NSW Recognition Framework

About the framework

Under the national standards for training providers (the VET Quality Framework) and Smart and Skilled's NSW Quality Framework the principles a training provider uses for developing a recognition process must be clear, concise and able to be implemented in a wide range of contexts.

The NSW Recognition Framework is designed to help training providers operating in NSW to develop a recognition process.

The framework includes:
- which standards a training provider must to adhere to
- the six stages of recognition
- record keeping and reporting
- where to find further information.

Find the right approach

While the NSW Recognition Framework establishes a common structure for thinking about and implementing a recognition process, there is no single correct approach. Each training provider and assessor will create procedures and documents for recognition which:
- suit the qualifications offered to the candidates
- meet its own needs
- suit the context in which the recognition is being provided (i.e. at a worksite or at a training provider's premises).

A training provider, however, may apply the NSW Recognition Framework when developing its own recognition process.

Definitions

A training provider registered to operate in NSW must comply with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* (available on www.legislation.gov.au) as part of its obligation to deliver quality training and assessment.

The NSW Recognition Framework uses definitions from the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* for 'assessment' and 'recognition of prior learning'.

Assessment

'Assessment' is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace, as specified in a training package or vocational education and training (VET) accredited course.

Recognition of prior learning

'Recognition of prior learning' (RPL) is an assessment process that assesses the competency/s of an individual that may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual meets the requirements specified in the training package or VET accredited courses.

Standards to adhere to

A training provider's recognition process must comply with national standards and should align with the unit of competency TAEASS504A. A Smart and Skilled training provider must also comply with the NSW Quality Framework.

Comply with national standards

Under the Australian Quality Training Framework's 'Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration' and 'Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration', a training provider must comply with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*.

A training provider must meet these national standards which include assessment. However, this should not be the only reason to have a recognition process. For quality assurance purposes, and to meet the principles that underpin assessment, a training provider should develop and implement a workable recognition process as part of its assessment and continuous improvement systems.

Comply with the NSW Quality Framework

A Smart and Skilled training provider must adhere to its Smart and Skilled contract (available on www.training.nsw.gov.au) which includes terms and conditions that cover training and assessment, including RPL.

A Smart and Skilled training provider's training and assessment must reflect the principles unpinning the NSW Quality Framework (available under www.training.nsw.gov.au).

The NSW Quality Framework recognises that assessment practices can impact on quality and confidence in training outcomes. Recognition is an important part of the assessment process, and gives industry and others confidence in the training provider's training and assessment methods. A training provider's trainers and assessors must remain current in their professional development and in their knowledge and understanding of issues related to recognition.

Align to TAEASS504A

A training provider's recognition process should align the unit of competency: *TAEASS504A – Develop and Implement Recognition Strategies* (available on training.gov.au), part of the Diploma of Training Design and Development TAE50216, released with the TAE Training and Education Training Package Release 2.0.

The unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to develop and implement a recognition process. It requires the ability to:
- prepare information and advice on recognition
- identify evidence gathering opportunities
- evaluate a recognition-based assessment process
- have a continuously improving recognition process.

The unit is designed for individuals developing procedures and documentation for recognition-based assessment for an organisation.

Stages of recognition

Stage 1: Establish the context

A training provider's assessor must establish a candidate's context, which means:
- what industry they work in
- the level of qualification or units of competency relevant to them
- the location of their training (i.e. at a workplace or at a training provider's premises)
- the level of support from their employer.

Stage 2: Provide information

Everyone involved in assessment is informed about the process of recognition in a consistent way. A candidate must understand the assessment process.

The assessor provides information to the candidate which is tailored to suit the candidate and their context.

Stage 3: Gather evidence

The assessor must agree with the candidate on the forms of evidence in the assessment process (e.g. How will the candidate demonstrate their competence? What rules apply to this evidence?)

A candidate's evidence must be relevant, sufficient, current and authentic.

