

# *Rehabilitation for Recovery*

## **Certificate IV in Mental Health Work (Non-Clinical) CHC41102**

**Mental Health Coordinating Council  
Learning and Development Unit**

## **Participant Handbook**

## Acknowledgements

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Dear Mental Health Support Worker,

The Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) is pleased to be supporting workers in the community mental health 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 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 Certificate IV and 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 facilitate effective linkages between the government, non-government and private sectors acting as the liaison body representing the view 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. As part of our key objectives MHCC is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), and able to train and assess the Certificate IV in Mental Health Work (Non-clinical) CHC41102 which is part of the Community Services Training Package 2002.

The competencies offered by MHCC are nationally recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and are part of the Certificate IV in Mental Health Work (Non-clinical). 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 Certificate IV in Mental Health Work (Non-clinical) 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
- 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 and training and assessment is called '**the participant**'.

## Overview of the qualification

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<b>Name of the qualification</b>	Certificate IV in Mental Health Work (Non-clinical)
<b>Qualification code</b>	CHC41102
<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 14 units. 11 units are compulsory and 3 are elective.

### The compulsory units are:

CHCMH1B	Orientation to mental health work
CHCCS9A	Provide support services to clients
CHCMH4C	Provide non-clinical services to people with mental health issues
CHCCOM3C	Utilise specialist communication skills to build strong relationships
CHCCS301A	Work within a legal and ethical framework
CHCOHS401A	Implement and monitor OHS policies and procedures for a workplace
CHCCS402A	Respond holistically to client issues
CHCCS405A	Work effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers
CHCNET4A	Work with other services
CHCCS403A	Provide brief intervention
CHCCS501A	Assess and respond to individuals at risk of self-harm or suicide

### Electives

A range of 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.

CHCMH8A	Provide interventions to meet the needs of consumers with mental health and AOD issues
CHCCS304A	Assist with self medication
CHCMH7A	Provide, with consumers, support and interventions to meet the needs of carers and families

## ***How to complete the qualification***

A number of pathways have been created to allow workers to complete the Certificate IV in Mental Health Work (Non-clinical). The 14 competencies can be completed through training, assessment, workplace based projects and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

**There are 3 ways to complete the qualification**



### **Course pathway**

This pathway is most suited to someone with no qualification and little experience. This option includes training, assessment and workplace based projects that are generally completed over a 12 to 24 month period.

### **Blended Pathway (RPL and Training)**

This option is most suited to someone with some qualifications and experience. This pathway may include a combination of collecting evidence that contributes to a portfolio and participating in relevant training and assessment.

### **Full RPL**

RPL is a term used to describe a process whereby an experienced worker can apply to a qualified assessor to determine if they have the skills and competencies to gain either partial or total completion of a qualification. The RPL process provided by MHCC is holistic and can be completed in the workplace.

This option is most suited to an experienced worker who may have some qualification/s and includes collection of evidence eg work documents that contribute to a portfolio. This pathway may also include completion of assessment tasks.

The onus is on RPL participant to provide sufficient evidence to satisfy assessors that they currently have the relevant and current competencies. For more information regarding the recognition process refer to page 20.

For registration and entry requirements for all pathways please refer to page 5 - 6.

Course pathway		
Stages	Title	Competencies covered
Stage 1	Orientation to Mental Health work (2 days)	Orientation to mental health work CHCMH1B
	Working with People with Mental Health Issues (4 days)	Provide support services to clients CHCCS9A Provide non-clinical services to people with mental health issues CHCMH4C
Stage 2	Working with Mental Health Consumers & Carer's (2 days)	Provide, with consumers, support and interventions to meet the needs of carers and families CHCMH7A
	Law & ethics in Mental Health Work (2 days)	Work within a legal and ethical framework CHCCS301A
	Responding to Suicide & Self Harm (2 days)	Assess and respond to individuals at risk of self-harm or suicide CHCCS501A
	Mental Health Medication Matters (1 day)	Assist with self medication CHCCS304A
Stage 3	Mental Health & substance Use (2 days)	Provide interventions to meet the needs of consumers with mental health and AOD issues CHCMH8A
	Brief Interventions in Mental Health Work (2 days)	Provide brief intervention CHCCS403A
Stage 4	Training / Work place based projects	Utilise specialist communication skills to build strong relationships CHCCOM3C Work effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers CHCCS405A Respond holistically to client issues CHCCS402A Work with other services CHCNET4A Implement and monitor OHS policies and procedures for a workplace CHCOHS401A

### **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 or course performance criteria and not against other participants. Individuals 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 you will receive a statement of attainment or a qualification depending on the number of competencies you have already completed. 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.

