

# DIPLOMA of Community Services

(Mental Health) CHC50308

(Alcohol & Other Drugs and Mental Health) CHC50408



## Acknowledgements

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Mental Health Coordinating  
Council Inc  
ABN 59 279 168 647



Dear Mental Health or Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Support Worker,

The Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) is pleased to be supporting workers in the community mental health and alcohol and other drugs sector to gain recognition of skills and experience through training and workplace assessment.

This flexible learning model seeks to achieve effective delivery and assessment for mental health and AOD workers. The skills you bring to your role are formally recognised and further developed as required.

The competencies you will achieve are nationally recognised and provide future opportunities to complete other Diploma and Advanced Diploma level qualifications.

Congratulations on starting the process of gaining recognition for your skills.

Jenna Bateman  
Chief Executive Officer

## Introduction

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The Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) is a peak body for the community mental health sector in NSW. MHCC's membership includes both mental health specific and generalist community organisations and other bodies interested in mental health.

As the peak body for NSW, MHCC aims to provide leadership and an independent public voice on mental health issues. MHCC facilitates effective linkages between the government, non-government and private sectors acting as the liaison body representing the views of our membership.

The MHCC is directly funded by the NSW Health Department. It also receives project grants from other sources as well as raising revenue from membership fees and other activities. MHCC is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), and able to train and assess the:

- Diploma of Community Services (Mental health) CHC50308; and
- Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol, other drugs and mental health) CHC50408.

These qualifications are part of the Community Services Training Package 2008 (CHC08).

The qualifications offered by MHCC are nationally recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Any statement of attainment or qualifications received will be recognised by other RTOs throughout Australia. MHCC also recognises AQF qualifications and/or statements of attainment issued by any other RTO in Australia.

This Handbook provides you with the following information:

- Overview of the:
  - Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol, other drugs and mental health) and how the qualification can be completed.
  - Diploma of Community Services (Mental health) and how the qualification can be completed;
- Fees and charges;
- Appeals process
- Information about recognition;
- Evidence and assessment information;
- The national qualifications framework for Community Services; and
- Glossary of terms.

The Participant Handbook is an **information guide** only and not part of the assessment process. This Handbook is designed to provide workers with any additional information they may require while completing the assessment process.

If you require further details, please contact the Learning and Development Unit (02) 9555-8388.

Throughout this Handbook, a worker who participates in workplace training and assessment is called '**the participant**'.

## Overview of the qualifications

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<b>Name of the qualification</b>	<b>Diploma of Community Services (Mental health)</b>
<b>Qualification code</b>	CHC50308
<b>Who is this for?</b>	This qualification covers workers who provide a range of community services to people with a mental illness.

This qualification is from the National Community Services Training Package. It is made up of 16 units, of which 14 are compulsory and 2 are elective.

### The compulsory units are:

CHCAD504A	Provide advocacy and representation services
CHCAOD510A	Work effectively with clients with complex alcohol and/or other drug issues
CHCCOM403A	Use targeted communication skills to build relationships
CHCCS504A	Provide services to clients with complex needs
CHCCW503A	Work intensively with clients
CHCMH401A	Work effectively in mental health settings
CHCMH402A	Apply understanding of mental health issues and recovery process
CHCMH404A	Conduct assessment and planning as part of the recovery process
CHCMH409A	Facilitate consumer, family and carer participation in the recovery process
CHCMH501A	Provide advanced supports to facilitate recovery
CHCORG428A	Reflect on and improve own professional practice
CHCPOL501A	Access evidence and apply in practice
CHCPROM503A	Provide community focused promotion and prevention strategies
HLTOHS400A	Maintain OHS processes

### Electives

Elective competencies that are considered most useful to workers within the mental health community sector have been selected. MHCC also recognises other equivalent competencies that may have been previously completed.

Either of the following two electives offered are:	HLTHIR403B	Work effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers
	HLTHIR404B	Work effectively with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people

<b>Course pathway Diploma of Community Services (Mental health) CHC50308</b>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Delivery options</b>
Consumer, Family and Carer	CHCMH409A Facilitate consumer, family and carer participation in the recovery process	1 day of training OR Assessment only*
Foundations in Recovery Practice	CHCMH401A Work effectively in mental health settings CHCCS402A Apply understanding of mental health issues and recovery processes CHCMH404A Conduct assessment and planning as part of the recovery process	4 days of training (Two lots of 2 days) OR Assessment only
Understanding and Improving Practice Part 1 & 2	CHCPOL501A Access evidence and apply in practice CHCORG428A Reflect on and improve own professional practice	2 days
Introduction to Integrated Practice Part 1 & 2	CHCCOM403A Use targeted communication skills to build relationships CHCCS504A Provide services to clients with complex needs CHCCW503A Work intensively with clients CHCMH501A Provide advanced supports to facilitate recovery CHCAOD510A Work effectively with complex alcohol and other drug issues	2 days
Community Promotion and Advocacy Part 1 & 2	CHCAD504A Provide advocacy and representation services CHCPROM503 Provide community focused promotion and prevention strategies	2 days
Applying Integrated Practice Part 1 & 2	CHCCOM403A Use targeted communication skills to build relationships CHCCS504A Provide services to clients with complex needs CHCCW503A Work intensively with clients CHCMH501A Provide advanced supports to facilitate recovery CHCAOD510A Work effectively with complex alcohol and other drug issues	2 days
Either of the following two electives are available: Units previously completed through another Registered Training Organisation may be transferred as a credit	HLTHIR403B Work effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers HLTHIR404B Work effectively with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	2 days of training
OHS	HLTOHS400A Maintain OHS processes	Online only

\* Participants who choose the assessment only option will not attend the training day(s) for that competency, but will be required to complete the assessment tasks.

