

FINDING RTOS FOR THE DISABILITY SECTOR

CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS



Finding the right RTOs to work with



Effective ways of working with RTOs



Engaging different RTOs for different purposes

Cara is one of South Australia’s largest disability service providers, with over 1,000 staff. Like many other providers, it’s facing significant workforce shortages and challenges in meeting some training requirements, such as supervision of vocational placements. It relies on partnerships with RTOs to train workers and build recruitment pathways. Kelli Witt (Manager, Talent Attraction and Sourcing) and Danielle Micarone (Accredited Training Coordinator) manage these partnerships and the recruitment and training of staff.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Cara works with a select group of RTOs that each offer different qualifications and approaches.



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Historically we had an arrangement with just one RTO. We had our own internally qualified trainers and the RTO would do the assessments and issue qualifications. But that model wasn’t working for us. We’ve moved to a more traditional model where we use a couple of providers. It’s easier to deal with a smaller group of RTOs. They all do things a bit differently and offer different qualifications.”

(Danielle Micarone)

Cara looks to work with RTOs who:

- offer flexible delivery options to suit shift workers
- are good, proactive communicators
- have well-established reporting processes
- have clear processes for supervising and following up with students
- know about funding opportunities
- understand the fluidity of the disability workforce.

“We like to work with RTOs who we know will report regularly, flag any issues and who have proactive processes. It’s good if they have online and blended options. A lot of our workers are maxed out and they find it hard to attend face to face training after a shift. Others are wary of online training. Having options is really good for us.”

(Danielle Micarone)

Before engaging with RTOs, Cara does some background research and talks to other providers who’ve worked with them. They like to find out about the trainers, as they find the quality and approach of trainers can vary significantly.

WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH RTOS

In working with different RTOs over many years, Cara’s learned some valuable lessons:

- make sure there’s a schedule or timeline for the training
- establish how students’ progress will be tracked and reported, and how they’ll be supported when needed

“If a student is struggling, it’s really good to have an open feedback loop because we can step in and help. We can get them in touch with someone who can guide or coach them.”

(Kelli Witt)

- clarify who’s responsible for what (e.g. who’ll complete supervisor logbooks)
- have ground rules to respect the privacy of clients (e.g. that trainers must give notice before turning up to a client’s house)
- communicate regularly and openly with the RTO and with students.

“The successes we’ve had are where there’s constant communication.”

(Kelli Witt)