### Assessment completion

To negotiate an extension to complete your assessments please contact the LDU via email or phone. 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.

### 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. This can include 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 may be subject to exclusion from MHCC training and assessment services. If at anytime you disagree with the decision made by MHCC please follow our complaints and appeals process.

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

### Pathways to other qualifications

Certificates	Diploma	Advanced Diploma
Certificate IV in Mental Health Work (Non-clinical)	Diploma of Community Services Management  Diploma of Community Welfare work  Diploma of Community Services (Case Management)  Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling)	Advanced Diploma of Community Services Management  Advanced Diploma of Community Services Work*

\*Please note that there are no prerequisite requirements for course entry except the Advanced Diploma of Community Services Work, which is based on work experience.

If you are interested in following a clinical pathway and would like to receive recognition for completion of a qualification you will need to negotiate this with the institution you will be attending.

### Entry requirements

Entry requirements for those participating 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.

### ***Registration***

Participants may enroll to complete the qualification or 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  
 Fax: 9810-8145  
 Post: PO Box 668 Rozelle NSW 2039  
 Phone: 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 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.

### ***Traineeship opportunities***

MHCC is able to provide opportunities regarding New Entrant and Existing Worker Traineeship to eligible participants. For more information please talk to your supervisor or contact the MHCC Learning and Development Unit on 9555-8388.

## ***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 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.

**Adult English language, literacy and numeracy**  
**Reading Writing Hotline** (national adult literacy referral service)  
Phone: 1300 6555 06  
info@literacyline.edu.au  
www.literacyline.edu.au

**TAFE New South Wales**  
Adult Basic Education  
Phone 1300 362 890 or ask at your local TAFE

**Referral to general disability services IDEAS**  
Phone: 1800 029 904  
TTY: 6947 3377  
www.ideas.org.au  
info@ideas.org.au

**Learning difficulties**  
**Specific Learning Difficulties Association of NSW (SPELD)**  
Phone: 9451 9477  
www.speldnsw.org.au  
[enquiries@speldnsw.org.au](mailto:enquiries@speldnsw.org.au)

**Deafness and hearing impairment**  
**Deaf Society of NSW**  
Phone: 1800 893 855  
TTY: 1800 893 885  
www.deafsocietynsw.org.au

**Vision Impairment Australia**  
Phone: 1300 847 466  
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 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 Certificate IV in Mental Health Work (Non-clinical) will vary for each individual according to the pathway chosen. The following table provides an overview of the current pathways and associated costs.

	Course pathway	Blended Pathway (RPL and Training) <sup>1</sup>	Full RPL
MHCC Member	\$2,400	\$1,200	\$1,000
Non member	\$3,600	\$1,800	\$1,500

*All prices are subject to change without notice.  
This fee structure does not apply to Traineeships\**

<sup>1</sup> Blended pathway costs start at \$1200. The exact pricing will be determined by the balance of RPL, Assessment and course units selected.

If a participant wishes to enroll for 7 or more units in the course and assessment pathway they will be deemed to be pursuing a course pathway and the fees will reflect that.

### Traineeship fees\*

For participants who are eligible for an existing worker traineeship incentive a standard fee of \$3000 will apply regardless of the pathway chosen.

### 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.

### Training Costs

	Per day
MHCC Member	\$100
Non member	\$150

### Training fee policy

#### Refunds

Please choose your course carefully. Once registrations are processed refunds can only be made when:

- A course is cancelled, or the course date is changed by MHCC
- A written request is received 14 days prior to the course
- A medical certificate is provided in the event of illness or misadventure

All refunds will incur a \$35 administration fee, except where a course has been cancelled by MHCC.