**Name of the qualification**                      **Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol, other drugs and mental health)**

**Qualification code**                      CHC50408

**Who is this for?**                      This qualification covers workers who provide a range of community services to people with a mental illness and alcohol or other drugs.

This qualification is from the National Community Services Training Package. It is made up of 19 compulsory units.

**The compulsory units are:**

CHCAD504A	Provide advocacy and representation services
CHCAOD402A	Work effectively in the alcohol and other drugs sector
CHCAOD510A	Work effectively with clients with complex alcohol and/or other drug issues
CHCAOD511B	Provide advanced interventions to meet the needs of clients with alcohol and/or other drug issues
CHCAOD512A	Develop and implement a behaviour response plan (Note: pre-requisite CHCICS305A)
CHCAOD513A	Provide relapse prevention strategies
CHCCOM403A	Use targeted communication skills to build relationships
CHCCS504A	Provide services to clients with complex needs
CHCCW503A	Work intensively with clients
CHCMH401A	Work effectively in mental health settings
CHCMH402A	Apply understanding of mental health issues and recovery process
CHCMH404A	Conduct assessment and planning as part of the recovery process
CHCMH409A	Facilitate consumer, family and carer participation in the recovery process
CHCMH501A	Provide advanced supports to facilitate recovery
CHCMH504D	Provide a range of services to people with mental health issues
CHCORG428A	Reflect on and improve own professional practice
CHCPOL501A	Access evidence and apply in practice
CHCPROM503A	Provide community focused promotion and prevention strategies
HLTOHS400A	Maintain OHS processes

**Specialisation**

**Mental health specialisation**

Candidates who have already completed *CHC50208 Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol and other drugs)* must select the following units to convert their qualification to the *CHC50408 Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol, other drugs and mental health)*:

CHCMH401A	Work effectively in mental health settings
CHCMH402A	Apply understanding of mental health issues and recovery processes
CHCMH404A	Conduct assessment and planning as part of the recovery process
CHCMH409A	Facilitate consumer, family and carer participation in the recovery process
CHCMH501A	Provide advanced supports to facilitate recovery
CHCPROM503A	Provide community focused promotion and prevention strategies

## Alcohol and other drugs specialisation

Candidates who have already completed *CHC50308 Diploma of Community Services (Mental health)* must select the following units to convert their qualification to the *CHC50408 Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol, other drugs and mental health)*:

CHCAOD402A	Work effectively in the alcohol and other drugs sector
CHCAOD511B	Provide advanced interventions to meet the needs of clients with alcohol and/or other drug issues
CHCAOD512A	Develop and implement a behaviour response plan (Note pre-requisite CHCICS305A)
CHCAOD513A	Provide relapse prevention strategies
CHCMH504D	Provide a range of services to people with mental health issues
CHCPROM503A	Provide community focused promotion and prevention strategies

Course pathway Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol, other drugs and mental health) CHC50408		
Title	Competencies	Delivery options
Consumer, Family and Carer	CHCMH409A Facilitate consumer, family and carer participation in the recovery process	1 day of training OR Assessment only*
Foundations of AOD	CHCAOD402A Work effectively in alcohol and other drug sector	2 days of training OR Assessment only
Foundations in Recovery Practice	CHCMH401A Work effectively in mental health settings CHCMH402A Apply understanding of mental health issues and recovery processes CHCMH404A Conduct assessment and planning as part of the recovery process	4 days of training (Two lots of 2 days) OR Assessment only
Understanding and Improving Practice Part 1 & 2	CHCPOL501A Access evidence and apply in practice CHCORG428A Reflect on and improve own professional practice	2 days
Introduction to Integrated Practice Part 1 & 2	CHCCOM403A Use targeted communication skills to build relationships CHCCS504A Provide services to clients with complex needs CHCCW503A Work intensively with clients CHCMH501A Provide advanced supports to facilitate recovery CHCAOD510A Work effectively with complex alcohol and other drug issues	2 days
Community Promotion and Advocacy Part 1 & 2	CHCAD504A Provide advocacy and representation services CHCPROM503 Provide community focused promotion and prevention strategies	2 days
Applying Integrated Practice Part 1 & 2	CHCCOM403A Use targeted communication skills to build relationships CHCCS504A Provide services to clients with complex needs CHCCW503A Work intensively with clients CHCMH501A Provide advanced supports to facilitate recovery CHCAOD510A Work effectively with complex alcohol and other drug issues	2 days

Course pathway Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol, other drugs and mental health) CHC50408		
Title	Competencies	Delivery options
Integrated Practice (AOD/Complex Needs)	CHCAOD511B Provide advanced interventions to meet the needs of clients with alcohol and/or other drug issues CHCAOD513A Provide relapse prevention strategies CHCAOD512A Develop and implement a behaviour response plan	4 days of training (Two lots of 2 days)
OH&S	HLTOHS400A Maintain OHS processes	Online only

\* Participants who choose the assessment only option will not attend the training day(s) for that competency, but will be required to complete the assessment tasks.

### Relationship between the compulsory units of these Diplomas

	CHC50308 Diploma Mental Health 16 units =14 compulsory +2 electives	CHC50408 Diploma combined (AOD and MH) 19 Compulsory units
CHCAD504A Provide advocacy and representation services	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCAOD402A Work effectively in the alcohol and other drugs sector		COMPULSORY
CHCAOD510A Work effectively with clients with complex alcohol and/or other drug issues	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCAOD511B Provide advanced interventions to meet the needs of clients with alcohol and/or other drug issues		COMPULSORY
CHCAOD512A Develop and implement a behaviour response plan (Note pre-requisite CHCICS305A)		COMPULSORY
CHCAOD513A Provide relapse prevention strategies		COMPULSORY
CHCCOM403A Use targeted communication skills to build relationships	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCCS504A Provide services to clients with complex needs	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCCW503A Work intensively with clients	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCICS305A Provide behaviour support in the context of individualised plans		
CHCMH401A Work effectively in mental health settings	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCMH402A Apply understanding of mental health issues and recovery processes	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCMH404A Conduct assessment and planning as part of the recovery process	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCMH409A Facilitate consumer, family and carer participation in the recovery process	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCMH501A Provide advanced supports to facilitate recovery	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCMH504D Provide a range of services to people with mental health issues		COMPULSORY
CHCORG428A Reflect on and improve own professional practice	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCPOL501A Access evidence and apply in practice	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
CHCPROM503A Provide community focused promotion and prevention strategies	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY
HLTOHS400A Maintain OHS processes	COMPULSORY	COMPULSORY

