

Skills Recognition

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Summary of the RPL Process

RPL is available to all students as a method of recognising their current competencies in a particular field. These competencies may have been gained through work, training or may be life skills.

Note: Competencies must be current usually obtained or demonstrated within the last five years

The RPL process in Work Safety involves the following steps.

- RPL information available on the ACWS website or in printed form.
- Contact the centre staff to arrange interview(in person or by phone) to determine that RPL is suitable for your situation.
- Applicant should complete the self assessment checklist
- Applicant to enrol on an RPL roll, make the appropriate payment and be allocated an assessor.
- **Applicant has 3 months from this date to submit all materials**
- Applicant to assemble the required documentation in the prescribed order
- Third party verification to be provided for all documents
- Assessor will review the evidence and determine competency
- Applicant will receive notification of outcome by email and/or mail
- No refunds will be granted regardless of outcomes
- A maximum of 800hrs RPL is available in a calendar year

Introduction

In this booklet you will find an explanation of the various Skills Recognition options that are available, answers to commonly asked Skills Recognition related questions and an outline of the steps to be taken if an application is to be made.

Skills Recognition– What is it?

Skills Recognition is the process whereby a person's skills can be formally assessed and acknowledged regardless of where or how they were acquired. It recognises that many people acquire skills not only through schools and training centres but also through work and life experiences.

Skills Recognition Options

The term skills recognition encompasses:

- Skills Recognition for Credit
- Exemptions
- Mutual Recognition
- Overseas Qualifications Recognition

Individuals should consider skills recognition:

- To confirm eligibility for a qualification or statement of attainment
- To confirm eligibility for entry to a course
- To gain credit within a course based on current competence held
- To pass assessments for a competency unit or module without having to attend class.

Skills Recognition for Credit

How can I get the skills I have recognised?

Skills Recognition for Credit allows you to apply for credit for competencies or modules for which you believe you already have the skills. These skills and competencies may have been acquired at work, while undertaking hobbies, voluntary work or similar experiences and do not necessarily have to include formal educational experiences.

There is no limit to the number of modules or competencies that you can apply for. Applications are assessed by an accredited assessor to determine whether your current level of skills, knowledge or experience is equal to the assessment requirements for the particular module or competency. A Skills Recognition assessment is based on the evidence provided by you, but applicants may be requested to undertake a practical, oral or written test. A successful assessment will result in you being granted credit for that module or competency. Fees apply for this service.

Exemption

I have completed a similar unit. Can this be recognised?

Exemptions recognise your previous studies that directly relate to competencies or modules within your current course of study at Swan TAFE. **These previous studies must involve similar modules or competencies.** For example if you have completed year 12 English in the past 5 years you may be eligible for an exemption from one or more TAFE communication skills modules or competencies.

When applying for an exemption you will need to provide a copy of your Statement of Academic Record or Statement of Attainment indicating the subject, module or unit of competence previously completed. In addition, you must be a current Swan TAFE student.

With exemptions the unit of competence or module should have been successfully completed within the last five years. Time limits outside of this will be at the discretion of the assessor. If your studies were completed more than five years ago you can still apply through the Skills Recognition for Credit process and provide evidence of how you have maintained the skills or knowledge over that time period.

Mutual Recognition

Can I get my previous studies recognised even though I attended a different College?

Swan TAFE recognises the formal training you have undertaken at other Registered Training Providers such as TAFE colleges or private training organisations through our mutual recognition process. On completion of your study at Swan TAFE you will attach copies of any Statements of Academic Record or Statements of Attainment from other Training Providers to your application for award.

The mutual recognition process allows for like to like units of competency or modules to be recognised if they have the same national identifier codes or State subject codes. Similar units of competency or modules completed can be recognised through the formal Skills Recognition For Credit or Exemption processes outlined above.

Overseas Qualifications

I completed a trade or qualification overseas. Can I get my trade certificate or qualification recognised?

To have your overseas qualification recognised contact the Overseas Qualification Unit of the Department of Education and Training, 7th Floor, 190 St George Terrace, PERTH WA 6004; telephone (08) 9320 3747.

What does skills recognition cost?

Skills Recognition for Credit: You will need to contact the College to determine if the course is eligible for profile (subsidised) fees. If the course is a profile course then the fees charged are the same as the tuition fee for the particular module or unit of competency. Additional costs may be charged for materials used during the assessment. Concession fees may apply.

If the course is not eligible for profile fees then a fee can be negotiated with the business unit.

• **Skills Recognition fees are not refundable regardless of the outcome of the application.**

Exemptions: Fees are not charged for Exemptions.

