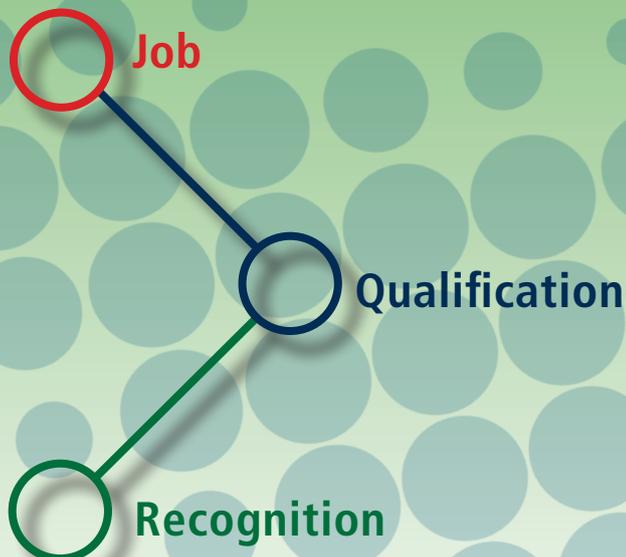


# Skills Recognition

valuing prior learning

## Have your skills recognised

### Candidate Guide



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### Project Team

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### Disclaimer

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# Contents

Page

## Overview

- Who is this guide for? 2
- What is recognition? 2
- What can I get from recognition? 2
- What are the benefits of recognition for you? 3

## Understanding Recognition

- Could this be you? 4
- How did recognition work? 5
- What about the jargon? 6
- Who is involved in recognition? 7

## Recognition and you

- How do you get involved? 8
- Where do you go for information? 8
- What do you need to do? 9
- What information should you expect? 10
- How do I prove what I know I can do? 12
- What happens after the evidence is gathered? 16
- Making a decision 18
- What does this mean? 18
- What next? 19

## Where to go for recognition

- Finding a Registered Training Organisation in NSW 21
- Other useful websites 21

# Overview

## Who is this guide for?

This guide has been produced to assist people seeking recognition for experience, skills and knowledge for which they do not hold a vocational qualification. The skills they want recognised may have been obtained through:

- Work experience
- Voluntary work
- While at school
- Life experience
- Sporting experience

## What is recognition?

Recognition is the process by which your existing skills, knowledge and experience gained throughout your life, regardless of how they have been acquired, are recognised towards the achievement of a nationally recognised qualification or statement of attainment.

## What can I get from recognition?

Recognition can result in the awarding of a nationally recognised qualification or in the issuing of a Statement of Attainment for part of a qualification rather than a whole qualification. You may not need a whole qualification depending on your job role, so a Statement of Attainment may be more relevant to you.

# What are the benefits of recognition for you?

- You will have your skills recognised
- It saves you time in achieving a qualification as you do not have to repeat learning for skills and knowledge you already have
- It reduces time spent to gain a qualification by not undertaking unnecessary training
- It enables you to identify gaps in your knowledge and skills and therefore any learning that needs to occur to meet the requirements of a particular job role or qualification.

**This guide** has been developed to assist you to gain recognition.

This guide will help you:

- become more informed about recognition
- understand the recognition process.

**This guide** will assist you to answer questions such as:

- How does recognition work?
- How do I get involved?
- Who else is involved?
- What does it mean for me?
- How do I prove my skills and knowledge?
- Do I need to have a lot of documents?
- What happens if I don't succeed?