## **Assessment**

### **Competency based assessment**

Competency based assessment looks at the skills, knowledge and attitude required for a certain task or position. A person's competence is measured against the relevant industry competency standards and not against other participants. Assessors who are assessing the qualification have nationally recognised qualifications that meet industry standards for conducting assessments.

### **Competent or not yet competent**

There are two possible results you can achieve: Competent (**C**) or Not Yet Competent (**NYC**).

Once assessment tasks are completed, sent to your assessor and assessed, you will be advised of the outcome. If you are competent in all of the performance criteria within a unit of competency, you will receive a statement of attainment or a qualification. If there are areas where you are not yet competent, you and your assessor can discuss ways to achieve competence. You will only have to prove competence in the particular performance criteria you are not yet competent and not the entire unit of competency. If at the end of the course you have been assessed as competent in all the required units, you will receive a qualification. If you are competent in some but not all of the units, you will receive a statement of attainment for the units completed.

### **Assessment completion**

Assessments can be submitted by:

Email: [assessment@mhcc.org.au](mailto:assessment@mhcc.org.au)  
Fax: 02 9810-8145  
Post: PO Box 668 Rozelle NSW 2039

**Assessments will not be accepted without a signed coversheet and signed third party reports. Assessments that are not complete will not be marked.**

If assessments have been returned to the LDU by the due date they will be marked and returned to you within six weeks of the due date providing no additional work is required. Assessments received after the due date may experience a delay of up to eight weeks depending on the availability of your assessor.

### **Assessment extensions**

A participant will be granted assessment extensions on a case by case basis. In exceptional circumstances a participant may withdraw from the assessment process for up to 6 months. If at the end of the six month period the participant is unable or does not wish to complete the assessment, they will no longer be enrolled in that assessment. If at a later stage the participant wishes to complete the assessment, a re-enrolment fee of \$50 will be charged.

The organisation may be notified when a participant has withdrawn from the assessment process or no longer wishes to complete the assessment.

To negotiate an assessment extension please contact the LDU via email or phone.

## Overdue Assessments

An assessment is deemed overdue when it is two weeks past the due date, unless an extension has been requested and granted. In exceptional circumstances a participant may withdraw from the assessment process for up to six months. If at the end of the six month period the participant is unable or does not wish to complete the assessment, they will no longer be enrolled in that assessment. If at a later stage the participant wishes to complete the assessment, a re-enrolment fee of \$50 will be charged.

The organisation may be notified when a participant has withdrawn from the assessment process or no longer wishes to complete the assessment.

Assessments that are over 12 months old will not be accepted. The participant will be required to re-enrol in the assessment process and charged a \$50 fee.

**You must make and keep a copy of any assessment prior to sending it to MHCC**

## Plagiarism

**Plagiarism means** the inclusion of another person's work and representing it as your own. Any of the following acts constitutes plagiarism unless the source of each quotation or piece of borrowed material is clearly acknowledged: failing to adequately reference the work of others; copying part or all of another person's work; submitting work that in part or in its entirety has been copied from written material or electronic material including the Internet.

Plagiarism is forbidden. Any work containing plagiarised material will be assessed as "Not Yet Competent" and you may be subject to exclusion from MHCC training and assessment services. If at any time you disagree with the decision made by MHCC please follow our complaints and appeals process.

## ***Pathways to other qualifications***

The diploma courses below can lead into the Advanced Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma's listed.

<b>Diploma*</b>	<b>Advanced Diploma*</b>	<b>Vocational Graduate Diploma*</b>
CHC50108 Diploma of Disability CHC50208 Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol and other drugs) CHC50308 Diploma of Community Services (Mental health) CHC50408 Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol, other drugs and mental health) CHC50608 Diploma of Community Services Work CHC50708 Diploma of Community Development CHC51208 Diploma of Child, Youth and Family Intervention CHC51708 Diploma of Counselling CHC51808 Diploma of Family Intake and Support Work CHC52008 Diploma of Community Services (Case management) CHC52208 Diploma of Community Services Coordination	CHC60308 Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management	CHC80108 Vocational Graduate Diploma of Community Sector Management  CHC70208 Vocational Graduate Certificate in Community Services Practice (Client assessment and case management)

\*Please note that there are prerequisite requirements for course entry

## ***Entry requirements***

All participants in the MHCC training and assessment program must be able to read and write English to a standard that allows them to achieve the following:

- Read, understand and follow OH&S instructions
- Read instructions and procedures relating to the care of people with a mental illness
- Write care notes which record assistance provided to people with a mental illness
- Perform calculations such as additions, subtraction etc to support mental health clients with budgeting skills

MHCC can provide some assistance however appropriate referrals will be made for those requiring additional assistance.

To gain entry into the **Diploma of Community Services (Mental health) CHC50308** qualification a candidate must:

1. Be recently appointed or currently working in a community support mental health work role and have a relevant recognised higher education or vocational education qualification at Certificate IV or above

**OR**

2. Be recognised as competent, through a recognised training program or recognition process, against the following qualification (or equivalent):
  - Certificate IV in Mental Health

**OR**

3. Have sufficient work experience in the relevant sector to indicate likely success at this level of qualification in a job role involving:
  - The application of knowledge with depth in some areas and demonstration of a broad range of technical and other skills;
  - A wide range of tasks and roles in a variety of contexts, with complexity in the range and choices of actions required and
  - The exercise of discretionary judgement and decision making under general guidance.

