultation Log. This also captures the organisation name, stakeholder type, State and the method of communication/consultation. Stakeholder names and contact details will also be collected to enable HumanAbility to clarify and follow up on the feedback if needed. However, these **are not** included in the published version of the Consultation Log and are not submitted to the funding body.

As the feedback is reviewed, the action taken in response to the feedback will be documented in the Consultation Log. Where feedback is not incorporated, the rationale for this will also be documented.

Where feasible, the themes identified from consultation workshops will be added to the Consultation Log.

The Consultation log will be published to the project page after consultations and incorporation of feedback is complete.

8. Evaluation of Consultation Strategy

The effectiveness of the Consultation Strategy will be evaluated using the following measures:

- Analysis of stakeholder type and location
- Number of interviews achieved in pre-draft and functional analysis work
- Attendance at consultation workshops
- Number of dedicated website page visits and submissions made in the portal
- Social media posts, engagement and reach (on HumanAbility social media pages and other social media pages)
- Newsletter articles / news items published by stakeholders
- Meetings held / attendance / topics
- An increase in enrolments and completions of the relevant qualifications.

The Technical Committee and Industry Advisory Committee will also be asked to provide advice relating the effectiveness of the Consultation Strategy in driving project outcomes.