

RPL TOOLKIT GUIDE

FOR EMPLOYERS



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WELCOME MESSAGE

The Human Services Skills Organisation's (HSSO) mission is to ensure the sustainability of a skilled and adaptable human services industry to support people with disabilities, older Australians and veterans, children and other vulnerable groups.

One of HSSO's projects that will contribute towards its mission, is the development of a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Candidate Centred process, for the qualification CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support.

This project will allow for the recognition of prior learning of a significant proportion of the current workforce, utilising the skills of a number of Registered Training Providers and workplaces, across every Australian state and territory, to deliver and provide information and RPL assessments to support:

- eligible workers who provide support to people in residential or home care settings, to develop RPL applications and portfolios of evidence
- care providers and industry stakeholders to assist their workers' transition to the obtain qualifications through the recognition of their experiences within the workforce

The HSSO is committed to providing a flexible and supportive process that enables workers who support people with disabilities, older Australians and veterans, children and other vulnerable groups, who have gained skills and knowledge from their workplace (s), the opportunity to have that skill and knowledge recognised.

This Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) project has been designed for workers who have current experience in the provision of individual support, and are currently employed within an aged care residential facility, home based care and / or the disability sector.

The information in this document will assist you to understand the RPL process that your staff will be undertaking and how your organisation together with the assessor /mentor, can assist in providing the evidence required to demonstrate your staff members competence, in order to achieve recognition for part of, or the whole of the CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support.

This is a formal process that is based on a range of identified evidence, which the assessor will support you to provide for your staff.

The process of the journey your staff will undertake and the requirements are outlined in the following pages of this document.

Thank you for your assistance in participating

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jodi Schmidt', is placed above the name and title of the signatory.

Jodi Schmidt
Chief Executive Officer

Human Services Skills
Organisation

Acknowledgments

The Human Services Skills Organisation is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment through the Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow program. We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work. We pay our respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders past, present and emerging.

The HSSO would like to thank all who have contributed to the development of this RPL Toolkit and for their generosity in sharing their industry expertise, skills and knowledge of the sector.

SECTION I: HSSO OVERVIEW

Our vision is for Australia's human services sector to be equipped with a skilled, diverse and adaptable workforce meeting its needs now and into the future.

The HSSO is uniquely positioned to collaborate with employers, registered training organisations and government to strengthen the workforce that cares for the nation's most vulnerable.

Our purpose is to improve the skills of the human services sector to deliver the best outcomes for Australians.

Our commitment is to improve how the sector identifies, develops and delivers workforce solutions, knowing it will result in better support and care for those who need it most.

What's in it for you?

At a time of significant skill shortages, retaining skilled staff is imperative to many organisations. There are many reasons why staff choose to stay or leave an employer; the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications can be a motivating factor for employees to commit to their current employer.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process by which your current employees can have the skills and knowledge that they have gained on the job recognised against the national industry standards, related to the provision of individual support.

Full or part qualifications can be gained through the RPL process. It may also identify future professional development needs for your existing staff, which can assist with your human resource planning.

The benefits that an organisation may gain from their employees participating in the HSSO RPL Project are as follows:

- Engaging your workforce in an activity that is rewarding and empowering
- Providing you with an understanding of the depth and breadth of your workforce's existing skills
- Ensuring any workforce development strategies provide the greatest return on investment
- Increasing business productivity and profitability and increasing your competitive edge

What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)?

RPL is an assessment process used to assess your Employee's existing level of knowledge and skills against a range of industry standards (known as units of competency). This involves them performing their everyday work tasks whilst being observed by an Assessor, telling their stories and answering verbal questions around the work that they do. This assessment process may lead to them gaining the full or part of the qualification CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support, without ever entering a class room.

What is the Certificate III in Individual Support?

The CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support is the qualification recognised by the sector for

- Aged care support workers
- Personal care assistants
- Disability support workers
- Home support workers

This qualification reflects the role of workers in the community and/or residential settings, who follow individualised plans to provide person-centred services to people who may require support to participate in Activities of Daily Living and / or community activities due to ageing, disability or some other reason. This work involves using discretion and judgement in relation to the individual support being undertaken, as well as workers taking responsibility for the own work performance. Workers will have acquired skills and knowledge across a range of workplace practices and duties, as well as have the knowledge of the concepts and practices required to provide person-centred support

To successfully complete the Certificate III in Individual Support, a total of 13 units of competency are required to be undertaken. Seven of these units are what are known as “core” units i.e. compulsory – they must be done. The other 6 units are made up of electives. Some of the electives have been selected through industry consultation and embedded into the Clusters 1, 2 & 3 according to occupational sector needs (i.e Residential, Home Care and Disability, as (demonstrated in the chart on the next page) and other units the Employee may choose for themselves.