To gain entry into the **Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol, other drugs and mental health) CHC50408** qualification a candidate must:

1. Be recently appointed or currently working in a community support mental health and/or alcohol and other drugs work role and have a relevant recognised higher education or vocational education qualification at Certificate IV or above

**OR**

2. Be recognised as competent, through a recognised training program or recognition process, against the compulsory units of competency from one of the following qualifications (or equivalent):
  - Certificate IV in Mental Health; or
  - Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs

**OR**

3. Have sufficient work experience in the relevant sector to indicate likely success at this level of qualification in a job role involving:
  - The application of knowledge with depth in some areas and demonstration of a broad range of technical and other skills;
  - A wide range of tasks and roles in a variety of contexts, with complexity in the range and choices of actions required; and
  - The exercise of discretionary judgement and decision making under general guidance.

## **Registration**

Participants may enrol to complete the Diploma's or other MHCC training courses by downloading an enrolment form from our website [www.mhcc.org.au](http://www.mhcc.org.au) and return it to MHCC. You may also register your interest through the following methods:

Email: [training@mhcc.org.au](mailto:training@mhcc.org.au)  
Fax: 02 9810-8145  
Post: PO Box 668 Rozelle NSW 2039  
Phone: 02 9555-8388

## **Credit Transfer**

Credit transfer is the assessment of a course or subject in which a participant wants to claim credit. The assessor examines the initial course or subject that the applicant is using to claim credit for, to discern the extent to which it is equivalent to the required competency outcomes in a unit of competency or qualification. The onus is on the participant to provide sufficient information about the course or subject that they have completed so that the assessor can confidently assess equivalency.

## **National Recognition**

National Recognition (previously known as mutual recognition) is the acceptance by one RTO of a qualification or statement of attainment issued to a participant by another RTO. This acceptance is usually for purposes of entry into a qualification where another qualification or certain statements of attainment are a pre-requisite to entry, or for part completion of a qualification based on statements of attainment for the units already held by the participant.

If the qualification or statement of attainment has been superseded and is no longer on the National Training Information Service (NTIS) or is not the version required by the qualification, national recognition does not apply. In such situations, participants will be advised to undertake a recognition of prior learning process.

MHCC will honour all national recognition requirements as specified by the Australian Quality Training Framework standards. MHCC is not required to re-issue a qualification or statement of attainment awarded by other providers for an equivalent qualification, or the same units of competence.

## **Assistance Provided**

MHCC is committed to providing assessment processes and tools that are valid, reliable, flexible and fair to all participants. We are able work with you to address any needs you have that may affect your ability to complete the assessment tasks.

These needs could include:

- Physical or intellectual ability
- Language, literacy and numeracy
- Cultural or ethnic backgrounds
- Location
- Socio-economic factors

Should you experience a difficulty in completing the course or assessment MHCC will make every attempt to accommodate your needs within our limited capacity. Information

about your needs will be kept confidential. To discuss your needs contact the Learning and Development Unit as soon as possible on (02) 9555-8388. This will allow MHCC time to make reasonable adjustment to the assessment. Adjustments to assessment may include having someone read assessment materials to you while someone records your spoken responses to assessment questions. MHCC will also provide assistance and referrals as appropriate.

The following list is not exhaustive and as services come to the attention of the MHCC they will be added and participants advised.

**Reading Writing Hotline** (national adult literacy referral service)  
Phone: 1300 6555 06  
info@literacyline.edu.au  
[www.literacyline.edu.au](http://www.literacyline.edu.au)

**TAFE New South Wales**  
Phone 131601 or ask at your local TAFE Campus listing:  
[www.tafensw.edu.au/contact/campuses.htm](http://www.tafensw.edu.au/contact/campuses.htm),  
and ask for Adult Basic Education (ABE) section

**Deafness and hearing impairment  
Deaf Society of NSW**  
Phone: 1800 893 855  
TTY: 1800 893 885  
[www.deafsocietynsw.org.au](http://www.deafsocietynsw.org.au)

**Vision impairment Vision Australia**  
Phone: 1300 847 466  
TTY: 9334 3260  
[www.visionaustralia.org](http://www.visionaustralia.org)  
[info@visionaustralia.org](mailto:info@visionaustralia.org)

### ***Privacy and Confidentiality***

MHCC is committed to upholding and abiding by the National Privacy Principles, under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). All personal information held by MHCC remains confidential and protected, and is only used and disclosed to the extent specified in the Learning and Development Unit Privacy and Confidentiality policy which can be downloaded from MHCC website at [www.mhcc.org.au](http://www.mhcc.org.au).

## Fees and charges

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### **Qualification Costs**

The cost for completing the Diploma qualifications is available on our website [www.mhcc.org.au](http://www.mhcc.org.au).

### **Qualification fee refund policy**

Depending on the circumstances, refunds (less a 25% administration charge) may be available for the first 3 months after enrolment. After that point payments for training and assessment will only be refunded in exceptional circumstances. Participants in exceptional circumstances can make application for special consideration to MHCC's Learning and Development Unit Manager.

A Tax Invoice is available on request.

### **Course Cancellations**

MHCC training events will proceed only if sufficient numbers are enrolled to make the course financially viable. We make every attempt to ensure that courses run. However, MHCC reserves the right to alter any arrangements, including course cancellations if required. We will notify you of any cancellations and changes as soon as possible, usually this will be 7 days prior to the course date. MHCC is not responsible for travel-related costs that may be incurred as a result of cancellations.

