NSW Recognition Framework
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NSW Recognition Framework

1.1 Overview

The Recognition Framework has been developed to assist and inform Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) operating in NSW. The resources referenced in this framework are a result of the National COAG Skills Recognition Projects 2009, and have been reviewed and updated as required.

This framework references the Six Stages for Recognition that are designed to assist RTOs, trainers and assessors to develop and implement an effective skills recognition process in their organisation.

1.2 Understanding recognition

While the framework establishes a common structure for thinking about and implementing recognition, there is no single correct approach. Each RTO and assessor will need procedures and documents for recognition which suit the qualifications offered to the candidates, and meet the RTO needs and the context in which recognition is being provided (e.g. worksites or RTO premises).

That said, all RTOs can apply the framework in developing their own recognition policy and procedures.

1.3 Definitions

As part of an RTO’s obligation to deliver quality training and assessment, RTOs registered to operate in NSW must comply with the National Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012.

For the purposes of this framework, these terms have the following definitions from the NVR Standards 2012.

**Assessment:** the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed by the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a Training Package or by the learning outcomes of a VET accredited course.

**Recognition:** the Recognition process includes Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) and Skills Recognition. All terms refer to the process of evaluating the training participant’s level of skill or competence against the endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards or outcomes specified in the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) accredited qualifications and accredited courses.

1.4 Compliance with the National Standards

Under the Initial and Continuing Standards of registration of Registered Training Organisations in NSW, compliance with the National VET Regulators (NVR) Standards is mandatory.

As an RTO you are required to meet a set of national standards which include assessment. This should not be the only reason to have a recognition process. For quality assurance purposes and to meet the principles that underpin assessment you should develop and implement a workable recognition process which is part of your assessment and continuous improvement systems.
1.5 Compliance with the Smart and Skilled NSW Quality Framework

Under Smart and Skilled, approved TAFE, private and community based RTOs deliver government-subsidised vocational training that addresses the skill needs of NSW industry and community.

The Smart and Skilled contract has terms and conditions that cover training and assessment, including RPL.

Training and assessment delivered under the Smart and Skilled contract must reflect the principles unpinning the NSW Quality Framework. The Quality Framework also recognises that assessment practices can impact on quality and confidence in training outcomes.

Recognition is an important part of the assessment process which should confirm the confidence of industry and others in the RTO’s training and assessment methods. It is essential that trainers and assessors remain current in their professional development and in their knowledge and understanding of issues related to recognition.

1.6 Alignment to TAEASS504A – Develop and implement recognition strategies

Within the Diploma of Training Design and Development TAE50211 is the unit – TAEASS504A Develop and implement recognition strategies. This unit was released with the TAE10 Training and Education Training Package version 2.0.

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to develop and implement a recognition strategy in the context of organisational development. It requires the ability to prepare information and advice on recognition, to identify evidence gathering opportunities and to evaluate a recognition-based assessment process. It also focuses on continuously improving recognition processes within an organisation.

This unit typically applies to those who have a role in developing procedures and documentation for recognition-based assessment for an organisation.

2.1 Why promote recognition?

Quality training is central to Smart and Skilled. NSW residents are entitled to expect that training:

- meets national standards
- is tailored to learning needs
- assists participation in society
- is relevant to jobs and workplaces
- is well regarded by employers
- promotes confidence in the training system.

A rigorous, clear and concise recognition framework can benefit all stakeholders.

2.2 Benefits to the student

Recognition has many benefits. This type of assessment is important in acknowledging and validating skills, knowledge and life experience.

Benefits for the student include:

- eliminating duplication of learning
- increasing self-esteem and self-confidence
- validating the learning gained through work and life experience
- assisting with career development and training identification.

2.3 Benefits to the employer

Benefits to the employer can include:

- fast-tracking of workers through training
- reduction in the costs of training
- reduction in down-time while workers are in training
- an efficient method to identify “skills gaps” allowing for more focused training.

2.4 Benefits to the RTO

Benefits to the RTO can include:

- the ability to offer a high degree of flexibility in pathways to qualifications
- savings involved in having an efficient and time saving process
- the ability to develop a range of appropriate recognition programs
- capability to better engage with worksites and employers
- satisfied candidates and employers
- confidence in the integrity of the qualifications issued as a result of a quality recognition process.
3.1 The six stages of the Recognition Framework

Establish the context

Establishing the environment in which recognition takes place – the industry, the location, whether in a workplace or a training organisation, the level of qualification sought, the degree of employer or systems support, and so on.