Mutual Recognition: Fees are not charged for Mutual Recognition

Overseas Students: Applicants will need to contact the Overseas Office at Swan TAFE to determine the costs of skills recognition 9267 7183.

Does having skills recognition affect my study allowance?

Successful skills recognition will lead to a reduction in your study load and may therefore affect your study allowance. If you are a recipient of an allowance such as the Youth Allowance, Austudy, Abstudy, Jet, pensioner education supplement, Newstart etc please contact Centrelink and get advice as to how a reduction in study load will affect your payments. It is recommended that you obtain the advice in writing so it can be referred to if a future dispute occurs.

How long does Skills recognitions take?

Different recognition options take different amounts of time to process.

A Skills Recognition for Credit application for a single unit may be expected to take up to four weeks. This can be extended where practical tests, interviews or supervised assessment have to be made. Delays will also occur if you are requested to provide additional evidence or clarify the mapping of evidence against elements or learning outcomes.

Exemption application processing should be completed in two to three weeks.

What is meant by evidence?

Evidence is the 'proof' you submit to justify your claim that you have certain skills or competencies. Evidence for Skills Recognition can take a number of forms. The following guidelines provide you with examples of the types of evidence you may choose to submit. If you have other suggestions for the type of evidence you would like to submit you can discuss these with an assessor.

Employment History

This can relate to paid employment, voluntary employment or work experience. This experience may be past or current. However, more recent experience tends to have greater validity. The main evidence in this category would be samples of work, on-the-job assessment or confirmation of skills by an industry representative.

Samples of Work

If possible you should accompany your application with samples of work that demonstrate your competence. For example, a person applying for Skills Recognition in a word processing unit or module may choose to submit examples of merged letters, complex tabulation, assignments, reports or similar. You must be able to verify that the work is in fact your own.

Validated Letter

A letter of work validation should not be confused with a reference. Its purpose is to help confirm the authenticity of information in your application. It should provide details concerning the duties, experience and responsibilities which are relevant, including some indication of the level of skill demonstrated in your work performance.

It is important that the letter is written on official stationery by a person who knows you and the duties you perform. The position of the person writing the letter should be clearly indicated and a contact phone number should be provided. The assessor may contact this person to clarify or verify the claims in the letter.

Industry Representative or Support Person

You may wish to have a person from your place of employment or the organisation where you gained the skills attend an interview with you and support or validate any claims regarding your work/life experience and duties or responsibilities.

Life Experience

Relevant experience you have acquired through any normal day-to-day activities, other than formal work, can also be considered. For example, community group involvement, hobbies, leisure activities, organising events, and committee involvement. Try to consider the relevant features of these activities that demonstrate your competence. Include samples of work or a letter of validation where possible.

Skills Demonstration

You may be asked to demonstrate your current competence by way of a practical skill demonstration. The advantage of this type of evidence is that the assessor can determine if you currently have the skills being claimed.

Interview/Verbal Questioning

You may be requested to demonstrate your competence by relating relevant experiences directly to your assessor during a formal interview. You would need to have supporting documents or other materials prepared for the interview. Ensure that your responses directly relate to the competencies for which you are being assessed.

Formal or Informal Training

You can further support your application for Skills Recognition by including details of any training you have undertaken including school, college, university, specialised short courses, workshops or specific industry training. If possible, include a verified photocopy of any qualifications or other documentation that provides details of what was covered in the training.

Evaluating your evidence

To ensure that your application for Skills Recognition is successful you need to submit evidence that is:

Valid

Does the evidence relate directly to the unit of competence or module? Your assessor needs to ensure that the evidence provided by you directly covers the competency for which you are seeking recognition. This may be more difficult with historical evidence than recent evidence. Therefore it is important to start with the recent evidence and to use the historical evidence to confirm and verify judgements. Additional evidence can be gathered through observation of performance or questioning to ensure that the evidence provided relates directly to the units of competence or module concerned.

Current

While historical evidence can be used to confirm competence, it is critical that appropriate evidence is available to show that you are **currently** able to use the skills and knowledge for which recognition is sought. Prior learning often contributes to **current** competence but its effect may decline over time. Current competence is often double-checked by observing people in real or simulated work and questioning them on their knowledge

Ask yourself: Does the evidence you have provided indicate that you are **currently** able to use the skills and knowledge?

Qualifications, documentation of experience and other indicators of prior learning obtained more than five years earlier are unlikely to be adequate evidence of current competence. The assessor needs evidence that the skills and knowledge have been used, reinforced and updated by more recent learning or work opportunities.

