



Call for Expressions of Interest

Research Insight Topic: 'Student Voice'

Funding Available: Maximum \$25,000

BACKGROUND

AVETRA has been engaged by the Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) for a two-year programme to commission Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) researchers to produce 'Research Insights' that translate research findings and evidence to a policy facing output. Several Research Insights will be commissioned in a range of VET topic areas aligned with the strategic objectives and priorities of the vocational education and training system in Victoria.

The partnership between VSA and AVETRA aims to inform policy activity with relevant research evidence, build policy translation capability within the VET research community and build connections between VSA staff and VET researchers. This in turn aims to create opportunities for applied VET researchers to engage directly with policy-makers and influence policy development.

FOCUS OF THIS RESEARCH INSIGHT

The Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) is seeking to commission a research team / researcher to provide research insights about two or three extant mechanisms that have been successfully applied to capture and incorporate student voice into education and training design. One mechanism needs to explain (preferably through available research sources) the strategies, tools or approaches that operate through national VET arrangements.

This project aims to provide evidence to inform mechanisms to bring students' perspectives into qualification consideration and curriculum/course design. The purpose is to be able to compare the Australian model (to the extent it is codified and operates) along with models in other contexts. The other models may be those operating at an institutional level within Australia or policy driven models in other systems internationally (such as the ETHAZI model in the Basque VET system).

Key to the success of this project will be an assessment of the effectiveness of student voice mechanisms, in terms of student engagement and achieving objectives in relation to learning success.

This research insights project seeks to:

- Examine available academic and grey literature to identify mechanisms and approaches for enabling student influence in learning design.

- Identify systemic approaches, if any, and risks associated with incorporating student perspectives and inputs into learning design and delivery.
- Identify potential mechanisms and approaches that could be contextualised and implemented into the Australian and / or Victorian system.

These objectives develop the general principles of the partnership between the VSA and the Australasian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA). These principles include creating opportunities for applied vocational education and training (VET) researchers to engage directly with policy-makers and influence policy development.

SUGGESTED APPROACH

Given the prior research and knowledge in this area, the VSA considers that a review of academic and grey literature would be the most appropriate approach for addressing the research insights. The VSA remains open to recommendations from AVETRA and or the research team / researcher on alternative approaches.

Case studies highlighting the challenges and positive impacts of capturing and acting upon student voice can also be considered to illustrate the mechanisms. The VSA is particularly interested in practices, mechanisms and strategies that exceed minimum requirements under current vocational legislation and settings. Case studies capturing and acting upon student feedback of disadvantaged cohorts are also of interest to the VSA. Please note, however, case studies are for illustrative purposes.

TIMEFRAMES

The research insights project should be finalised within 10 weeks of the start date. The activities listed below should be completed by the suggested date. If it is not possible for the research team / researcher to complete a specific activity by the indicated date, the team coordinator should communicate with the contact point, as soon as practicable, to explain the reasons for the delay and propose an alternative date.

Milestone	Date due/completed by
Call for expressions of interest	September 8 th , 2023
Close of expressions of interest	September 18 th , 2023
Successful applicant notified	September 26 th , 2023
Project start date	October 13 th , 2023
Interim Research Insight report delivered	November 24 th , 2023
Briefing presentation by research team (plus delivery of verbal feedback from VSA)	Early December TBC
Delivery of VSA written feedback (if needed)	1 week after briefing presentation
Final Research Insight paper delivered	December 22 nd , 2023
Project completion and acquittal	January 19 th , 2024

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for submitting an expression of interest all applicants must be:

- A current paid member of AVETRA
- Currently residing in Australia
- An Australia Citizen or permanent resident, or holding valid work permit or visa for employment in Australia

Practitioner and early career researchers are strongly encouraged to apply. Research teams, including researchers at mixed stages of their research career and/or across research contexts and disciplines are encouraged to apply. Any applicants with significant financial or personal relationship with AVETRA, VSA or NCVER should state any conflict of interest within their application and seek advice from AVETRA before applying. AVETRA welcomes enquiries and applications from researchers with a disability who make need and seek reasonable adjustments to enable their applications. Please contact avetra@avetra.org.au to discuss.

The following are not eligible as named researchers on applications:

- Researchers currently employed by government departments (including statutory authorities, VET or tertiary sector regulatory authorities or other government operated research departments)
- Current ISSI Fellows (Former fellows who are 6 months or more past the end of their fellowship are eligible to apply as long as the Research Insight being applied for is not duplicating previous or existing deliverables a part of the fellowship)
- Researchers currently holding Category 1 research grants (including ARC grants, NMRHC grants or commissioned research funds from NCVER)
- Researchers already awarded funding through this scheme are not eligible to be a named chief investigator on a second project within 12 months of completing the first project. Previous named chief investigators may be named as partner investigators on a subsequent application.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Expression of interest will be selected on the basis of evidence provided to demonstrate the following selection criteria:		Weighting
1	Experience relevant to the project focus and objectives	20%
2	Understanding of the relevance of the topic to VET policy	20%
3	Methodological design for completion of the research insight output	20%
4	A realistic timeline and budget	15%
5	Skills in writing in plain English for stakeholders	15%
6	Effective management and contingency plan	10%

PREPARING AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Expressions of interest should be prepared using the template below. The following evidence should be attached in support of the application:

- CVs for all named researchers
- A gantt chart of the proposed plan of work for completion of the project
- A project budget.
- The names, contact email addresses, and phone numbers of two **referees** who can speak to the experience of the named lead researcher.
- Two examples of writing by the named lead researcher.

Expression of Interest Template

Section 1: Research team and experience relevant to the topic

1.1 Lead researcher details

Name of lead researcher	
Organisation/institution	
Email	
Phone	

1.2 Additional researcher/s details

Name of additional researcher	
Organisation/institution	
Email	
Phone	

Add additional tables for any further named researchers

1.3 Researcher/s experience relevant to the project (please outline researcher experience and interest relevant to the project focus and objectives using examples of completed or in progress applied and/or scholarly research work)

300 word max

1.4 Attach CVs for all named researchers

1.5 Please describe any prior experience of the named researchers in preparing research outputs for non-research audiences

300 word max

1.6 Please attach at least two examples of written work by the lead researcher (examples can include research reports, journal articles, conference papers, submissions to Research Today)

Section 2: Understanding of the topic

2.1 Provide a statement outlining your understanding of the topic and its relevance to VET policy (references may be included)

500 word max

Section 3: Methodological design

3.1 Detail the methodological design for the completion of the research insight, including how evidence will be curated and the analytical approaches that will be used.

700 word max

3.2 Detail the contribution of the named researcher/s to the completion of the project

250 word max

Section 4: Timeline and budget

4.1 Provide a gantt chart timeline for the completion of the project, including the contributions of named researchers (In preparing the project timeline, please note the delivery timeline outlined in the call for expression of interest)

Insert gantt chart

4.2 Project budget

Please provide an itemised project budget, inclusive of salary/buy out costs for named researchers, consumables and organisational overheads/shared service costs (In preparing the project budget, please note the maximum budget of \$25,000.)

Insert budget

4.3 Please detail a project management plan, including any approaches to ensuring effective communication between the research team and mechanisms for timely delivery of the final Research Insight

250 word max

4.4 Please identify any risks and the steps to mitigate risks (including those associated with the proposed timeline, researcher availability, changes in organisational/institutional support)

Descriptor	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Level	Mitigation Strategies
	Likely		High	
	Possible		Medium	
	Not likely		Low	