# Understanding Recognition

## Could this be you?

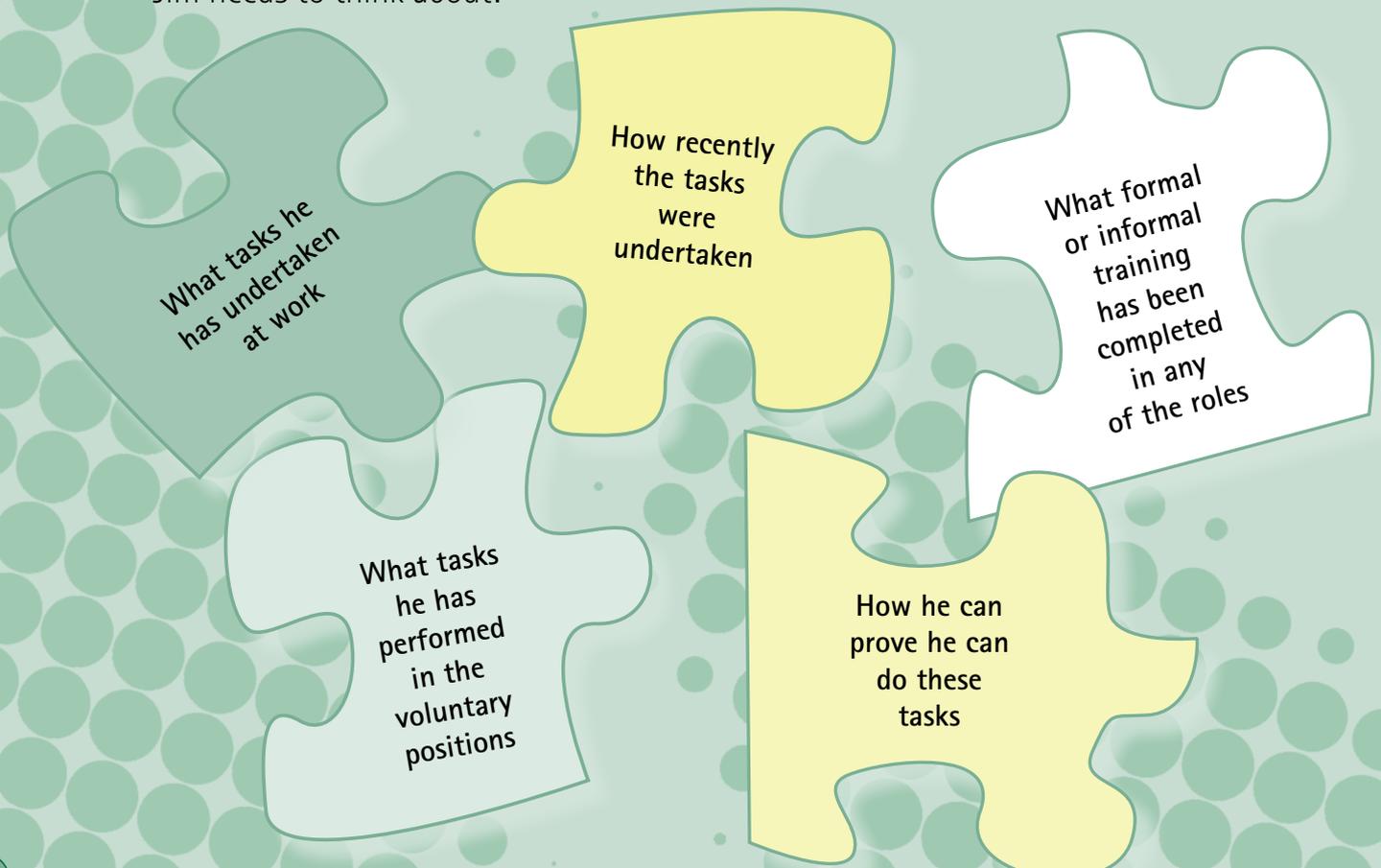
*Over the years Jim has held a number of positions in different industry areas. The tasks Jim undertook in all positions required him to: liaise with customers; take orders from customers; record and maintain order information systems; order stock; maintain stock supplies; pack orders ready for delivery; supervise delivery staff.*

*He also has been a member of a local volunteer organisation where he has held positions such as secretary and committee member. A keen sportsman he is active in the local soccer club organising junior players. Jim has been unemployed at times during his career but while unemployed remained active in the community as a volunteer.*

*Jim is interested in a career as a supervisor as he feels his experience demonstrates the ability to supervise and manage different situations. He is finding it very difficult as he has never gained any qualifications to show the range of skills and knowledge he has as a supervisor. He considers himself to be very experienced but is uncertain what his next step should be in trying to have this recognised. He has spoken to a number of friends who also do not know where he might go to find out some information.*

This story is not uncommon; your story might be similar, although your background and experience may be very different from Jim's.

If he is serious about getting formal recognition of his skills and knowledge, Jim needs to think about:



# How did recognition work?

Let's think about Jim and the steps to gain recognition for his skills.

1. Jim searched the local newspaper for anyone offering supervisor training.
2. He contacted a training provider who gave him information about two different courses offered for supervisors. The information included a pack which listed types of evidence that could be used to prove competence as a supervisor.
3. On reading the information Jim felt they he did not need to complete the training as he could gather the evidence that was discussed in the information.
4. He recontacted the training provider and enrolled.
5. He gathered evidence with the guidance of the assessor from the training provider.
6. Once Jim submitted the evidence the assessor reviewed this and rang Jim to discuss it further.
7. This discussion identified that there was an area that required additional evidence. An agreement was reached with the assessor about what evidence could be provided.
8. Jim resubmitted the evidence, was deemed competent, and was awarded a qualification.