Sufficient

While there is no exact amount of evidence that needs to be collected, your assessor will need to ensure that you have provided enough to enable them to make a confident judgement that competence has been achieved. It is important to ensure that you can apply the skills and knowledge over time and transfer the skills and knowledge to a number of different situations. It is critical that the evidence addresses the full range of skills and knowledge identified in the relevant unit of competence or module.

Authentic

The assessor needs to ensure that the evidence is actually your work and not someone else's. To ensure authenticity the assessor may check records and/or get confirmation from your supervisors or trainers. Photocopy any official documents (awards, academic statements, trade certificates, etc) then take both the original and photocopies of documents to the Business Unit so that the copies can be verified. Never leave your original documents with the College as they may be lost or not returned.

You may be requested to submit a Statutory Declaration that the evidence provided is your own work. The Statutory Declaration needs to be noted by a person authorised to do so such as a Justice of the Peace, a Chief of Police, a Magistrate, a Commissioner for Declarations, Public Notary etc.

Consistent

You need to be able to demonstrate your ability to carry out the competency on more than one occasion and under different circumstances where necessary.

Summary

A combination of different types of evidence will provide your assessor with the best possible chance of processing your Skills Recognition application successfully.

Make sure your evidence is well organised and clearly referenced to the unit competencies or module outcomes.

How do I find out about my result?

Following the assessment of your application and possible interview you will be officially notified of the outcome of your application.

If your application is successful the result will be recorded on your Statement of Academic Record. If you have received recognition for a unit from a Training Package qualification you will also receive a Statement of Attainment. If you have successfully applied for Skills Recognition for an entire qualification you will be able to apply for an Award by submitting an **Application for Award Form to the Business Unit office**.

If your application is not successful you may enrol in a program of study with associated fees and charges applicable.

Can I appeal the result?

If your application is not successful but you feel that you did demonstrate competence you are entitled to appeal. Further information on the appeal process and an *Application for Assessment Appeal Form* is available from the Business Unit office. An additional fee will apply for this service. You must appeal within two weeks of receiving formal notification of the Skills Recognition assessment outcome.

You will be notified of the result of your appeal within approximately twenty working days of your appeal being lodged.

What if I need help or advice?

If you have general queries contact the Australian Centre for Work Safety on 1800359658

If you require unit of competency or module details look on our website under courses. <http://ohseducation.com>

If you are not sure whether you should apply or you have other queries about units of competency or modules contact the Business Unit office and make an appointment to see a Lecturer.

How can I improve my chances of successful Skills Recognition?

Points to remember for improving your chances of gaining Skills Recognition now and in the future are:

- Be aware of the different ways in which skills can be recognised as outlined in this package.
- Keep all documentation of courses that you have done, even those that have not been completed.
- Keep documentation of your work experience, such as the dates when you worked, the name of the employer, the type of work that you did and any other evidence to demonstrate the skills that you have gained.
- Once you have learnt new skills in a job, discuss the possibility of a workplace-based assessment with your employer.

SKILLS RECOGNITION APPLICATION PROCESS

Stage 1 – Self-Assessment

1. Read through the information provided in this booklet.
2. Obtain a copy of the Self Assessment Documentation for the course you are applying for.
3. Complete the Self Assessment Evaluation Form
4. Ask your workplace Manager or supervisor to verify your assessment
5. If you believe you can gather sufficient evidence proceed with a formal application.

Stage 2 – Formal Application and Submission

1. Obtain a skills recognition enrolment form from the ACWS office. (email is available)
2. Complete the appropriate enrolment and pay the appropriate fees.
3. Receive the relevant documentation list for this qualification
4. Photocopy all supporting documents for your own records.
5. Lodge your *Skills Recognition Portfolio of Evidence* with the Business Unit office

Stage 3 – Assessment

1. The assessment will be conducted by a qualified assessor(s).
2. The assessor(s) may contact you and request clarification. In some cases a demonstration, challenge test and/or an interview may be required at a mutually agreed time and place.
3. If the assessor considers that the application is close to demonstrating competency you may be requested to supply additional evidence. This opportunity to supply additional evidence will only be provided once and may incur additional costs.

Stage 4 – Post Assessment

1. Notification of the outcome of the assessment will be forwarded to you.
2. Feedback on the assessment outcome may be sought by contacting the Business Unit office.
3. An appeal may be lodged if you consider an error in judgement has been made. An additional fee will apply.
4. You will receive a Statement of Academic Record for any modules or competencies that you have achieved as formal recognition towards the qualification.