Full or partial non-attendance of registered participants will incur the full registration fee.

#### *Transfer / Substitution / Credit*

All fee-paying participants are given the opportunity to transfer to another course date on 1 occasion. MHCC must be notified in writing by either fax or email 7 days prior to the course if a transfer is required.

**Email:** training@mhcc.org.au

**Fax:** 9810-8145

Substitutions must be advised in writing 5 days prior to the course.

In special circumstances course credits can be negotiated.

#### **A Tax Invoice is available on request**

#### *Course Cancellations*

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
- acts on feedback quickly and aims for efficient and equitable resolution of participants complaint 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
- 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
- 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 EO or Learning and Development Unit Manager.

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

### **Appeal of assessment decision**

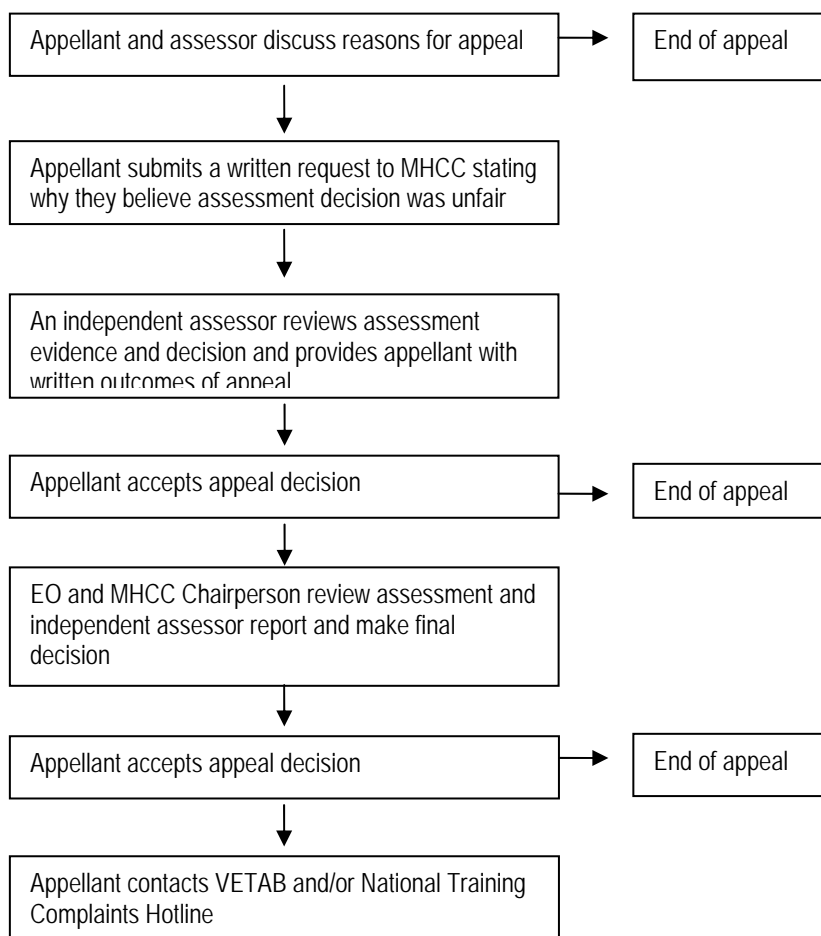
To lodge an appeal against an assessment decision, the appellant must have been assessed as 'not yet competent' in at least one part of the assessment activity or event. To raise concerns about the process of the assessment not being conducted in a supportive learning environment, participants should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

VETAB	Phone: 9244 5335
National Training Complaints Hotline	Phone: 1800 000 674
Anti-Discrimination Board	Phone: 9268 5544
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission	Phone: 9284 9600

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 Vocational Education Training Advisory Board on (02) 9244-5335 or the National Training Complaints Hotline on 1800 000 674.

### ***Welfare and disciplinary procedures***

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. Breaches of conduct will be handled by the CEO.

## 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 to 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 an 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 tenants.
- 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 needs to be undertaken, or perhaps none at all to achieve 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.
- The qualification may be beneficial in other areas of expertise and industry and can be applied in a number of fields.

