

# 4. Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning

## RTO Policy

### Purpose

To state the Department's policy regarding assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

This policy applies both:

- to the assessment and RPL of staff for the purposes of awarding National qualifications, as listed within the Department's Scope of Registration as an RTO, and
- to the assessment and RPL of staff for the purposes of internally accrediting or endorsing individuals to perform specific fire roles on behalf of DSE.

Note that people often refer to 'Recognition of Current Competence' or RCC but this term is no longer used and is captured within the RPL context.

### Relationship to AQTF - Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2005

This policy relates to Standards 8.1 and 9.2.

### Scope

The Department provides training and assessment services to staff from the Networked Emergency Organisation, comprising DSE, DPI, Parks Victoria and VicForests, together with contract staff, the media and occasionally, member of other fire agencies. The Department does not provide these services to members of the public.

This Department provides training and assessment services for the purposes of:

- awarding National qualifications, as listed within the Department's Scope of Registration as an RTO; and
- internally accrediting or endorsing individuals to perform specific fire roles on behalf of DSE.

The Department's scope of registration as an RTO is as follows:

#### Public Safety Training Package Qualifications

Code	Title
PUA 20701	Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations)
PUA 30701	Certificate III in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations)
PUA 40301	Certificate IV in Public Safety (Firefighting Supervision)
PUA 50501	Diploma of Public Safety (Firefighting Management)

### Also

PUA 20601 Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting and Emergency Operations)  
(not currently delivered)

### **Units of Competency**

Code	Title
FPIFGM153A	Spot Fires from a Fire Tower

### **Short courses**

Code	Title
21587VIC	Course in Basic Wildfire Awareness (BWA)
21588VIC	Course in Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS)

As an RTO, The Department can also award individual units of competency as specified in the courses and qualifications in its Scope of Registration.

These units of competency are listed are follows:

### **PUA20701 Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations)**

#### Core units (4)

PUAFIR201A	Prevent injury.
PUAFIR204A	Respond to wildfire.
PUAEQU001A	Prepare, maintain and test response equipment.
PUATEA001A	Work in a team.

#### Elective units (7)

PUAOPE002A	Operate communications systems and equipment.
PUAFIR209A	Work safely around aircraft.
PUAFIR210A	Undertake hover-exit operations from aircraft.
PUAFIR212A	Rappel from helicopter.
PUAFIR212A	Undertake helicopter winch operations
PUALAW001A	Protect and preserve incident scene
PUATEA004A	Work effectively in public safety organisations.
PUACOM002A	Communicate in the workplace

### **PUA30701 Certificate III in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations)**

#### Core units (4)

PUAFIR303A	Suppress wildfire
PUAOHS002A	Maintain safety at incident scene
PUATEA002A	Work autonomously
PUAFIR301A	Undertake community safety activities

#### Elective (8)

PUAFIR309A	Operate pumps
PUAOPE003A	Navigate in urban and rural environments
PUAVEH001A	Drive vehicles under operational conditions
BSZ404A	Train small groups

PUAFIR311A	Dispatch rappel personnel and equipment from a helicopter
PUAFIR312A	Operate aerial ignition equipment in an aircraft
PUAFIR313A	Operate aerial ignition support equipment
PUAFIR315A	Navigate from an aircraft.

### **PUA40301 Certificate IV in Public Safety (Firefighting Supervision)**

#### Core units (3)

PUAOPE001	Supervise response
PUAOPE004	Conduct briefings and debriefings
PUATEA003A	Lead, manage and develop teams

#### Elective units (8)

PUAFIR406A	Develop prescribed burning plans.
PUAFIR407A	Conduct prescribed burning.
PUAFIR401A	Obtain incident intelligence.
PUAFIR408A	Plan aircraft operations.
PUAFIR409A	Develop air attack strategies.
BSZ407A	Deliver training sessions.
BSZ401A to 403A	Plan, conduct and review assessment (count one unit only)
PUAMAN002	Administer work group resources.
PUACOM012A	Liaise with media in the region.