Recognition is a process which varies and you will find there are differences in how individual Registered Training Organisations (training providers) offer recognition. Typically the process involves some kind of assessment of your existing skills and knowledge to determine the competencies you have.

# What about the jargon?

You will hear a number of terms being used regarding recognition. Below are the most commonly-used of those terms.

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

An RTO is an organisation registered to issue nationally recognised qualifications or statements of attainment for units of competency from training packages or accredited courses. This is the organisation that offers you recognition and assists you through the process. There are a variety of RTOs you can choose from, some may specialise in your industry area. RTOs consist of private providers (who vary in size), Community Colleges, Enterprise RTOs and TAFE.

## **Nationally recognised qualification**

A formal certification that is recognised nationally and awarded under the Australian Qualifications Framework for the achievement of competencies.

## **Statement of Attainment**

A nationally recognised statement awarded for attainment of units of competency which partially contribute to completion of a qualification.

## **Competency**

Competency is a mix of knowledge, technical skills, understanding, problem solving and attitudes that can be demonstrated in the workplace. To be deemed competent you are assessed against the relevant units of competency.

## **Unit of competency**

This is a description of the job or work function that you need to perform such as Operate a Bar, Drive a Forklift, Communicate in the Workplace, and the standard of performance and knowledge required.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is a process in which the candidate and the assessor work together to gather evidence to enable the assessor to make a decision on the candidate's competence.

## Who is involved in recognition?



# Recognition and you

## How do you get involved?

- By contacting an RTO – a list of RTOs can be found at <http://www.ntis.gov.au>, and under training organisations in local phone books and newspapers;
- By talking to others who may have recently undergone recognition or training;
- By reading this guide for assistance and information.

## Where do you go for information?

You may find information about your industry (or the industry you want to work in) and relevant qualifications in a number of ways, for example:

- Contact an RTO
- If you are employed talk to your employer and/or workplace supervisor
- Talk to others in your workplace or volunteer organisation
- Talk to others in your industry
- Talk to others who may have already been involved in recognition.

The internet also has information. Try these websites:

- <http://www.skillsrecognition.gov.au> - this is the NSW skills recognition website
- <http://www.training.com.au> - this website provides information on training and assessment
- <http://www.ntis.gov.au> - provides information on RTOs, qualifications competency standards, training packages, and where to find additional information.

Information can be provided in a number of ways:

- Websites
- Information sessions
- Marketing materials
- Course brochures
- Specific recognition leaflets
- Individual interviews or course advisory sessions.

## What do you need to do?

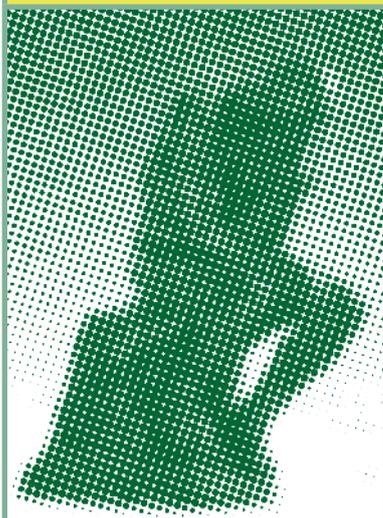
If you want to find out more about recognition, you can approach an RTO which will be able to provide information relevant to you. This information should relate to the industry in which you want to work or have worked in the past.

An 'industry' is your work environment, and could include a volunteer work environment. For example you may work in the Retail, Hospitality, Building and Construction, Community Services, Farming or Horticulture Industries. You may also be a volunteer at your local SES, a charity or a sports club.

The industry area you come from, or want to work in, will determine the types of competencies you have and the qualifications which are relevant to you. This in turn will determine the type of assessment process and the types of information you need to receive from an RTO.

The RTO will assist you to identify relevant units of competency and explain the types of evidence (proof of your skills and knowledge) required.

### Think about



1. What industry area do you work in?
2. Where have you gained your knowledge and skills?
3. Can your employer or supervisor tell you about relevant qualifications in your industry?
4. Is there an RTO you can talk to about relevant qualifications in your area?

## What information should you expect?

There may be two stages where information will be provided to you by an RTO. General information should be provided to you before enrolment and then you should receive more detailed information when you have enrolled.