### **Replacement certificates**

Requests for replacement qualifications or statements of attainment must be in writing and addressed to the Learning and Development Unit Manager. Written requests must have:

- Your full details including name, address, contact details and drivers license number
- The title of the qualification or units of competency achieved

The provision of the first replacement certificate is without cost, however additional replacements will attract a fee of \$50. All decisions regarding replacement certificates reside with the Learning and Development Unit Manager.

## **Lodging complaints and appeals**

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MHCC aims to provide relevant and high-quality services that meet the needs of participants. To achieve this, MHCC is committed to an ongoing monitoring and evaluation feedback system that fosters both open communication and contributions from stakeholders. MHCC:

- values and practises openness, fairness and accountability in the conduct of its activities including any investigations that may arise from participant feedback; and
- acts on feedback quickly and aims for efficient and equitable resolution of participants complaints and appeals.

All staff involved in complaints and appeals handling will treat information as confidential. This means that the name or identity of the person complaining/appealing, and any other private information, will only be given to people who need to know it in order to deal with the issue. MHCC will endeavour to protect complainants, and other people who provide information, from any reprisals or victimisation, which may occur as a result of making a complaint/appeal. If a participant feels that they are being treated unfavourably by training personnel following a complaint or appeal, they should immediately contact the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). MHCC is committed to the resolution of complaints and appeals in a fair and timely manner by ensuring that participants:

- are clearly informed in a timely way about how to complain or appeal;
- have an opportunity to present their case;
- have access to an independent representative if needed;
- are clearly informed of the outcomes of the complaint or appeal; and
- have their complaints and appeals resolved within realistic and fair timeframes.

### **Complaints**

A complaint can be lodged about any aspect of the MHCC training services except an assessment decision. To seek a review of an assessment decision, participants must lodge an appeal. Training and assessment participants may lodge a complaint where they feel that:

- competencies and assessment processes were not adequately explained;
- they were not consulted about, or did not take part in, planning their assessment;
- assessment was conducted differently to the planned process;
- assessment evidence provided was misinterpreted;
- assessment procedures were inappropriate, incomplete or incorrect;
- assessor(s) and/or trainer(s) showed bias, misjudgement or inappropriate behaviour;
- there was a mistake in recording the assessment decision; or
- they were wrongly excluded from the training or assessment program.

MHCC treats every complaint as a serious matter and attempts, where possible, to negotiate a satisfactory outcome for all parties. Participants can lodge complaints by:

- talking to a staff member or
- writing a letter to the CEO or Learning and Development Unit Manager.

The CEO is responsible for dealing with all formal complaints according to the MHCC Policy and Procedure Manual.

### **Appeal of assessment decision**

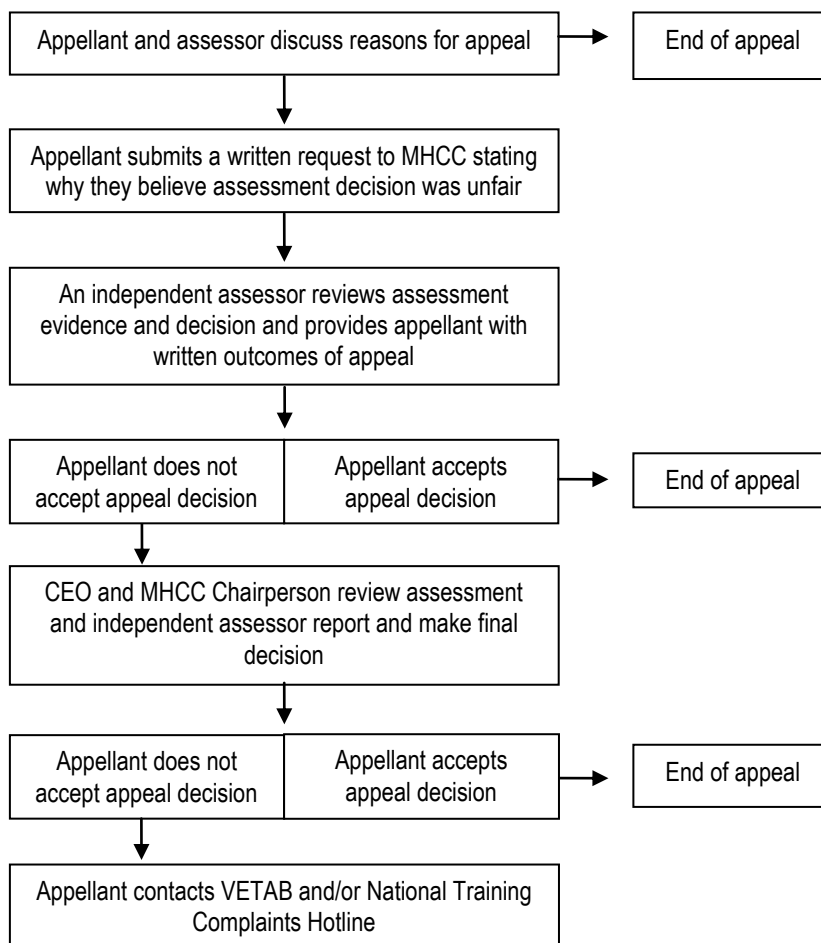
To lodge an appeal against an assessment decision, the appellant must have been assessed as 'not yet competent' in at least one part of the assessment activity or event. To raise concerns about the process of the assessment not being conducted in a supportive learning environment, participants should do so by registering a complaint.

An appeal can be lodged against:

- the outcome of an assessment activity or event that relates to a nationally recognised module or course
- the outcome of an RPL application.

In the first instance, the appellant should make an informal approach to the original assessor for clarification about the reason for the decision. Following this discussion, the appellant may re-submit the assessment with any required additional information to achieve competency.

The following flowchart shows the procedure to be followed for an appeal.