### **PUA 50501 Diploma of Public Safety (Firefighting Management)**

#### Core (8)

PUAOHS003A	Implement and monitor the organisation's occupational health and safety policies, procedures and programs.
BSXFMI506A	Manage workplace information.
PUAFIR509A	Manage a multi-team response.
PUAOPE007A	Command agency personnel within a multi-agency response.
PUAPRO001A	Promote a learning environment in the workplace.
PUACOM007A	Liaise with other organisations.
PUAFIR502A	Develop incident control strategies.

#### Elective (5)

PUAFIR501A	Conduct fire investigation and analysis activities.
BSZ501A to 507A	Various training and assessment units from the Diploma in Training and Assessment (count 2 of these units)
PUACOM008A	Develop and organise public safety education programs.
PUACOM009A	Manage media requirements at major incidents.

### **Definitions**

**Assessment** is the process of determining if an individual has the prescribed skills, knowledge and experience needed to acquire a specific capability.

**Competent** is the result a candidate receives when they have demonstrated the ability to perform tasks and duties to the standard expected.

**Moderation** (in assessment) is the process of establishing comparability of standards of student performance across different courses, institutions or organisations, in order to ensure that assessment is valid, reliable and fair. DSE conducts internal moderation across its Regions and Fire Districts. DSE is also moderated for comparison against other RTOs.

**Qualification** is certification awarded to a person on successful completion of a course in recognition of having achieved particular knowledge, skills or competencies.

**Recognition of Prior Learning (or RPL)** is the acknowledgment of a person's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant status or credit in a subject or module.

**Statement of Attainment** is certification issued to a student for partial completion of a qualification including, where relevant, the units of competency achieved under nationally endorsed standards. Achievements recognised by Statements of Attainment can accumulate towards a qualification within the Australian Qualifications Framework.

**Validation** is a process for confirming the correctness or soundness of information or findings.

**(RTO) Validation** is an external process of verifying that the RTO satisfies the criteria for quality endorsement.

### Policy Statement

1. Only authorised Assessors who meet the requirements of the Department's ***RTO Policy – Competency of staff involved in delivery and assessment*** are permitted to conduct assessments or conduct the RPL process on behalf of the Department.
2. Lists of authorised Assessors for each qualification (by competency) or internal accreditation (or endorsement) are listed in the **FireWeb Training Module** under "Authorised Persons", accessible to all Departmental staff.
3. Authorised Assessors may be assisted by appropriate subject matter experts if required.
4. Assessments for the purposes of granting qualifications under the auspices of the Department as an RTO shall only be conducted for those qualifications (including Short Courses and units of competency) that are listed in the Department's current Scope of Registration.
5. Assessments shall be conducted to the standard of assessment as prescribed in the following competency standards from the *Training and Assessment Training Package*:
  - TAAASS401A Plan and organise assessment
  - TAAASS402A Assess competence
  - TAAASS404A Participate in assessment validation

or to the standard prescribed in the equivalent competencies from the (now discontinued) *Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training*:

  - BSZ401A Plan Assessment
  - BSZ402A Conduct Assessment
  - BSZ403A Review Assessment

and as prescribed in the Assessment Guidelines of the Public Safety Training Package at the [National Training Information Service](http://www.ntis.gov.au/cgi-bin/waxhtml/~ntis2/pkg.wxh?page=84&inputRef=147) website (<http://www.ntis.gov.au/cgi-bin/waxhtml/~ntis2/pkg.wxh?page=84&inputRef=147>)

6. All assessment applicants shall be provided with information on:
  - the criteria against which they will be assessed, and
  - the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process.
7. All assessments shall:
  - be valid, reliable, fair and flexible<sup>1</sup>;
  - focus on the application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace and cover all aspects of workplace performance including task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job role environment skills;
  - provide for feedback to the applicant about the outcomes of the assessment process and guidance on future options in relation to those outcomes;
  - be equitable to all persons, taking account of individual needs relevant to the assessment; and
  - provide for reassessment on appeal.
8. ***RTO Policy – Recognition of qualifications from other RTOs*** applies where credit is being sought for qualifications issued by other RTOs.
9. People who believe that they have the required personal competencies (but do not have an identical qualification from another RTO) are encouraged to apply for RPL. RPL assessment shall follow the same principles as other assessments.
10. The opportunity to apply for RPL must be offered to persons on enrolment in a training course. Persons who are applying for RPL and subsequent

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<sup>1</sup> Valid - Assessments actually assess what they claim to assess and what they have been designed to assess, against the selected standards. Only by the use of valid assessment methods and tools can assessors ensure that they are covering all issues required by the standards, and are being consistent in their approach.

