



## RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

### PURPOSE:

The objective of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for the Vocational Education and Training system is to ensure that an individual's prior learning achieved through formal and informal training, work experience or other life experiences is appropriately recognised.

### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

The principles governing the recognition of prior learning (RPL) for Queensland's Vocational Education and Training system are those specified in Principle 12 of the National Assessment Principles through the National Training Framework Committee:

- 12.0 Assessment processes shall provide for the recognition of current competencies regardless of where these may have been acquired.
- 12.1 Recognition of prior learning focuses on identifying the endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards currently held by individuals as a result of formal and informal training, not how, when or where the learning occurred.
- 12.2 Recognition of prior learning underpins any system of competency based training. It is essential that Registered Training Organisations have a demonstrable commitment to recognising the prior learning of individuals.
- 12.3 Recognition of prior learning shall be available to all potential applicants.
- 12.4 Recognition of prior learning shall involve processes that are fair to all parties involved.
- 12.5 Recognition of prior learning shall involve the provision of adequate support to potential applicants.

### OBJECTIVES OF RPL

With these principles providing a basis for action, the objectives of the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy are:

- 1. To increase access to RPL by individuals in the Vocational Education and Training system.
- 2. To ensure that RPL is an integral component of the assessment of an individual's eligibility for an award.
- 3. To encourage training organisations implement RPL policies that are consistent with Principle 12 of the National Assessment Principles.
- 4. To ensure that procedures for RPL incorporate a range of valid and reliable techniques designed to accurately assess competencies held.
- 5. To promote 'non-traditional' (other than classroom/workshop based) learning processes as valid pathways to competency achievement and recognised training outcomes.



## **ASSESSMENT PROCESSES FOR RPL**

The RPL assessment processes for the Queensland's Vocational Education and Training system are those specified in the National Assessment Principle 8:

- 8.0 Assessment Processes shall be valid, reliable, flexible and fair.
- 8.1 Assessment processes must cover the broad range of skills and knowledge needed to demonstrate competency.
- 8.2 Assessment of competency should be a process, which integrates knowledge and skills with their practical application.
- 8.3 During assessment, judgements to determine an individual's competency should, wherever practicable, be made on evidence gathered on a number of occasions and in a variety of contexts or situations.
- 8.4 Assessment processes should be monitored and reviewed to ensure that there is consistency in the interpretation of evidence.
- 8.5 Assessment should cover both on and off the job components of training.
- 8.6 Assessment processes should provide for the recognition of competencies no matter how, where or when they have been acquired.
- 8.7 Assessment processes should be made accessible to individuals so they can proceed readily from one competency standard to another.
- 8.8 Assessment practices must be equitable to all groups of individuals.
- 8.9 Assessment procedures and the criteria for judging performance must be made clear to all individuals seeking assessment.
- 8.10 There should be a participatory approach to assessment. The process of assessment should be jointly developed/agreed between the assessor and the assessee.
- 8.11 Opportunities must be provided to allow individuals to challenge assessments and provision must be made for reassessment.



## **FOUR KEY PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT IN RPL**

All assessment systems and training organisations registered for assessment are required to demonstrate their compliance with four key assessment principles:

- Validity
- Reliability
- Flexibility
- Fairness

### **Validity:**

- Assessment against the units of competency contained in the Competency Standards for Assessment must cover the broad range of skills and knowledge.
- Assessment of the competencies in the standards should integrate knowledge and skill with their practical application.
- Judgement made about competence against any of the units must be based on sufficient evidence. Evidence should be gathered on a number of occasions and in a range of contexts or situations and using different methods.

*(Note: Assessments are valid when they assess what they claim to assess)*

### **Reliability:**

- The criteria for the judgement of competence must be clearly stated and adhered to.
- Assessment practices in the training and assessment of persons with assessment responsibilities, needs to be monitored and reviewed to ensure consistency of judgement.
- As a minimum requirement people assessing trainee assessors must demonstrate competency in both the *Assessment Standard and the Extension Unit*.

*(Note: Without reliable assessments there can be no comparability of credentials.)*

### **Fairness:**

- Reasonable adjustments are made to assessment procedures for people with special needs.
- Assessment procedures and the evidence (whether product or process) must be made clear.
- A consultative approach to assessment of competency against one or all of the units in the standards is recommended.
- Persons being assessed against the Competency Standards for Assessment must have the opportunity for a review and an appeal of assessment decisions.