Stage 4: Assess the evidence

An assessor reviews the evidence a candidate submits and then documents their assessment of the evidence. The assessor must measure the evidence against the standards of performance required using the training provider's assessment process and tools.

Stage 5: Make an assessment decision

The assessor makes a decision on the candidate's competence and then tells the candidate of their decision.

This usually involves interviewing the candidate to provide and receive feedback. This interview does not have to be face-to-face, but could occur via telephone, video link or other suitable methods. The process should ensure that an assessor gives the candidate appropriate feedback, as well as the candidate having the opportunity to provide feedback to the assessor on the assessment process.

Stage 6: Issue credentials or plan the next step

The assessor issues the candidate with credentials or helps them to decide, 'Where to next?'

The later may include gap training to complete a qualification, advice about the next level of qualification available, career advice for the newly qualified, or developing an action plan for the candidate to become competent.

As part of the training provider's continuous improvement process, an assessor should ask a candidate to provide feedback to the training provider on the recognition process.

Further information

The following publications are available on www.training.nsw.gov.au.

- *Skills Recognition – A Guide for Registered Training Organisations*

    Explains how a training provider can achieve a quality recognition process, as well as develop or improve its capacity to engage and assist an RPL candidate and their employer during the recognition process.

- *Assessor Guide to Recognition of Prior Learning*

    Explains how an assessor can offer a streamlined recognition process and information to a candidate and their employer.

- *Candidate Guide to Skills Recognition*

    Explains how an individual can be recognised for their experience, skills and knowledge for which they do not hold a vocational qualification. The guide also explains the recognition process.

- *Skills Recognition – A Guide for Employers*

    Explains the recognition process for employers.

Record keeping and reporting

All training providers must meet the mandatory rules for record keeping and reporting under *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* and Smart and Skilled training providers have additional requirements under their Smart and Skilled contract.

Requirements of the national standards

The *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* (the Standards) require a training provider to provide high quality training and assessment practices (including recognition of prior learning) that:

- meet the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses
- follows the Standard's assessment principles and rules of evidence
- is responsive to industry and learner needs
- is delivered by appropriately qualified trainers and assessors with the right support services, facilities and equipment.

A training provider must develop a plan that ensures thorough and rigorous assessment practices and results. The plan must use a risk-based approach and consider risk indicators such as the potential safety concerns to clients from an assessment outcome that is not valid, the mode of delivery, changes to training packages and/or licensing requirements. Trainers and assessors may participate in the plan.

There are differences in the operating characteristics and business objectives of training providers and the evidence they use to demonstrate compliance with the Standards must reflect those differences.

Audit and retention requirements

Each year, a training provider must demonstrate to the VET regulator that it has complied with the Standards during the year and currently.

To be compliant with the Standards a training provider must cooperate with the VET regulator:

- in the conduct of audits and monitoring of its operations
- in the retention, archiving, retrieval and transfer of records
- to ensure that any third party delivering services on its behalf is required under written agreement to cooperate with the VET regulator.

Requirements of the Smart and Skilled contract

A Smart and Skilled training provider is required to maintain records for all government-funded training and for all training participants, including apprentices and trainees, as evidence of:

- the delivery of training
- the assessment of training delivered
- credit transfer or of recognition granted
- exemptions granted
- certificates and qualifications issued.

The Department, through Training Services NSW, must be able to access and verify evidence as authentic.

Further information

See:

- Training Services NSW
  (www.training.nsw.gov.au/skills_trade_recognitio
  n/index.html)
- *Making Connections* e-newsletter
  (www.training.nsw.gov.au/skills_trade_recognitio
  n/skills_recognition/making_connections/index.ht
  ml)
- Skills Online Resource Repository
  (www.training.nsw.gov.au/training_providers/reso
  urces/skillsonline/rpl_resources.html)
- Australian Skills Quality Authority
  (www.asqa.gov.au).