Reliable - Reliability refers to the consistency or reproductive ability of an assessment. That is, how consistent are the assessment results from one assessment to the next. Assessment results merely provide a limited measure of performance obtained at a particular time. Unless this can be reproduced or generalised on different occasions little confidence can be placed in the results.

Flexible - Assessors must be capable of taking a flexible approach to the gathering and assessment of evidence. Clearly, this approach must always take time and cost into account - both to ensure the best use of assessor time and to meet the needs of the candidate and their employers.

Fair - The principle of fairness is open to some debate and diverse interpretation. Assessors need to consider how they resource themselves to ensure that fairness is truly achieved.

exemption from a training course should apply to the relevant Course Coordinator (refer ***RTO Policy – Client selection, enrolment and induction***). Persons applying for RPL unrelated to a training course should contact an authorised Assessor (see point 3 above).

11. All RPL applicants shall be assessed using the standard Departmental assessment instrument and processes (from the **Fire Training Management System**) for that qualification (as this includes the context and application of the competencies in the wildfire and Department specific context).

This is to ensure that the Department meets its obligations as an employer under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. This, although in variance with many other RTOs, is the recommended position of the Australasian Fire Authorities Council and the policy position of most other fire agencies.

12. Where a Departmental assessment instrument (from the **Fire Training Management System**) is not available for the assessment, the Assessor shall conduct the assessment against the assessment criteria/performance criteria of the unit of competency.
13. All assessments conducted under the auspices of the Department as an RTO shall be validated by a Departmental Validator for that qualification (refer to **FireWeb Training Module** for list of Authorised Persons). The Assessor shall arrange for this validation. An Assessor cannot validate his or her own assessments.
14. The purpose of "Validation" is to provide quality assurance to the assessment process. To provide this quality assurance, the DSE Validator must check that, prior to "Validating" a National course or competency on behalf of DSE:
  - they are duly authorised to validate that course or competency unit on behalf of the Department;
  - the Assessor is duly authorised by the Department to act as an assessor on its behalf (in some instances they may be external assessors);
  - the Assessor has followed the prescribed process for such assessments (including the meeting of pre-requisites where these exist); and
  - the Assessor has used the appropriate current assessment tool.

The Validator does not necessarily sight all completed assessments or other documentation but rather the Validator must have enough evidence that the assessment process has met the above requirements. (For example, the FireWeb Training Module will only display the names of Assessors who are endorsed to conduct such assessments).

15. All assessments conducted shall be recorded in the FireWeb Training Module, along with the results of the assessment. ***RTO Policy – Administration and Records Management*** applies to this context.

16. Where the assessment is successful and the assessment has been validated, a Statement of Attainment (from the Department) for the competency or qualification shall be issued. Statements of Attainment shall only be generated from the **FireWeb Training Module**.
17. DSE will internally moderate its assessment strategies by:
  - reviewing, comparing and evaluating the assessment processes, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same competency standards, at least annually; and
  - documenting any action taken to improve the quality and consistency of assessment.
18. **RTO Policy - Complaints and appeals** applies to this context. All persons shall be provided with access to re-assessment on appeal
19. **RTO Policy – Access and equity** applies to this context.

### Responsibilities

The Manager Fire Training is responsible for authorising this policy and seeing that it is adhered to.

Individual Assessors are required to implement this policy.

### Legislative Context

Refer to **RTO Policy – Key legislation**

### Associated Documents

**RTO Policy – Competency of staff involved in delivery and assessment,**

**RTO Policy – Recognition of qualifications from other RTOs**

**RTO Policy – Client selection, enrolment and induction**

**RTO Policy – Administration and Records Management).**

**RTO Policy – Access and equity**

**RTO Policy – Complaints and appeals**

Fire Training Management System (FTMS)

FireWeb Training Module – Authorised Persons

[National Training Information Service](#) for details of specific competency standards.