



Charter of Principles for Cross-Sectoral Collaboration on Interoperability across the Australian Education and Training Sectors

Preamble

In their Joint Ministerial Statement on Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in Australian Education and Training 2008-2011, Australia's education and training Ministers recognise the importance of technology in developing the potential of all learners, achieving Australia's education and training goals, and enabling students to achieve high quality learning outcomes and contribute productively to our society and economy. To this end, Ministers have agreed to collaborate across jurisdictions and the three education and training sectors: schools, vocational education and training, and higher education.

Compatible and interoperable ICT equipment and infrastructure, online resources and supporting policies and systems provide the foundation for national and international collaboration. Education outcomes and efficiency can be improved by sharing resources and expertise, leveraging existing initiatives and investments, and developing common approaches which recognise the importance of diversity, innovation and experimentation. Interoperability will underpin the education and training reforms being pursued by Australian Governments, including in areas such as developing and delivering a nationally consistent curriculum and specialist subjects, facilitating the movement of students between organisations, jurisdictions and sectors, developing repositories for resources, and facilitating seamless, secure and appropriate access to intellectual property, including copyright materials.

Australia's education and training Ministers, through the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MVTE), have endorsed the following principles for cross-sectoral collaboration on interoperability to support national, jurisdictional and organisational objectives.

Principles

Interoperability in the Australian education and training sector is based on a shared body of knowledge and common, agreed guidelines.

The shared body of knowledge and guidelines about interoperability provide organisations with "authoritative advice" about how to achieve required levels of compatibility. The guidelines reflect the practical requirements of the education and training sector.

Guidelines for interoperability are based on international standards and Australian requirements.

Guidelines are based on:

- Relevant international standards
- Relevant Australian standards, including standards supporting the interoperability of the ICT systems and services of different governments
- Standards and agreements developed to support specific Australian education and training requirements.

The benefits of collaboration and interoperability are actively promoted to all education and training organisations.

Organisations make their own decisions about whether to participate in joint initiatives and shared infrastructure arrangements. These decisions are based on a sound understanding of the benefits of collaboration and interoperability, and of the benefits and opportunities for participation.

Education and training organisations are committed to making explicit, well informed decisions about whether or not to adopt specific interoperability guidelines.

Organisations ensure that they understand and consider the benefits, opportunities, risks and costs of:

- Participating in collaborative initiatives
- Connecting and contributing to shared infrastructure
- Adopting interoperable approaches that are consistent with the shared body of knowledge and common guidelines.

Collaboration is managed using sound governance arrangements.

Governance arrangements for collaborative initiatives and shared infrastructure are explicit, open, transparent and sustainable, and include a clear definition of accountabilities

A cross-sectoral approach is used for collaborative activities, including the development of interoperability guidelines and shared infrastructure, where engagement with, and management across, the three education and training sectors is beneficial.

Cross-sectoral management of collaboration is valuable when:

- Requirements and problems are common to multiple sectors
- Shared approaches can lead to efficiency gains and new opportunities created by innovative solutions
- Shared infrastructure is required across multiple sectors
- The research and development activities for investigating emerging requirements and problems require cross-sectoral participation.