The table below provides a list of typical information you should expect.

What to ask for	What information you should expect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a definition of recognition (what it is)</li> <li>• is it available to you?</li> <li>• what it means to you in practical terms</li> <li>• the costs involved and what the cost covers</li> <li>• the support available</li> <li>• typical timelines for the process</li> <li>• initial qualification-related information</li> <li>• recognition process/flow chart</li> <li>• pathways specific to the course/s</li> <li>• individual interviews or course advisory sessions</li> <li>• how to get started.</li> </ul>	<p>A recognition kit/guide which contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information and advice including support available to you</li> <li>• Steps in the recognition process including what happens if you think the process was unfair</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of the RTO, assessors and you</li> <li>• Suggested evidence requirements (what you can provide or demonstrate to prove your skills and knowledge)</li> <li>• Guidelines on gathering evidence</li> <li>• Guidelines on how to present your evidence</li> <li>• Information to help you to assess your skills against the competencies you are interested in</li> <li>• Information about what happens if you are successful/unsuccessful</li> <li>• How feedback on your assessment will happen.</li> </ul>

You should be supplied with enough information to make an informed decision about whether to pursue recognition.

## Think about

There are a number of things you should consider when reviewing the information provided:

- 1.** Have you received the information you need?
- 2.** What else do you need to know?
- 3.** Is it relevant to you?

When thinking about whether you will be able to proceed with recognition you should ask yourself:

- 4.** Am I currently working in a job relevant to my industry area?
- 5.** What tasks do I perform in my job or have performed recently in jobs?
- 6.** Am I up to date on any specific legislation and regulations relevant to my industry?

## How do I prove what I know I can do?

The RTO will support you in gathering evidence to prove you have the necessary knowledge and skills.

You will be working with the RTO to identify:

- Evidence you may already have e.g. work documents, testimonials from previous employers/volunteer organisations, samples of your work
- Evidence that needs to be collected by the assessor e.g. the assessor may observe you completing a task and/or ask you questions to confirm your knowledge.

The RTO will help you understand what evidence is and what specific types of evidence might be suitable to gain the qualification you are pursuing.

Evidence for recognition is not limited to existing documents you already have. Evidence can take a number of forms and might include any combination of:

- **Questioning** – the assessor may give you written questions, or interview you and ask questions verbally
- **Observation of practical tasks** – the assessor may observe you performing tasks in the workplace, in a simulated environment, in the classroom or any combination of locations
- **Finished products** – items you have produced in your work, which could vary from food you have cooked to reports you have written
- **Presentations** – the assessor observing presentations made by you
- **Video and/or audio taped evidence** – showing you completing tasks
- **Third party reports** – references or answers given by third parties to questions from the assessor, providing examples of your work ability relating to the standards – this can be verbal or in writing
- **Documents** – such as relevant qualifications/transcripts, project plans and reports, minutes of meetings, correspondence, resources developed
- Anything else that you or the assessor/RTO can think of that is relevant and proves your competence.

You should decide with your assessor the specific types of evidence to be collected, the timelines for submission of evidence and what form the submission should take.

John owned a small business specialising in providing tree services – pruning, felling, and removing stumps. He employed two teams of four – each headed by a team leader with the qualification RTF30203 Certificate III in Horticulture (Arboriculture). The remaining team members were labourers without formal qualifications who had learned many skills in John’s employ – workplace safety, teamwork, communication – both verbal and non-verbal – as well as a range of skills in horticulture, arboriculture and using tools and equipment.

John approached a large local training provider to see what recognition might be possible for his workers if they enrolled in a relevant qualification.

After consultation a combination of types of evidence were identified to be collected by:

- An assessor observing the teams at work and using an observation record/ checklist to capture evidence of the skills observed – in this case the RTO would provide and complete the paperwork;

**plus**

- John providing references verbally – in answer to a set of questions based on relevant competencies. Questions would be devised by the RTO and recorded by the assessor. This would help ensure the workers had performed at an acceptable workplace standard over a period of time;

**plus**

- The workers themselves providing verbal answers to a set of questions based on relevant competencies to ensure their depth of knowledge and ability to handle contingencies was sound.

What evidence could my assessor gather through, for example, observation or questioning?

What evidence can I collect – such as testimonials?

What evidence do I already have such as work records, certificates or samples of work?