## ***Lodging a complaint with an external agency***

If a participant believes that their complaint or appeal has not been treated reasonably and fairly, they can lodge a complaint with the following bodies:

Australian Skills Quality Authority Complaints Team	Phone: 1300 701 801
Anti-Discrimination Board	Phone: 92685544 Toll Free: 1800 670 812
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission	Phone: 9284 9600 Hotline : 1300 656 419

If you have a complaint about a member of MHCC staff or an assessor who is registered with MHCC, please contact MHCC for a copy of the Complaint and Grievance Procedure. If you are not satisfied with the complaints process you can also contact the Australian Skills Quality Authority Complaints Team on 1300 701 801.

## ***Participant rights and responsibilities***

MHCC attempts to provide training and assessment services in a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect and is committed to the welfare of all course participants by complying with OH&S, anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation. It is expected that mutual respect and the rights of others be observed at all times. All breaches of conduct will be handled by the CEO.

As a participant you can expect:

- Suitably qualified trainers and assessors;
- Appropriate teaching methods and materials;
- Professional conduct;
- Clean, comfortable facilities suitable for adult learning;
- Accurate and current information; and
- Opportunities for input into your learning needs.

As a participant you are entitled to:

- Be treated with courtesy, fairness and respect;
- Privacy concerning personal information, subject to statutory requirements;
- Learn in an environment free of discrimination and harassment;
- Be informed of assessment procedures (if applicable);
- Pursue your educational goals in a supportive and stimulating environment; and
- Lodge a complaint through the grievance process.

As a participant it is your responsibility to:

- Treat other people with courtesy, fairness and respect;
- Attend assessment events and submit assessment items on time;
- Be punctual and attend regularly;
- Not engage in plagiarism or cheating in any assessment;
- Make and keep a copy of assessments you submit;
- Observe normal safety practices, including no smoking in buildings or any outside area other than the designated area; and
- Behave in a responsible manner, by not littering, harassing or offending fellow participants or staff, damaging property or persons, or attending class affected by alcohol or illegal drugs.

If you are unable to meet your responsibilities you will be asked to talk to the LDU Manager regarding changes to be made, including the possible cessation of attendance. In the specific case of an individual attending training/assessment activities under the influence of alcohol or

illegal drugs, their employer may be notified and assistance to access appropriate referral agencies will be offered.

## **Workplace training and assessment explained <sup>1</sup>**

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Previously the way people achieved a qualification was by undergoing a formal course of education or training. However, learning also occurs as a result of life and work experience. Experienced workers may undergo an assessment to determine if their skills, knowledge and experience allow them to be assessed as competent for one or more of the national units of competence from the national Community Services Training Package. Depending on the sort of experience the worker has they may have sufficient skills and knowledge to be assessed as competent and receive a national qualification.

Such an assessment may take place on or off the job. Workplace assessment is the name given to assessments conducted on the job. Workplace assessment requires a competent assessor to make a judgment based on evidence, about whether a participant has (or has not yet) the skills, knowledge and attributes to do a particular job, as defined in the relevant national competency standards that apply to that job.

When a participant is assessed as meeting all of the units of competence specified in the Community Services Training Package, a national qualification is awarded.

If a participant is assessed as only meeting some of the units of competence the participant can then decide whether to have a statement of attainment issued or to undertake some workplace focused training. This is usually a series of activities or tasks that facilitate learning within the workplace and job role of the participant. An individually customised training plan is developed to enable the participant to work towards a national qualification.

### **Benefits to workers of completing the qualification**

The benefits to workers of completing the qualification include:

- The training and qualification gives workers authority and credibility to provide a service to service users;
- Workers will also become part of enhanced service delivery, because they are trained and qualified;
- It provides consistency of skills across the community mental health sector;
- It demonstrates to workers the commitment their employer(s) has to their education, training and personal development;
- Training and assessment is specifically tailored to meet the job role of community mental health workers;
- It recognises and values prior learning, experience and existing skills of community mental health workers;
- It can save time, energy and resources for the worker, as only part of a course of training may need to be undertaken to complete a qualification;
- Assessment is against units of competence from national competency standards that are recognised by all registered training organisations;
- A national qualification is achieved or guidance can be provided on the options available to achieve a national qualification;
- It raises the professionalism and skill of the workers involved. Many workers comment on an increased sense of value and confidence, new learning and increased skill; and

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<sup>1</sup> Participant Handbook, Tenants' Union NSW, 2008

- The qualification may be beneficial in other areas of expertise and industry and can be applied in a number of fields.

## ***Understanding the community services qualifications<sup>2</sup>***

### ***Australian Qualifications Framework***

The first agreed framework, called the Australian Qualifications Framework (**AQF**), enables different training organisations throughout Australia to issue the same type of qualifications. The same rules apply throughout Australia. The AQF can be summarised as being:

School sector Accreditation	Vocational Education and Training Sector Accreditation	Higher Education Sector Accreditation
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Vocational Graduate Diploma Vocational Graduate Certificate  Advanced Diploma  Diploma Certificate IV Certificate III Certificate II Certificate I	Doctoral Degree Masters Degree Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate Bachelor Degree Associate Degree. Advanced Diploma Diploma

“It should be noted that vocational education and training is increasingly provided in the schools sector (VET in Schools) which may be recognised at the appropriate Certificate I - IV level or as credit towards the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education. Some Certificate I - IV qualifications are also issued in the higher education sector and there is also a vocational education and training pathway to the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma”.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Australian Quality Training Framework 2007***

The second agreed framework (called the Australian Quality Training Framework) is the national set of standards which assures nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment services within the vocational education and training system. The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) AQTF 2007 is the current version of the framework, effective from 1 July 2007.

It enables different assessors throughout Australia to accept the assessments of each other because they follow the same rules and assess to the same standards. It also enables people to gain a qualification through the recognition assessment process.

This ***Participant Handbook*** provides you with information on how you can apply for a national Certificate IV level qualification via recognition assessment and workplace training pathway.