There are a number Occupational Sector Elective units, which your Employee can choose one or two of the electives from (depending on which industry sector you are in i.e Residential, Home Care or Disability) to make up the 13 units of competency required to gain the qualification.

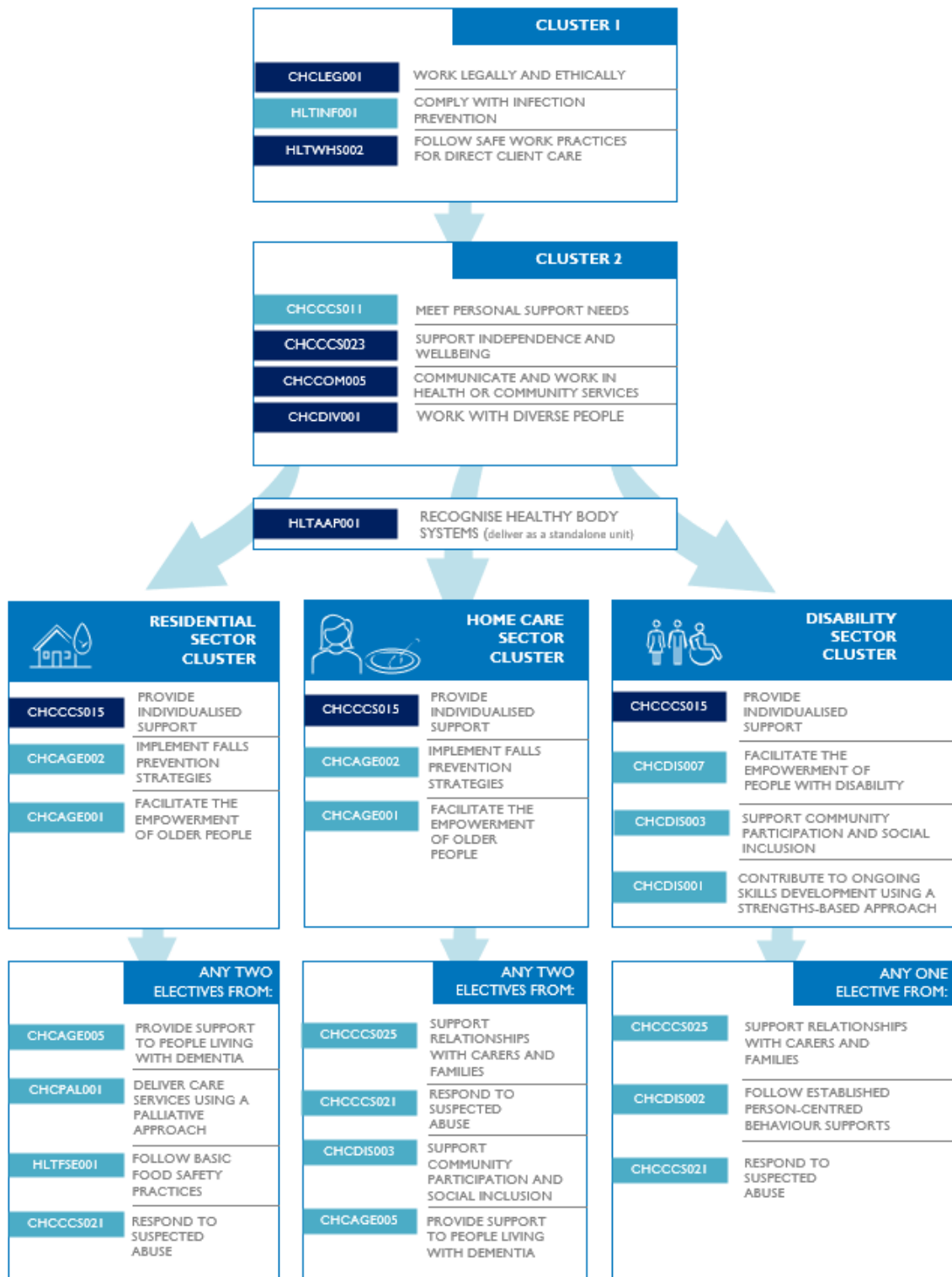
What is a Cluster?

Clustering involves delivering and assessing two or more similar / related units of competency together in groups. The HSSO has utilised clustering within this project to eliminate, the need for repetitive unit by unit assessment, allowing for the units within a cluster to be more holistically assessed in a workplace environment and saving your employee time in participating in assessments.

In the chart/ diagram on the next page you can see how the 13 units of competency contained in the CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support have been grouped / clustered together for this qualification. These are the units that your employees' skills and knowledge will be assessed against using a candidate-centred approach.