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

## 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:

AQF Level	Relevant qualification
AQF 1	Certificate I
AQF 2	Certificate II
AQF 3	Certificate III
AQF 4	Certificate IV
AQF 5	Diploma
AQF 6	Advanced Diploma
AQF 7+	Higher Education Qualifications

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.

### Australian Quality Training Framework

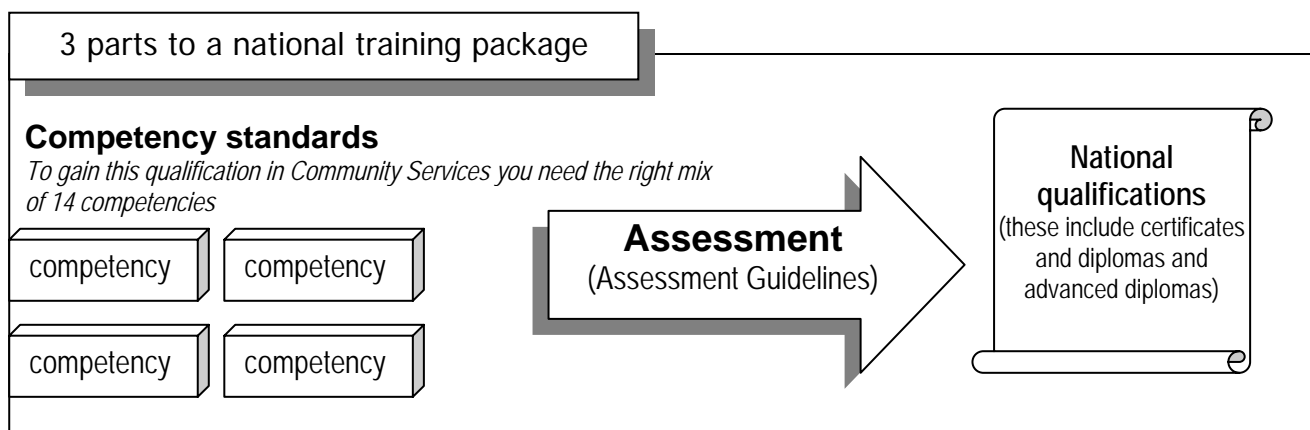
The second agreed framework called the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) enables different assessors throughout Australia to accept the assessments of each other, because they follow the same rules and assess to the same standards. It also enables people to gain a qualification through the recognition assessment process.

### 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.

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 the **Community Services Training Package (02)**. For more information about RPL and the evidence required refer to page 15 –17.

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).



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

## Recognition explained <sup>3</sup>

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**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 enroll 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 an participant can demonstrate that they have the skills and competencies required to receive the qualification then

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<sup>3</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 Certificate IV in Mental Health Work (Non-clinical) 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**

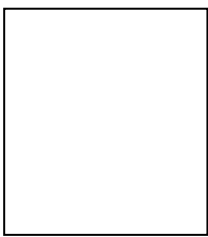

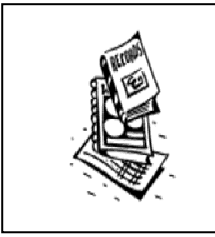



MHCC has an RPL process available to all participants that involves collection of evidence for a portfolio. The portfolio is evidence of your skills and your work or work you have contributed to. You can get advice from peers about what should be in your portfolio or ask them if they think what you are 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 (02) 9555-8388.

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## Assessment evidence <sup>4</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 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 co-ordinators, 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>4</sup> Participant Handbook, Tenants' Union NSW, 2008

### **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 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 a 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>5</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 Certificate III in Disability Work and all of the competencies in this qualification are from the Community Services Training Package. This qualification is recognised nationally by training organisations and the Disability Work industry sector.

## Feedback form <sup>6</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** for Certificate IV in Mental Health Work (Non-clinical) is:  
useful                      acceptable                      not useful
2. The **Participant Handbook** for Certificate IV in Mental Health Work (Non-clinical) is:  
easy to use                      acceptable                      not easy to use

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