### **National Training Packages**

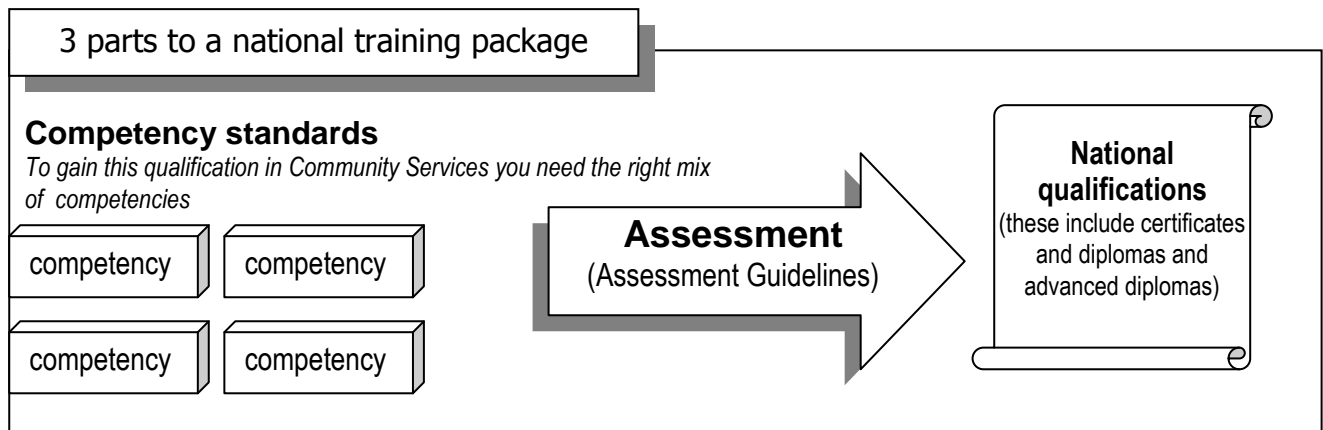
The third agreed framework (called National Training Packages) enables specific workplace competencies to be identified across all industries in Australia. This means that, in those industry areas where national workplace competencies have been identified, a participant can be assessed against them by a qualified assessor.

<sup>2</sup> Participant Handbook, Tenants' Union NSW, 2008

<sup>3</sup> Extract from <http://www.aqf.edu.au/aqfqual.htm>

If the participant decides to proceed with applying for recognition of prior learning (RPL) assessment because of their existing community services work skills, the national training package that they should be assessed under is the **Community Services Training Package (08)**. For more information about RPL and the evidence required refer to page 20.

You can access a copy of the latest competency standards (and the rules for assessment) from the National Training Information service [www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au).



## Recognition explained <sup>4</sup>

**Recognition** is a term used to describe a process whereby an experienced person or worker can apply to a qualified assessor to determine if they have the skills and competencies to be awarded a national vocational qualification.

**Recognition** is often known as Recognition of Prior Learning (**RPL**) or sometimes as Recognition of Current Competencies (**RCC**).

**Recognition** is one of several pathways by which a person may demonstrate that they have the skills and competencies to be awarded a national vocational qualification. Other common qualification pathways include classroom based courses, distance education courses, online courses, traineeships, apprenticeships, self paced learning etc.

If an employee is competent in an area in which they would like to hold a national vocational qualification, there are many benefits for the person to undertake a recognition assessment.

Firstly, they will receive independent feedback as to how skilled they really are. Secondly they may be able to achieve all or some of a national qualification without having to enrol in a course of study and sit through a series of lessons. Thirdly, it is a time efficient process which will either result in the participant receiving a national qualification or in knowing which areas they have to focus on in order to become competent.

In having their skills assessed the participant may seek the support of their workplace employer/supervisor. This could involve as little as the employer supplying a written or verbal reference. If the employer/supervisor would like to be more involved in the recognition assessment of their employee then this may also be possible.

In terms of the time required to undergo a recognition assessment, this varies from participant to participant. At the minimum several meetings between the participant and their assessor are usually required. Sometimes it might take months depending on the process for assessment that the participant and their assessor have agreed upon.

For more information about the stages involved in the recognition process, read the next section.

### ***Key features of recognition***

There are a number of key features of recognition

- ❖ **There are benefits to both the worker and the workplace.** Following a successful assessment the participant benefits by having a nationally recognised qualification. The workplace benefits by having a competent worker.
- ❖ **Assessment is based on competence.** If a participant can demonstrate that they have the skills and competencies required to receive the qualification then

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<sup>4</sup> Participant Handbook, Tenants' Union NSW, 2008

they are entitled to have it awarded to them. The participant does not necessarily need to be able to read, write or speak English very well in order to get a competency based qualification. It depends what the assessment rules are for the specific qualification being assessed against.

- ❖ **Only a qualified assessor can assess against national competencies.** Depending on individual circumstances, the assessor must be qualified to assess against the Diploma qualifications and must be either employed by an RTO or have an assessing contract with a RTO.
- ❖ **Assessment is based on evidence.** The participant must be able to demonstrate to their assessor that they meet the relevant national competency standards. It is not good enough for the participant to just know the theory or just have the right attitudes – they must be able to integrate the skills in a workplace like environment.
- ❖ **Assessment can be based on a variety of evidence.** There are lots of ways a person can demonstrate that they are competent. Some ways are through answering questions, observation, referee reports, supervisor interviews etc. It is important that the assessor negotiates a mutually suitable process with the participant.
- ❖ **Workplaces can be involved in the recognition assessment.** If the assessor, the participant and the participant's employer agree, certain people from the participant's workplace may be able to assist in determining the participant's level of competence.
- ❖ **There are 3 possible outcomes of a recognition assessment.** These are:
  - The participant is assessed as competent;
  - The participant is assessed as not yet competent; or
  - It is noted that further evidence is required.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning ('RPL') process**



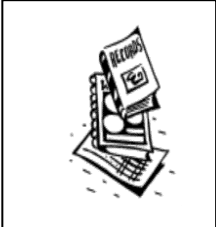



MHCC has an RPL process available to all participants that involves collection of evidence for a portfolio. The portfolio is evidence of your skills and your work or work you have contributed to. You can get advice from peers about what should be in your portfolio or ask them if they think what you are planning to include meets the standard. However, everything that you put in the portfolio needs to be either your own work or your own description of what you have previously done. If you would like more information about Recognition of your current skills and/or qualifications, please contact the Learning and Development Unit at MHCC on (02) 9555-8388.