CHC33015 Certificate III Individual Support: RPL Units

■ CORE UNITS FOR CHC33015 CERTIFICATE III IN INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT ■ ELECTIVES



Note: Credit transfer for First Aid certificate or other relevant unit of competency under import rules to replace any of final elective units.

What is the process for staff be assessed?

Recognition of Prior Learning is a process to recognise the skills employees' already have.

For each cluster and each of the individual units, there will be 3 steps to complete.

Together these 3 steps will help the Assessor gather the required to evidence to demonstrate your employees' skills and knowledge.

STEP 1: SUPPLY	STEP 2: SHOW	STEP 3: SAY
<p>As the employer, it is expected your organisation will assist in the provision of evidence demonstrating staff skills and knowledge through workplace records, policies and procedures, documents that staff have completed, and information about the tasks they perform every day, for example successful mandatory training records, performance review reports, client notes / progress reports (with identifiers removed). Minutes of meetings etc.</p> <p>The assessor will request that a Third Party Report be completed.</p>	<p>Employees will be observed carrying out tasks related to their work role. For example, they may be asked to show the assessor specific techniques or to follow workplace procedures.</p> <p>This may be done through Challenge Tests for very specific skills that may need to be observed or through a general Workplace Observation where the assessor will "shadow" your employee, observing them conduct routine duties/ tasks.</p>	<p>Employees will be asked oral questions to demonstrate their knowledge of the legislation, procedures, and expectations to perform their role. For example, they may be asked to explain why they do certain tasks in a particular way.</p> <p>In some cases, staff will be presented with scenarios and ask describe their work practices related to those incidents.</p>

Apart from your role in supporting the Assessor in the collection of relevant evidence for your Employees, for the clusters and single units, you will be also be asked by the Assessor to complete a Third-Party Report to verify some of the tasks an Employee undertakes within their duties. This could be you, the Employee's supervisor or team leader, but the person must be someone who works regularly with the Employee and is able to verify the work they undertake throughout their duties i.e., they have witnessed them do work.

*Please note - You will NOT be assessing or judging your employees' skills. Your role is purely to support the collection of as much relevant documented evidence as possible by the assessor, to help demonstrate the range of tasks that your staff perform, and the skills and knowledge they use every day.

The three step RPL process is described in more detail over the next couple of pages.

STEP 1: SUPPLY

The identifying and collection of your employees' information / evidence about the skills and knowledge that they have developed in the workplace

Note:

- All documents listed below are samples and the Assessor will provide you with a relevant Evidence Portfolio list to guide you through the evidence they will be seeking.
- Where you have already provided a specific document to the Assessor and it is required in another cluster or unit; it does not need to be provided again. The Assessor will use the one document across the clusters / units where it is required.
- All documents related to clients are to be de-identified i.e the Assessor is not seeking personal details just notes on the types and range of supports and activities provided to clients

The types of documents the assessor will seek from you will vary according to the cluster or unit requirements but as a sample will include the following:

Training records, Statements and Certificates

Internal training records or results that indicate staff have an understanding of the following legislative and industry / organisational requirements in line with their role.

- Induction
- Covid 19 / Infection control training
- Manual Handling training
- Discrimination
- Mandatory reporting
- Aged Care / Disability Standards

Induction or other onboarding records.

Documents that demonstrate experience and types of work undertaken within in their roles and performance

- Resume
- Contract of employment
- Job description
- Workplace Appraisals
- Employment service records

Organisational Policies and Procedures

Access to the relevant policies and procedures of your organisation to assist in Observations and Oral Questions

- Occupational Work Health and Safety
- Incident reporting
- Document / storage requirements
- Complaint's Policy
- Dealing with behaviours of concern

Plans, notes and other workplace documents

Access by the Assessor to the following documented evidence completed and followed by the staff member which demonstrates that care and support was delivered to clients in line with the personal job role.

- Individual Support / Care Plans
- Client progress notes
- Completed hazard reports
- Completed incident reports
- Minutes of meetings

STEP 2: SHOW

Employees demonstrate their skills and experience gained over the years

The Assessor will come to the workplace and observe your Employee using their skills to do every day work tasks. This will give the Employee the chance to demonstrate their skills and experience that they use to support their clients, other team members and your workplace.

A date/time for an Employee to demonstrate these skills to the Assessor will be agreed to by you, the Employee, and the Assessor (either in person, via email or the phone).