## Here are two examples of different ways evidence can be presented

### Example 1

Ray has worked for a local building company for a number of years. His main tasks are: adhering to Occupational Health and Safety requirements (his safety and the safety of others), following plans developed by his supervisor, preparing and handling materials, using tools and equipment, carrying out basic demolition. The table below shows the units of competency that may be suitable and the types of evidence that could be gathered. As the tasks are very hands on, assessment would take place at the work site.

Possible units of competency	Possible evidence
BCGCM1001B-Follow occupational health and safety procedures BCGCM2001B- Read and interpret plans BCGCM2004B-Handle construction materials BCGCM2005B-Use tools and equipment BCGCM2009A-Carry out basic demolition	The assessor observed Ray at work The assessor asked Ray questions about his knowledge Ray obtained a report from his supervisor outlining the tasks he performs at work

### Example 2

Beryl is a supervisor in a large retail outlet in the city. The outlet has a number of locations and it is Beryl's responsibility to supervise staff across the locations. Beryl has had to deal with a number of team and staff issues across the locations which she has done successfully. Her tasks include: organising her own work, supervising the work of others but under her manager's supervision, adhering to organisational OHS policies and procedures, developing teams and team members, developing and implementing communication amongst team members. Beryl would like to gain some recognition for the skills and knowledge her position requires.

Beryl's assessment will use workplace evidence but no observation as it is difficult to 'see' the requirements of the units by observation, therefore observation is not the most effective way to gather evidence of Beryl's competence.

Possible units of competency	Possible evidence
BSBCWOR404A - Develop work priorities BSBOHS7A - Monitor a safe workplace BSBLED401A - Develop teams and individuals BSBWOR402A - Promote team effectiveness BSBWOR401A - Implement effective workplace relationships	Beryl completed projects in the workplace which were identified by Beryl and her assessor Beryl produced work records eg her work plans, minutes of meetings, risk assessments she had conducted The assessor asked Beryl questions about her knowledge Beryl obtained a report from her supervisor outlining her tasks and how she performs them

# What happens after the evidence is gathered?

Once you have submitted your evidence the assessor reviews it against the units of competency.

The evidence is reviewed together as a whole and recorded by the assessor using documents developed by the assessor and the RTO.

## The assessor needs to ensure that your evidence:

**Is valid:** does your evidence relate directly to the unit of competency; demonstrate relevant skills & knowledge; and is it appropriate to the relevant level required by the competency?

**Is sufficient:** does your evidence include all the critical tasks and knowledge in the unit of competency; prove you have performed these over a period of time and in different situations; and have you submitted enough different forms of evidence?

**Is authentic:** can each piece of evidence be clearly identified as your own work and is it dated and referenced; where your evidence is part of teamwork, is your specific role clearly defined; are qualifications, references, licences etc presented by you certified documents; are your verbal or written accounts about what you can do verified by a credible third party and/or supported by documented evidence?

**Is current:** does evidence demonstrate you have the skills and knowledge required to meet current performance requirements?

An interview, whether face-to-face, by telephone or other means is a common part of any recognition process. This will allow your assessor to

- Ask questions to explore the extent of your knowledge
- Seek clarification about items of evidence
- Ensure the whole competency is demonstrated.

Consider the example below:

## Case study

## Gathering and producing evidence

Sally submitted evidence to gain the Certificate III in Public Safety (Aquatic Search and Rescue) PUA31304. The evidence provided was judged against the relevant units of competency. The assessor looked at each piece of evidence to examine where it related to the units of competency and whether it was valid, current, sufficient and authentic.

- Evidence was validated by relating it to the relevant units of competency to ensure that it adequately reflected the requirements.
- The sufficiency of the evidence was established through observing the candidate as well as through the documentary evidence provided by the candidate.
- Currency of evidence was established through the observation of the candidate, as well as speaking to her supervisor about the work she was currently doing.
- The authenticity of the evidence was established by having a statutory declaration signed for photographs provided, and by calling her previous employer and speaking to her current supervisor.

*An interview was arranged with the candidate to explore specific knowledge requirements relating to health and safety. This interview was conducted over the telephone to minimise the cost to the candidate of having to travel to the office.*

## Making a decision

The assessor will make a decision about your competence and will discuss this with you – in a face-to-face interview or by telephone. Receiving constructive feedback from your assessor is very important at this point.

The assessor will make one of the following decisions:

- You are competent (C) in a unit (or units) of competency
- You are not yet competent (NYC)
- Further evidence is required.