### **Flexibility:**

- Assessment procedures should cover both on and off the job components of the Competency Standards for Assessment.
- There should be a process for people to seek recognition of their current competency in one or more of the units of competency in the Competency Standards for Assessment without having to participate in a training programme.



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## **RISK MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE.**

The extent of recognition sought may be up to one hundred per cent. It is acknowledged that there is a higher risk associated with this degree of recognition. The amount of risk in the RPL process is directly related to the amount of evidence to be collected; the degree of rigour required; the number of assessors to be used; and the costs of implementing RPL processes. The general principle to be observed is that:

- As the level of risk increases there should be a corresponding increase in the rigour of the RPL processes. This increased rigour can be achieved through requiring more evidence of higher quality and the involvement of more assessors to review the evidence and make the final assessment decision.

## **FEES AND CHARGES FOR RPL SERVICES.**

In determining fees and charges for Recognition of Prior Learning services, apply the principles of access and fairness under the AQTF.

The RPL process should include the following stages:

- Information
- Initial support and counselling
- Application
- Assessment
- Post-assessment guidance; and or
- Certification

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The implementation of recognition of prior learning processes is an essential requirement of the registration criteria. Training Organisations seeking registration to provide accredited courses/recognised training programmes will be required to certify that students have been provided with information relating to arrangements for the recognition of prior learning prior to application. Implementation of the policy will be evaluated through the registration review process of DETA.

As part of the registration review process, the reviewing officer will examine RPL information and promotion materials, record keeping system, RPL assessment instruments/process and appeals procedures, to ensure consistency with the principles outlined in this policy statement.

## **NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY**

Non-compliance with the requirements of this policy may result in the Registered Training Organisation having its registration cancelled or withdrawn.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### *Assessment:*

The process of collecting evidence about competency and making judgement about whether or not competency has been achieved.

### *Assessment Records:*

Assessment results can be the basis of the issuing of qualifications and/or certificates and as well as being valuable employment records. They must be kept as a permanent reference about a person's competencies, be recorded securely and be readily accessible. Record keeping systems are established as part of an assessment system and must comply with organisational procedures and national and legislative requirements.



*Assessment Tools:*

Methodology for the gathering of evidence. This can include direct questioning, direct observation of performance, projects, skill tests, simulations, written tests, examination of finished products, reports from co-workers and supervisors. A variety of assessment tools should be used in the process of establishing competency.

*AQF:*

The Australian Qualifications Framework comprises twelve national qualifications issued in the secondary, vocational education and training and higher education sectors. These include Certificates I – IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma.

*AQTF:*

The AQTF is designed to establish a more streamlined and responsive system of national recognition underpinned by strengthened quality assurance.

*Competency:*

The ability to perform to a level as specified by a standard. It is the demonstration of skill and knowledge and their application and incorporates, in addition to task skill and knowledge, task management skills (managing a range of tasks within a job), contingency management skills (dealing with changes and problems) and work environment skills (dealing with responsibilities and expectations).

*Competency Standards:*

Describe the ability to perform distinct activities within an occupation to the standards expected in employment. They are expressed in outcome terms, which enable competency to be assessed. The component parts are unit, element, performance criteria, range of variables and evidence guide.

*Evidence:*

Information gathered through the use of a variety of assessment tools, which will provide proof from which the assessor can make a judgement about competency. In most assessments evidence is gathered from more than one source, in more than one situation and can have many forms. Direct evidence is observation of performance. Indirect evidence can include evaluation of products or services, simulations or skills tests, questioning or reports from others.

*Quality Assurance:*

A planned evaluatory approach designed to ensure that standards are being appropriately applied and meet the needs of the users. Quality assurance mechanisms are an integral part of a well-designed assessment system.

*Registered Training Organisations:*

Training Organisations which have been formally recognised to conduct assessments and issue qualifications or Statements of Attainment under the AQTF.

*Self-Assessment:*

A process which allows a candidate to collect and provide evidence of their own performance against standards. This can be done with a logbook or other record keeping mechanism and is verified by an assessor through observation and questioning and from the testimony of others.

*Units of Competency:*

Describes a discrete job and function and is written in outcome terms. Further developed through elements and performance criteria.