The types of tasks staff may be asked to perform include (Note: this is sample only and will vary from cluster / unit to cluster / unit):

1. Reading and implementing individual support / care plans
2. Adherence to safety and infection control procedures
3. Identifying support requirements outside their role
4. Encouraging clients to engage in activities
5. Empowering clients
6. Demonstrating dignity and privacy towards clients
7. Documenting and reporting within organizational requirements

STEP 3: SAY

Employees demonstrating their knowledge relevant to providing care and support in the context of the work role

The Assessor will ask your employees' questions related to how they do certain things in their role. These questions will ask about specific scenarios and how the person would act or about how they go about doing tasks within your workplace. For example, the Assessor may ask:

- What would you do if you were faced with this situation?
- What is your organisations' policy / procedures when this happens?
- Describe a situation where you were required to undertake this in your work.

This is the Employee's opportunity to tell the Assessor all the great things they do and how they do them. Here they can provide workplace examples to help the Assessor understand the skills and knowledge they use every day. This section will focus on:

- Providing holistic person centred support to clients
- Working with people from different cultural backgrounds who may have different values / beliefs
- How they work with other staff and when they need to refer to specialist's and / or other health professionals

A date/time for this interview will be agreed by you, the employee, and the assessor (either in person, via email or the phone).

HSSO Expectations of participating Employers

In order for this project to be successful for all stakeholders, we have developed set of Guiding Principles for each of the stakeholders within the Project, that HSSO will require each of them to abide by.

Employers are expected to:

1. Provide support to RPL assessors by allowing them access to the organisation's policies and procedures
2. Provide support to the RPL assessors by allowing them to view/ access client notes (de-identified) to collect relevant information / documentation evidence for each RPL candidate / employee
3. Provide support to the RPL assessors by allowing them to view/ access staff training records for each RPL candidate / employee
4. Provide support to the RPL assessors by allowing them to view/ access relevant reports completed by each RPL candidate e/g WHS or incident reports
5. Provide support to the RPL assessors by allowing them to view/ access relevant employment reports such as Job Descriptions, Length of Service, Appraisals for each RPL Candidate
6. Allow RPL assessors permission (on a negotiated basis) to shadow / watch the RPL candidates conduct their duties and ask them questions
7. Raise concerns with the process with the HSSO, RTO or RPL assessors where they arise (put a number / link or something here)

Your Questions Answered:

Does undertaking RPL mean I have to do assignments?

Does undertaking RPL mean an Employee will need time off to have to do assignments?

No there is no written requirements. The only written documents are the ones that are collected from your workplace, such as forms and workplace documents that you completed when undertaking your daily tasks such as client notes.

What an Employee has one of units listed in the qualification already?

If an Employee has a unit that is in the Chart of Units on page 6 of this document, then you will be given Credit Transfer (providing it has the same Unit Code - not just the same name) by the Assessor. They / or you if you have it) will need to provide the Statement of Attainment from the training provider who gave them the unit. If this is the case they will not be required to be assessed for the unit.

What if my Employee has other units, do they have to do those listed?

If an Employee has a unit (or units) not listed on the Chart of Units on page 6, and it is relevant to their work, this should be discussed with the Assessor. The qualification allows for the "importing" (use another unit) that they may already have that was not included in the units provided; such as Provide First Aid, Transport Individuals or Assist Clients with Medication, that they may have undertaken previously as a single unit. This means they can use that unit and not do an assessment for another unit that listed.

Note: This only applies for electives units i.e. employees MUST do all core units unless they already have the exact unit

Some of my employees have been doing the job for years, why do they need to be observed and questioned?

An Assessor is required by law before issuing qualifications or accredited units to collect evidence from a range of sources to ensure that your employee's experience meets the requirements as specified in each unit of competency obtained. Because of these reasons, evidence needs to be provided / collected in both documented and / or observed forms.

What happens if we don't have all the documents asked for?

Recognition applications often succeed even though not the documents requested are able to be supplied. This is because the Assessor will be able to look at other evidence that may be able to be included instead, if it is relevant.

In other cases, where a minor gap of evidence is indicated, the Assessor may ask you to provide your Employee with some different duties for a small period of time so that they can experience skills that they may not have, to fill their skill gap needs or may provide them with a video to watch to increase their knowledge in a specific area and then ask questions of them.

What if the employee doesn't achieve all of the units by the end of the assessment process?

Once the Assessor has reviewed all of an employee's evidence that they have collected, the Assessor will provide feedback to your Employees about which units they obtained. A Statement of Attainment will be given to them for ALL of the units they successfully gained RPL for.

If there are major gaps in evidence which cannot be addressed without undertaking such things as watching videos or supplemented work experiences then your employee's RPL journey will be completed.

The Assessor will discuss other options with your Employee regarding the completion of the qualification, if they wish to complete, and how that can be done i.e. undertaking study on line, remotely, in class - depending on their personal circumstances / needs.

What are the costs for RPL?

There are no direct costs either to the Employer or the Employee to participate in the HSSO RPL project. The training provider will receive funding from the relevant State or Territory government.