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## Assessment evidence <sup>5</sup>

MHCC assessments enable you to provide all the relevant information and evidence for the assessor. If you feel that other evidence would also be relevant, the image below outlines other types of evidence that could also be used. If you do not feel comfortable with the assessment methods outlined, please contact the Learning and Development Unit Manager at the MHCC on (02) 9555-8388.

If you would like to provide other evidence, include a Statutory Declaration to support your evidence. This is a legal document, so you must be careful to make sure that all information provided is true and accurate.

<p><b>Certificates</b> Certificates of attendance</p> 	<p><b>Evidence letters</b> Supervisor's reports Letters of reference from coordinators, clients, other professionals or peers that you have worked with</p> 
<p><b>Work records</b> <i>Care must be taken with confidentiality</i></p> 	<p><b>Journals, diaries or appointment books</b> Personal records Records of work or voluntary positions Reflections on own work</p> 
<p><b>Telephone references</b> At your request an assessor can contact people you have worked with or other people to provide a telephone reference</p> 	<p><b>Documents, audio-visuals and pieces of work</b> Documents Newsletters Photos Videos Creative works Assignments from courses</p> 

<sup>5</sup> Participant Handbook, Tenants' Union NSW, 2008

## Glossary<sup>6</sup>

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### **Appeal process**

This process allows for the person being assessed, or an employer, to have an assessment reviewed. This may result in part of an assessment being repeated or carried out in a different way.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is the process whereby the assessor collects evidence and makes judgments on the ability of an individual to perform certain tasks or skills.

### **Assessment process**

The assessment process is the steps agreed to by the participant and the assessor to most suitably complete the assessment activities.

### **Assessor**

An assessor is someone who has the skills and knowledge to conduct assessments. RTO's must use assessors who have the assessment qualifications required by the training package guidelines.

### **Competency unit**

Competency is a fixed arrangement of knowledge and skill needed in the workplace for a particular task. Elements are lists of outcomes that make up the competency unit. All the elements together describe the competency unit.

### **Evidence**

Evidence is information gathered that shows proof of competency. It can take many forms and be gathered from a number of sources. Evidence must be valid, authentic, sufficient and current to enable the assessor to make the assessment judgment.

### **Extension**

A participant may apply for an extension of time to complete an assessment that is due to be completed by a specified date.

### **Portfolio**

A portfolio is a collection of materials, such as original documents, work samples, certificates, etc. that are put together for a specific purpose.

### **Qualification**

A qualification is the formal declaration, issued by an RTO, stating that a person has achieved all the requirements of a national Training Package or an accredited course.

### **Reasonable Adjustment**

Reasonable adjustment is when the assessment method is altered to meet individual or participant needs while remaining valid and reliable.

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<sup>6</sup> Participant Handbook, Tenants' Union NSW, 2008

## **Recognition process**

This term may be called Recognition of Prior Learning, Recognition of Current Competency, Skills Recognition, or simply Recognition. All of these terms refer to the process of accepting a person's skills and abilities regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. This includes any combination of formal or informal training and education, work experience or general life experiences. The assessor must be confident that the participant currently possesses the competencies being recognised. The assessor may use a variety of evidence that could include documentation, references from employers and workplace observations. The assessor must ensure that the evidence is authentic, valid, reliable, current and sufficient.

## **Registered Training Organisation ('RTO')**

A Registered Training Organisation (**RTO**) is a training organisation that has met the standard for training and assessment according to national requirements (*Australian Quality Training Framework*).

## **Self-assessment**

Self-assessment is a process that allows participants being assessed to collect and provide evidence on their own performance against the competencies in a certain qualification. This method is often used to help the participant and the assessor to determine what evidence is valid and where the gaps may be.

## **Special consideration**

Reasonable adjustment may be made to the assessment process to meet the individual needs of the participant. Participants may need particular attention because of personal needs, such as language difficulties, disabilities, cultural requirements, etc. All information provided to the assessor and RTO about special needs remain confidential.

## **Statement of Attainment**

Statement of Attainment is a record of recognised competencies. The Statement of Attainment may contribute towards a qualification if a participant has or undertakes further training, assessment or recognition. The Statement of Attainment is issued by an RTO when competencies have been successfully assessed.

## **Training Package**

A Training Package is a set of nationally approved competencies, assessment guidelines and qualifications for a specific industry or work sector. The Diploma of Community Services (Mental health) and the Diploma of Community Services (Alcohol, other drugs and mental health) are from the Community Services Training Package 2008. These qualifications are nationally recognised by RTO's and the mental health sector.

## Feedback form for the Diploma Participant Handbook <sup>7</sup>

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We'd love your comments....

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please circle your responses to the following:*

1. The **Participant Handbook** is:

Useful and relevant

acceptable

not useful and not relevant

2. The **Participant Handbook** is:

Clear and easy to understand

acceptable

confusing

What I like about the **Participant Handbook** is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion what needs to be improved is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Please attach any other comments you would like to make and send this form to:*

Mental Health Coordinating Council  
Learning and Development Unit  
PO Box 668 Rozelle NSW 2039  
Fax: 9810-8145

**Thank you for your thoughts and time**

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<sup>7</sup> Participant Handbook, Tenants' Union NSW, 2008