Context is about the candidate’s situation i.e. what industry they work in, what qualifications/units of competency are relevant to them.

This stage involves providing information to the candidate and then gathering information about the candidate’s environment and aspirations to ensure specific information can be provided that is relevant to their needs.

Provide information

How everyone involved is informed about the process of recognition in consistent ways, and how candidates understand the expectations of the assessment process. In this second stage the RTO/assessor provides information relevant to the candidate and their context.

The information the assessor gathered from the candidate in establishing the context allows them to provide appropriate information to the candidate and to make any adjustments to the recognition process if required.

Gather evidence

The proof of competence – negotiated between the assessor and candidate (within guidelines).

How does the candidate demonstrate their competence?
What rules are applied to this evidence?

During this stage the assessor and candidate must agree about which forms of evidence are to be collected in the assessment process.

Assess the evidence

Measuring the evidence against the standards of performance required – using the assessment tools and recording the evidence.

This stage involves reviewing the evidence submitted by the candidate and using the RTO’s documented assessment process and assessment tools. Evidence must be relevant, sufficient, current and authentic.

Make an assessment decision

Once all evidence is collected and measured, the assessor aggregates/evaluates this and makes a decision about competence which is communicated to the candidate.

Assessment decision making usually includes an interview with 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 appropriate feedback is provided to the candidate by the RTO assessor, as well as the candidate having the opportunity to provide feedback to the assessor on the assessment process.

Issue credentials and/or plan the next step

The candidate is helped to decide “where to next?”. This may include gap training to complete a qualification, advice about the next level of qualification available, career advice for the newly qualified, or the development of an action plan if not yet competent.

All candidates should be asked to provide feedback to the RTO on the recognition process as part of the RTO’s continuous improvement process.
3.2 Explanatory notes for the six stages

The four resource booklets available that guide and assist RTOs, assessors, candidates and employers with the recognition process are available from the NSW State Training Services website.

**Skills Recognition - A Guide for Registered Training Organisations:** To assist Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) deliver a quality recognition service and develop or improve the capacity of RTOs to engage and assist RPL candidates and employees being instructed in recognition.

**Assessor Guide to Recognition of Prior Learning:** Assists assessors to offer streamlined recognition processes and information to employers and recognition candidates.

**Candidate Guide to Skills Recognition:** To assist people seeking recognition of experience, skills and knowledge for which they do not hold a vocational qualification. This guide has been developed to provide individuals with more information about recognition and help them to understand the recognition process.

**Skills Recognition – A Guide for Employers:** Assists assessors to offer streamlined recognition processes and information to employers and recognition candidates.

4.1 Record keeping and reporting

Whether you are reporting against the NVR Standards or the NSW Smart and Skilled contract, there are mandatory rules for record keeping required for your Recognition assessment, evidence and records.

First and foremost, the NVR Standards must be adhered to, and then any other requirements above and beyond these under the Smart and Skilled contract must also be fulfilled.

4.2 Requirements of the NVR Standards

Standard 15.5 of the Essential standards for continuing registration, within the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012, requires an RTO to provide quality training and assessment services across all of its operations.

Among other things, this means that assessment (including recognition of prior learning) must:

a) meet the requirements of the relevant training package or accredited course, and

b) be conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence, and

c) meet workplace and, where relevant, regulatory requirements.

While the examination of assessment tools at audit will determine whether an RTO has a plan in place to ensure the valid assessment of students by recognition, only the review of completed student assessment items will confirm the extent to which those plans have been implemented.

Therefore, NVR auditors will generally examine a sample of completed student assessment items at all audits except at initial registration.

Retention requirements

An RTO is required to securely retain, and be able to produce in full at audit if requested to do so, all completed student assessment items for each student, as per the definition above, for a period of six months from the date on which the judgement of competence for the student was made.

4.3 Requirements of the NSW Smart and Skilled contract

Smart and Skilled providers are required to maintain records for all funded training and for all training participants, including apprentices and trainees, as evidence of:

- the delivery of training; and
- the assessment of training delivered; and
- Credit Transfer or of Recognition granted; and
- exemptions granted; and
- certificates and qualifications issued.

Evidence must be accessible, authentic and capable of verification by State Training Services (STS).
5.1 Resources/contacts

For further information about Recognition visit the following websites:

NSW State Training Services

Making Connections E-Newsletter

Skills Online Resource Repository

Australian Skills Quality Authority
www.asqa.gov.au