## What does this mean?

**Competent** – you will be issued with the qualification or statement of attainment and the process for issuing of the official credential will be explained.

**Not yet competent** – options are explored which could include:

- You being issued with a statement of attainment in units achieved if the whole qualification is not achieved
- You undertaking further training by enrolment in a class to meet skills gaps
- You undertaking further training by enrolment in online or distance education
- You being asked to complete work-based projects to further develop skills and/or knowledge.

**Further evidence required** – really means that for some reason the assessor could not make a decision based on the evidence submitted so far. This could have been for a number of reasons:

- Evidence did not relate clearly to the units
- Insufficient evidence
- Evidence was not current
- There were inconsistencies in the evidence submitted.

This is where the assessor will discuss with you options for gathering more evidence or gaining the qualification/units of competency in another way.

You should be provided with enough feedback to ensure you understand what the next step may be and why you were assessed as either not yet competent (NYC) or are required to present more evidence. This should be an open, transparent process which includes two-way communication so that you can ask questions.

## What next?

Your assessor will be required to complete RTO records of your assessment. How this is done will depend on the RTO's record keeping procedure. However there are clear principles that underpin this to ensure:

- Your privacy is maintained
- Confidentiality is ensured
- RTO legislative requirements are met
- Any licensing requirements are met
- Any contract requirements are met.

Your personal records must be kept securely by the RTO for the required period of time.

You have access to these records and if for some reason you lose your qualification or statement of attainment you can approach the RTO for a copy, though this may involve a cost.

## Recognition checklist:

Did you receive	Yes	No
<p><b>Information prior to enrolment that</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• was easy to understand</li> <li>• was clear and concise</li> <li>• included enrolment information</li> <li>• explained what recognition is</li> <li>• explained what it means to you</li> <li>• explained that it is available to you</li> <li>• included costs involved and what the cost covers</li> <li>• included the support available</li> <li>• included timelines and</li> <li>• included initial qualification-related information?</li> </ul> <p>Was the information sufficient to guide your enrolment decisions?</p>		
<p><b>On enrolment</b></p> <p>Did the RTO supply a recognition kit specific to the qualification and industry and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information and advice that was easy to understand and included advice about support available to you</li> <li>• steps in the recognition process including what you can do if you think the process was unfair</li> <li>• roles and responsibilities of the RTO, of assessors and you</li> <li>• suggested evidence requirements</li> <li>• guidelines on gathering evidence</li> <li>• guidelines on how to present your evidence</li> <li>• information to help you assess your skills against the competencies</li> <li>• what happens if you are successful/unsuccessful and</li> <li>• how feedback on your assessment will happen?</li> </ul> <p>Can you continue and gather/produce evidence for submission?</p>		

**Good luck in your endeavours**

# Where to go for recognition

## Finding a Registered Training Organisation in NSW

Only a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) can recognise your skills and issue you with a qualification or Statement of Attainment.

You can find an RTO by going to the National Training Information System website at:

<http://www.ntis.gov.au/>

Information about RTOs can be obtained by going to the Registered Training Organisation link within this website.

## Other useful websites

### The NSW COAG RPL Skills Recognition website:

This is the main recognition support site for NSW with supporting information for stakeholders in recognition practice including candidates, assessors, registered training organisations, employers and industry bodies.

[www.skillsrecognition.gov.au](http://www.skillsrecognition.gov.au)

### Australian Skills Recognition Information:

The Australian Skills Recognition Information (ASRI) site is part of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship main site. It tells you about skills recognition for the purpose of migration to Australia or having your skills or qualifications gained overseas assessed, to allow you to practise your occupation in Australia.

[www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)

### Centrelink Career Information Centres:

Find out if Centrelink's Career Information Centres can help you by looking in this section of the Centrelink site. Career Information Centres can help customers make informed decisions about education, training and employment options and pathways.

[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

### DET Apprenticeships and Traineeships:

This site explains the processes which allow people who have trade skills and experience but do not have formal qualifications to have them formally recognised by the NSW Vocational Training Tribunal (VTT) and receive trade certification.

[www.apprenticeship.det.nsw.edu.au](http://www.apprenticeship.det.nsw.edu.au)

### JobWise:

JobWise is a web site supporting mature age employment and contains information for employers, mature age job seekers and mature age workers.

[www.jobwise.gov.au](http://www.jobwise.gov.au)

### Myfuture:

This site gives you information about career planning and education, and training options for jobs. You can use the myguide feature to guide you through activities to help you explore your career.

[www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au)



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations