

1 Introduction

Purpose

This Recognition Strategy is designed to provide a national process and guidelines for recognising the current knowledge and skills of people working in, or proposing to enter the library industry.

It provides an overall framework which encompasses a number of models or options that can be further adapted for use in library workplaces or in training situations. As it is based on assessment against the *Library Industry Competency Standards* at Industry Levels A–D, it provides a common basis against which to benchmark the learning that takes place in many different situations.

The models were developed over a period of testing with 30 applicants across three States. This permitted a gradual refinement of the whole process, with input from the applicants themselves, training providers and some employers. This document is the result of the piloting. Further adaptation will be needed after the current review of the *Library Industry Competency Standards* and the development of formal evidence guides by CREATE Australia.

Workplace use

The Strategy can be used either in the workplace or by training providers. Its application in the workplace could help in:

- identifying the collective skill gaps of staff;
- developing in-house training programs for staff;
- identifying the training needs of individuals;
- mapping an individual's personal development plan or a career plan;
- developing more effective recruitment procedures, for example in recruiting people whose skills and knowledge supplement those of the existing staff;
- performance appraisal;
- enhancing the flexibility of staff.

Training use

Training providers can use the framework provided by this Strategy to determine the level of skills and knowledge of applicants seeking to gain entry to courses which prepare graduates for positions in the library and information services sector.

The Recognition Strategy can also be used to assess the knowledge and skills of people who seek to enter a course at the level appropriate to their prior learning, and for those who wish to upgrade from a superseded course to a more current one preferred by employers, using their industry and relevant other experiences.

It provides the industry content and focus that can be used in conjunction with the training provider's own recognition or RPL processes.

Individual use

Individuals would be able to use the process to prepare themselves for a formal recognition process or simply to benchmark themselves informally against the *Library Industry Competency Standards*.

Scope

The Strategy focuses on using the Library Industry Competency Standards as units of 'currency' in the recognition process. Linkages from each unit of competence to modules in the Diploma of Library and Information Studies allow training providers to meet their own state or system requirements for certification, and map these outcomes to appear in a statement of competency attainment.

It could also be used as a model for adapting any other training modules or programs to match the Library Industry Competency Standards.

Similarly, individual employers, or groups of employers, will be able to use the process and the resources to devise a recognition or assessment program to suit their particular training or development needs.

The Recognition Strategy is simply that: a strategy for recognition. It does not provide training for assessors, or mechanisms for registering assessors, for maintaining databases of the outcomes of recognition, for reporting of results, nor for handling appeals.

While these aspects are critical to the implementation of this Strategy, they require further industry input and will be addressed by CREATE Australia. Most TAFE institutions are already registered training providers, and can provide certification, on enrolment, for the outcomes of a recognition process. Many large libraries may seek to become either registered training providers or assessors, and will also be able to issue a nationally recognised certification of competence.

How to use it

The next section (**2 Recognition: what is it?**) provides a background to the recognition process through examining the concept of prior learning and experiential learning. It introduces the Recognition Continuum which is based on an action-learning process. The essential features of recognition, its benefits, and the keys to successfully implementing the Recognition Strategy follow.

The remainder of the document describes the stages in detail, highlighting key issues, such as evidence, the process of assessment, and the need for support for all parties concerned in the process. It includes case study cameos to highlight the many different experiences of the participants in the pilot phases.

Action learning

Following each stage in the process will ensure that the 'action learning' theme can be fully developed, and that the recognition process becomes a learning event in itself. The applicant is then able to use the process to gain insights about previous learning and possible future directions.

Guides and other Materials

Two Guides have been included in the package. Guide A is the *Recognition Exemplar using the Library Industry Competency Standards* and should be used for all applicants seeking recognition. However, in some cases where an applicant has completed modules in the Diploma of Library and Information Studies (or any of its subsidiary courses), it may be easier to assess against the modules and translate the outcomes against the Competency Standards. In this case, Guide B, *Recognition Exemplar using the Modules in the Diploma of Library and Information Studies*, would be used.

Other materials have been included to provide additional guidance if needed. They can be adapted to suit the needs of individual workplaces or training providers.

A short bibliography of informative readings is included in the appendices, accompanied by some pertinent definitions.

Case Study 1

Samantha, a member of a disadvantaged group, was currently employed in a number of part-time positions, but sought a qualification that would help her acquire more satisfying work. One of her part-time positions was on a casual basis on a loans desk, circulating materials, shelving and working with periodicals.

Samantha was originally trained as a secretary, and has maintained her expertise with computers doing spreadsheets, word processing, CD-ROM searching. She is very familiar with a variety of AV equipment.

Two of her current jobs, both on a part time basis, concern work as a sales representative and managing a small swimming pool business. As a sales rep, she has to deal with a variety of clients, handling their complaints, and managing the promotional aspects of the business. This position was acquired after a 6 week retail course at a local SkillShare.

Her swimming pool business involves taking bookings, doing the banking, and supervising the swimmers. She is about to undertake an instructor's course. She holds a current first aid certificate.

She is a very organised person, and confident about her work. She talked about some of her difficult clients, giving a number of scenarios that she had resolved to the satisfaction of her supervisor.

The evidence presented resulted in recommendations for the following competencies :

- 1 Assist client to access library's services and facilities
- 2 Assist with circulation services
- 3 Assist with programs, activities and promotion
- 8 Work with others
- 9 Contribute to own work performance and learning (ASF2)
- 10 Respond to requests from other information providers for material.

This case study shows that skills unrelated to library work can contribute positively to competency achievement.

2 Recognition: what is it?

The term 'recognition'

The term 'recognition' is used throughout this manual as an encompassing term to refer to the processes of **accreditation, assessment, credit transfer, recognition of prior learning or recognition of current competence**. All of these terms describe a process which results in a formal statement about the learning that has taken place.

Recognition for training purposes

Recognition of Prior Learning or RPL

This refers to a process in which an individual's skills, regardless of how they have been acquired, are recognised for the purpose of advanced standing in a formal program of study.

Credit transfer

The process known as **credit transfer** occurs when work done for one study program can be credited against the modules in another program.

Credit Transfer Processes

Where a person has completed national communication or information technology modules in one course, they are able to gain status through the transfer of this record to another course which contains the same modules. Alternatively, credit transfer can occur between library courses where part of the content of a superseded Associate Diploma overlaps with the content of the Diploma of Library and Information Studies.

The results from completing a competency-based program of study can be credited towards the achievement of competencies. A statement of equivalence between the training program and the competencies allows the student to claim the specified units of competency.

Recognition in the workplace

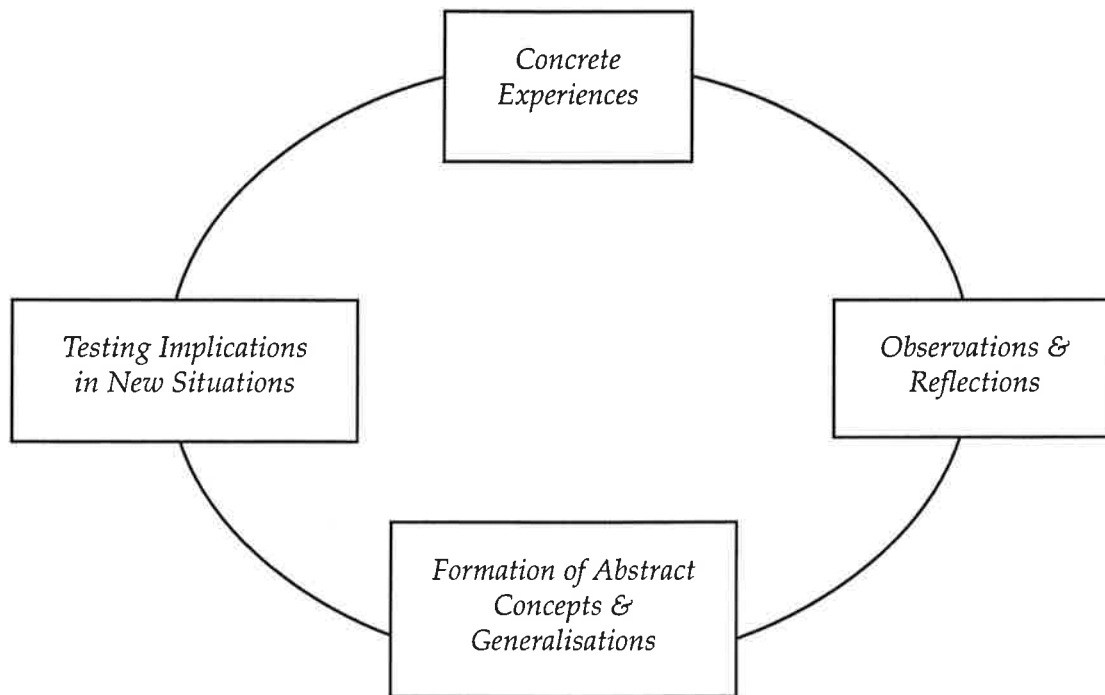
What is Prior knowledge and learning?

Essentially this means that a person may have the knowledge and skills required for a particular job, or equivalent to a particular qualification (or part of it) without the person, or their supervisors at work, or their trainers, being aware that they have these skills. This recognises the fact that a person learns through their experiences, and that this learning can be assessed against a competency or a learning outcome.

Experiential learning

To distinguish this type of learning from other forms, it is sometimes referred to as **experiential learning**. The learner interacts in a positive manner with their environment through a series of experiences, develops insights about what has occurred and why, and critically tests these insights over a period of time. This is demonstrated in the following diagram.

The Steps in Experiential Learning



The concrete experiences may result from:

- industry or work experiences
- life experiences and interests
- short training programs which are not formally recognised or assessed
- training programs undertaken in other countries
- informal learning programs.

This process often involves self-directed study (formal or informal), and exploration of ideas and their implications with colleagues or mentors.

Experimental learning and the Recognition Strategy

Experiential learning forms the basis for this Recognition Strategy. Instead of recognition being a once-only event in a lifetime, which drives a range of intense, short-term activities on the part of the applicant, and is forgotten as soon as the immediate goal is reached, the recognition process can be used to gain insights about abilities, strengths and weaknesses, and to identify long term goals.

Recognition Continuum

The Recognition Continuum (at the end of this Section) follows the action learning steps above but incorporates them into stages in a recognition process :

Experiences

⇒ the concrete experiences are the courses, training programs, work experiences, and life experiences of the applicant;

Matching against Standards

⇒ the observations and reflections occur during the matching of the skills and knowledge acquired through the concrete experiences with the benchmarks (*The Library Industry Competency Standards*);

Integration of experiences into a developmental strategy

⇒ the formation of abstract concepts and generalisations are the outcome of integrating the applicant's experiences into a personal/professional development framework which uses the *Standards* as stepping stones; at this stage, the documentation for recognition is finalised as it can incorporate the applicants' assessment of their own skills and knowledge at this point in their career;

External assessment of claims

⇒ testing the implications in new situations can occur on-the-job, or through the recognition process, when experienced assessors judge the results of the documentation presented, and agree on the outcomes (further information needed, a challenge test, an interview, or applicant is competent, or not yet competent);

Where-to-from-here?

⇒ the post assessment and reflection stage follows through with the administrative issues of certification or following an appeals system; it also includes the where-to-from-here questions, which may be answered by the development of a personal development plan, a training plan, or a career plan (or a change of career plan).

The recognition event then becomes part of a developmental process, which uses prior experiences and demonstrated learning, as an opportunity for :

- undertaking self-assessment of achievements and failures, strengths and weaknesses, against predetermined goals (which could be a study program, a competency level, or job opportunity);
- redefining personal and work goals, including career options, and planning a study program for a specified period;
- considering the relevance of a complete review of the learner's knowledge and skills at this stage of their career;
- applying for recognition against identified standards; and for
- incorporating the outcome of recognition into future career plans.

Case Study 2

A good example of such learning occurred in a number of the pilot interviews, where the compilation of life and study experiences, together with work experiences contributed towards achievement of competencies and towards completion of a qualification.

Jane had worked in country towns in a variety of positions such as shop assistant, factory worker, hostel supervisor, disability services officer, and library assistant. She professed an avid interest in local history and genealogy, had compiled a number of publications, taught herself to type and attended office/computing courses run by the local SkillShare and TAFE college.

One office course completed included 60 hours of communication, time management, negotiation, meetings, and conflict resolution. Jane has an up-to-date first aid certificate and purchased a new computer which she installed and uses for her books.

In the school library she helps children with their research, does all the end processing, covering and mending, and is helping convert the existing card catalogue into an automated one. She runs sessions for adults on tracing their genealogy, and has organised displays in the library (eg on heritage buildings).

Jane was recommended for 9 competencies (mainly at level 2) and 9 modules in the Certificate III (37%). As she was already enrolled in the Certificate III course, these modules would shorten her period of study considerably.

Essential Features of the Recognition Strategy

The Recognition Strategy:

1 is competency based

The Strategy is based on the Library Industry Competency Standards

2 recognises that considerable learning takes place through work and life experiences

For work and life experiences to constitute a learning process, the applicant has to demonstrate they have thought through their experiences, and incorporated the results into different ways of operating or different ways of thinking. They may have been able to build further on such experiences and use them as stepping stones into new directions or developments.

3 utilises the outcomes of formal and relevant study programs

Where such programs are competency-based, a matching process can be undertaken to contribute to the achievement of additional competencies.

4 uses an action learning approach to help applicants get most value out of their efforts

The end focus is not just on the Recognition processes and outcomes, but on developing a training plan, or a personal development plan, for the foreseeable future.

5 is based on the judgement of qualified industry assessors

Assessors must be trained and experienced industry assessors, with skills in managing a Recognition process.

6 incorporates quality assurance processes

By following the stages specified in the Recognition Strategy, the consistency and integrity of the process should be assured. By using the detailed Guides, the outcomes should be reliable, valid, and fair.

7 is based on outcomes being recognised by the key players

The key players in the process are the employers and employer groups, the Australian Library and Information Association, CREATE Australia, training providers, and most especially, the applicants themselves.

Industry recognition can take a variety of forms. Production of a statement of competence by an appropriate authority, or a statement of results leading to a qualification issued by a training provider, will ensure portability across States and Territories.

8 aims to provide a picture of the applicant's strengths and weaknesses at a specified point in time and in relation to the *Library Industry Competency Standards*

9 aims to induct the applicant into a process of lifelong learning

Recognition and lifelong learning

The recognition process can be used to develop stronger self-awareness skills, and bring the learner's thinking in line with current workplace and professional changes. Higher skill levels can be demonstrated through the process of applying for recognition. Identifying and selecting experiences, matching them against the *Standards*, collecting supporting evidence, arguing for their relevance, all contribute to the process of life long learning.

The learner is thus able to show that effective learning has taken place.

Principles underpinning Competency Based Assessment Processes

Inherent in the recognition process are the following principles of assessment :

- assessment can be carried out based on the traditional education and training routes to qualification (where the qualification yields outcomes specified in the competency standards) or on skills and knowledge already possessed by the applicant;
- an individual being assessed needs only demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the assessor that he or she is either competent or not competent;
- assessments are carried out against criteria detailed in the competency standards;
- assessment is criterion referenced and founded on outcome-based rather than process-based standards (Rutherford, 1994)

The Recognition Strategy provides many benefits :

Benefits for the employee

- provides a certification of competence
- may develop or extend interest in training
- encourages them to recognise their own skills and abilities, thus boosting self confidence and enhancing self-esteem
- assists in the development of career paths within and across sectors and employers.

Benefits for the employer

- eliminates the need to train staff in areas in which they are already competent
- identifies a strategy for the development of staff in line with business objectives
- can match individual needs to the needs of the organisation
- informs managers about the skills base of the organisation
- improves morale and motivation of staff
- may enhance the reputation of the organisation as a preferred employer
- provides an opportunity for the formal recognition of inhouse training.

The Keys to successfully implementing the Recognition Strategy in the Workplace or by a Training Provider

The Applicant

demonstrates that learning has occurred

The applicant identifies and selects their experiences against the *Standards*, assembles supporting evidence, measures and evaluates such experiences, argues for their relevance to the *Standards*, reflects on the outcomes of the recognition process, and develops a new learning program.

A number of examples should be used to demonstrate that the applicant is competent in each selected competency unit.

provides claims verified by supervisors, or persons significant in attesting the competence of the applicant

In work situations this may be a supervisor, a client, or a colleague. Life skills and experience may be verified by letters of support from people involved in the experience, from newspaper clippings, or articles, from school, club or society office holders, or other persons whose statements will support the evidence provided.

is supported by a mentor or adviser

The mentor not only provides a supporting role but provides an impartial view of the process and the evidence being collected.

The Employer

is committed to the workplace learning process

A commitment to workplace learning ensures that the learning which has taken place at work is recognised as part of the formal accreditation process. This recognises that the value of the training conducted in the workplace has outcomes apart from client or organisational benefits. The staff member's skills are recognised as adding value.

verifies the applicant's claims

By assisting the applicant to prepare evidence, and supporting the applicant's claims, the supervisor is facilitating the Recognition process.

supports the applicant at interview if necessary

In some cases, an interview may be necessary to discuss the nature of the applicant's evidence, or to interpret it meaningfully. The supervisor can bring the evidence into a broader context, and relate the applicant's skills to wider work processes.

builds the outcomes of recognition into a total training plan for the organisation

Once the skills base of the organisation is known, action can be taken so that staff skills can be utilised more effectively for example through rotation, projects, or other contributions. Staff development activities can be more clearly targeted and training budgets directed towards areas of greatest need.

***The Training
Provider***

is committed to recognising the prior learning of adults
The Recognition (RPL) process provides an opportunity to enrol students at a level appropriate to their knowledge and skills, and incorporate credit transfer processes. Completion rates are enhanced, and equity provisions for students assured.

is committed to recognising the certification issued by other registered training providers or assessors
Where competencies are used as the training 'currency', training providers are required to accept the certification issued by all other registered assessors.

can develop industry partnerships by working with employers as registered RPL assessors
Using training providers as registered RPL assessors, the employer can add the input of skilled industry assessors to a recognition partnership. This may result in the training provider issuing the certification and developing special training programs to suit the needs of that employer's staff.

CONTINUUM OF THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

<i>Information</i>	<i>Initial Support Counselling</i>	<i>Application</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Post Assessment Guidance & Certification</i>
← QUALITY CONTROL: Valid; Reliable; Current; Evidential →				
Concrete	Benchmarks	Observations & Reflections	Formation of Abstract Concepts & Generalisations	Testing Implications in new situations
Post Assessment & Reflection	Post Assessment & Reflection	Review	Formal assessment	Review
<i>Experiences From :</i>	<i>Level of competence from :</i>	<i>Initial discussion of evidence</i>	<i>Integration of experience</i>	<i>Review</i>
Formal Courses and Credentials Staff Development Training Programs Work Experience Life Experience	Learning outcomes of modules in the Diploma of Library and Information Studies (or subset courses) Units in the <i>Library Competency Standards</i>	Completion of RPL Application Form Identification of Additional Evidence needed Authentication and Verification of Claims Further useful information	Consolidating of prior knowledge, skills and other attributes Changing Mind Set; Developing Awareness of current position against benchmarks Recording learning; Completing RPL Documentation	Testing Ability to transfer Competence to other learning environments Judging Deciding Outcomes and Options Recording Results
Certifying RPL results Following Appeals process if needed Developing a Learning Plan/ Personal Development Plan Moving towards Lifelong Learning	Self Appraisal	Adviser/ Mentor Appraisal	Assessment	Review
Matching Process	Decision to continue →	Decision to continue →	Decision to continue →	Decision to continue →
Data Collection	Matching Process	Adviser/ Mentor Appraisal	Assessment	Review
Decision to continue →	Decision to continue →	Decision to continue →	Decision to continue →	Decision to continue →
Successful Outcome	Successful Outcome	Successful Outcome	Successful Outcome	Successful Outcome

3 Recognition: how to implement it

The RPL Continuum (on previous page) directs the recognition activities and outcomes. Prior to the Continuum, a preparatory or recognition awareness stage is needed.

Preparatory Stage: Recognition Awareness

Initial support and counselling

In this stage, information about recognition and RPL is made available to interested persons. This may be in the form of brochures, flyers, or advertising materials. Sometimes an RPL information session is used to allow discussions and questioning to occur.

Purpose of this stage

This preparatory stage should :

- provide an initial briefing about the process
- create a supportive environment in which potential applicants can ask questions and determine if the recognition process suits their needs
- provide an opportunity to discuss support mechanisms, eg materials and information for interested persons, use of a mentor or other support group
- indicate any training in RPL that is available, eg whether a training session is available or proposed, whether informal RPL sessions are held
- provide information about the benchmarks for recognition, the *Library Industry Competency Standards*, and about self assessment strategies.

Recognition Awareness training

An outline of a Recognition Awareness session, plus other information which could assist both applicants and employers, is included in Appendix 1 of this Section.

What the applicant should know before embarking on the process

At the end of this session, the applicant should know :

- if their experiences can demonstrate the learning required by the Standards or the module learning outcomes
- who to contact for further information
- where to find a copy of the *Library Industry Competency Standards* or details of the modules within the library courses
- the cost of the process
- how it will be conducted
- how much of their time will be required
- how the assessment will be done

- what types of evidence are acceptable
- who they can use to verify their evidence
- what their role will be in the assessment process.

What the applicant needs to have

At the end of this session, the learner should have :

- a copy of the application form to be used
- an outline of the *Standards* or details of the course modules
- contact details for further assistance
- options for further support.

Once the applicant has decided to proceed, the following stages occur :

Stage 1: Beginning with Experiences

Concrete Experiences

The applicant will be required to complete a formal application form and collect evidence to support their claims. Read this document and any supplementary information carefully.

A list of required information is listed at the end of this section (Section 3, Appendix 2), however each recognised assessor will use their own form, and require details specific to their approach and recording and reporting systems.

Application forms seek information on:

- *life experiences*
- *work experiences*
- *formal credentials*
- *staff development*
- *other credentials*

These forms are normally divided into two sections. The first section asks for personal details (name, address) and details of work experience, community involvement, other interests or skills, education or training details. The second section requires details about the modules or competencies for which the learner seeks recognition and an indication of the type of evidence available. The applicant will be required to attach evidence for each competency unit or module; this is best accompanied by a written statement stating how the evidence supports recognition (sometimes a checklist can be used).

See Section 9, Additional Materials provided for the Recognition Strategy for checklists

In some cases, the applicant will be required to provide a signed statutory declaration stating that the information provided is true and correct.

It is worthwhile remembering that the assessors will be aiming to help the applicant gain as much recognition as their skills and knowledge permit. Therefore it is often more productive to keep an open mind as to which modules or competencies will be sought until all evidence is assembled and examined.

Additional Materials (developing recognition statements)

Two forms (one listing the competency units and one the modules from the Diploma course) have been provided in the Additional Materials (Section 9). These provide a starting point for an applicant to begin assembling evidence to support their claims.

Data Collection phase

The applicant identifies and collects evidence of their prior learning (that is, both the skills and the underpinning knowledge) gained from:

- work experiences
 - positions held in different libraries and information agencies
 - positions held in other industries which have provided relevant skills
 - short term positions, casual positions
- formal credentials
 - outcomes from formal training programs
- staff development programs
 - training sessions, including those which were both assessed and non assessed
 - attendance at conferences, seminars, workshops
 - visits to other workplaces
 - discussions, mentoring sessions
- credentials gained from other areas which may not initially be considered relevant to the library industry
- life experiences
 - management and participation in various events, such as school and family celebrations
 - contributions to various societies, organisations, eg office holders
 - leisure activities and hobbies

Once the information is assembled, the next stage is reached. In a training environment the applicant normally has the choice to continue with the process or stop at this point. In the workplace, all staff may be required to undertake the recognition process as the first step in identifying the skills base of the organisation.

Stage 2: Benchmarking

Benchmarking the level of competence

The applicant investigates the standards against which their skills are to be benchmarked. These guidelines strongly recommend that recognition be undertaken against the *Library Industry Competency Standards* initially. If the aim is to proceed with a formal training program, the attached guides (Guide A and Guide B) and supplementary conversion materials will assist in matching competencies against modules.

The Standards as the benchmark

Recognition against the *Standards* (Guide A) provides longer term benefits for the applicant. The outcome will provide a direct guide to employers as to the level of the applicant's knowledge and skills from a work perspective. As employers become more familiar with the application of the *Standards* to workplaces, the *Standards* will be used for job profiles and human resource development plans.

As a starting point, the applicant should select the appropriate pages from Guide A to match the proposed units and examine the key elements and other criteria and comments carefully.

Learning Outcomes as the benchmark

Where an applicant is upgrading for the purposes of matching skills against a new qualification, for example, upgrading from an associate diploma to the new Diploma course, there is a strong argument for working with module and learning outcomes to facilitate achievement of the qualification and streamline the recognition process (Guide B). Training providers will be required to provide a statement of the specific competencies achieved through the training program.

The applicant selects the appropriate pages from Guide B to match the proposed modules and reads the learning outcomes carefully.

The matching process

Details of the training program (details of the modules and their learning outcomes) or the details of the *Library Industry Competency Standards* will require careful study. Once a picture of the overall aims and objectives of the module or competency is developed, the applicant can start matching their experiences with the skills and knowledge required.

Recognition is always against a full competency unit (or full module)

Formal assessment will take place against the complete module or competency; part of a module or competency cannot be formally assessed.

It is important to note the related modules or units of competence, as knowledge and skills may be quite high in one area of expertise, but low in others (where skills are not required in the current job, for example). Consequently an applicant may reach level 5 in one stream, but only level 2 in another.

Sample forms are attached in the Additional Materials, Section 9, to help applicants begin the work of identifying skills and assembling evidence.

Case Study 3

Simone had worked in two branches of a public library, primarily in circulation and in casual and part time jobs. She had also been employed as a receptionist in a high school library, and currently held two part-time jobs in a university library: as an administrative assistant and as a circulation assistant.

Simone had prepared well for the interview, with statements on each competency she claimed, a list of recent staff development activities and a range of position profiles. She also brought her supervisor to the interview to support her claims.

A library technician's certificate had been completed many years ago (results supplied). She was able to discuss the details of her work in circulation, training, conservation and preservation, bibliographic checking, and working in a team. She gave examples of working with different client groups and how their information needs were satisfied.

Simone was recommended for 19 competencies and 57% of the Diploma course (most recognition in the Certificate III but a number of Diploma modules were also agreed).

This is an example of a person's skills spanning different levels (in this case, levels 2-5) because of the nature of the work she was doing. To qualify for the Certificate III, Simone still needed to study or work in an ordering section and to complete some electives.

Stage 3 : Observations and Reflections

The following steps occur in this stage:

- the competencies or modules on which the person will initially be assessed are determined

Collecting suitable evidence

- the application form is completed in draft form
- evidence is collected to support the applicant's claims to competence

Demonstrating that learning has occurred

- the applicant writes a statement to show how the evidence relates to the selected benchmark

Self-appraisal

- in writing this statement, the applicant gains insights into their past behaviours and interests, into the patterns which emerge (differences and similarities), perhaps into situations or experiences which they unconsciously avoid/seek out
- these insights may confirm their strengths or help them to acknowledge their weaknesses
- these insights may help to identify the type of work which attracts them, may reveal their preferences, and their preferred learning styles.

The role of a mentor

At this stage the learner may wish to seek out the advice of a mentor, a colleague, or a friend to help them explore the full implications of these experiences. This person may be from the training provider's organisation, the workplace, or the community. With this person's input, the applicant can review their evidence, identify where the gaps are, and perhaps select additional competency units for possible recognition. The mentor may advise them on other types of evidence to use and can also help the applicant to decide whether to continue with the process.

Some comments on the role of mentors are located in Appendix 3 at the end of this Section.

Stage 4: Formation of Abstract Concepts: Integrating Experiences and Developing own Strategy for Recognition

Consolidation of prior knowledge, skills and attitudes

This is a stage where the applicant starts to look at their experiences in a detached manner, and develop generalisations about the nature of their work, how they learn best, and perhaps directions for the future. This conceptualisation will help determine the approach they may be able to propose for reviewing their claims. Through this work, they become proactive and committed to the process.

Mind set change

Experiences and past experiences take on a new light. The applicant begins to appreciate their abilities, skills, knowledge and achievements. They develop an awareness of where they fit against the benchmarks.

Develop awareness of position against benchmark

Now that the directions and approach are clearer, suitable evidence can be located. Details on collecting evidence are provided in Section 4.

Guides A and B in this package (*Recognition Exemplar for the Library Industry Competency Standards*, and *Recognition Exemplar using Modules in the Diploma of Library and Information Studies*) are consulted in depth. Ideas for evidence are further refined and new documentation is collected.

Articulating the nature of the learning

The learner should be aware of the format that the assessment will take, as this will influence the way in which the documentation is prepared and submitted. For example, a face-to-face interview allows the documentation to be explained and rearranged to demonstrate particular competencies; a telephone interview also permits clarification of objectives and demonstration of the way in which the documentation should be used.

If these are not part of the process, the learner should place themselves in the assessor's position and view their presentation from that perspective. A mentor or critical friend may offer advice.

Complete documentation

The documentation can now be completed.

Stage 5: Testing the Claims: Formal Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Testing implications in new situations

This stage is the formal assessment process, where the applicant submits their documentation for judgement by a recognised assessor. The assessor will evaluate the documentation provided against the specified standards (or modules), and will need to ascertain whether these skills can be transferred to other situations, integrated with other skills to reach higher level outcomes, and used in unpredicted work situations.

Judgement

Not only will the assessor look for the range and level of the required skills, they will also look for the underpinning knowledge base, that is, the nature and extent of the learning that has occurred. If formal assessment of some kind already exists (for example, through accreditation), the assessor will accept that and move to examine the uncredentialed learning (learning that has taken place through life and work experiences).

Types of decisions

The following results are possible :

- recognition of some competencies or modules due to corroborated evidence
- no recognition possible due to lack of evidence or unsubstantiated evidence
- more information needed to resolve a claim which is very close to being recognised, possibly due the fact that the learner did not fully address a competency unit, or omitted a piece of information.

Recording results

The learner should be advised as soon as possible of the results of the assessment and offered the opportunity to discuss any issues or clarify their evidence. This may result in the learner submitting additional information, arranging to demonstrate the contested skills or knowledge, or deciding to reapply when additional skills have been developed.

The final results are then agreed and recorded officially, with a copy being provided to the applicant.

Stage 6: Post Assessment and Reflection : After it's over?

Post Assessment phase

This is the recognition reviewing phase and covers the following aspects:

- certification

The formal statement of the outcomes of the recognition process are provided to the applicant. This is currently issued by a registered assessor or accredited training provider. The training provider may also identify relevant industry competencies.

- appeals

The applicant has the right to appeal formally against the decisions made in the assessment process. Registered assessors are required to demonstrate established mechanisms for appeal to ensure the process is fair and equitable.

Reflection and further learning

The process recommended in these guidelines takes the recognition process further and builds on the results of assessment. The applicant is encouraged to view the outcomes of recognition in a positive manner, integrating and building on the verified knowledge and skills through further planning and learning activities.

Study and training plans

This may be the first holistic assessment of the applicant's knowledge and skills as they apply to the library and information industry, and therefore it offers an opportunity to plan for future study and training, and career path development.

Personal development plans

The learner may have seen that their work experiences lack a particular aspect of library work that will interfere with their progress towards a designated field of interest. This may mean additional formal study, seeking appropriate staff development at work (eg through job transfers, higher duties work), or individual study and research.

Lifelong learning

The learner now seeks new experiences and may recommence the learning cycle, with new goals in mind. The learner has thus moved into a process of lifelong learning.

Appendix 1 (Section 3)

Recognition or RPL Awareness Session Proposed Training Outlines

Example 1 (supplied by Robyn Matthews, Adelaide Institute of TAFE)

This program was developed and run over two sessions, each session being one to one hour and thirty minutes long.

Workshop 1

Aims of the Session
(see next page)

Terminology used in Recognition
eg competency, module, nominal duration, learning outcomes,
assessment criteria

Filling in the Application Form
eg working through one module (Work Team Communication was
used as the example), noting learning outcomes and assessment
criteria to be met

Development of Knowledge and Skills
eg noting the relevance of knowledge, skills and understanding
regardless of length of time working in a library

Mapping Knowledge and Skills against Modules or Competencies

Evidence

Types, amount, relevance, authentication

Portfolio of Evidence (see attached handout)

Begin to collect examples from work, discuss needs with
supervisor, identify opportunities in your work area to work in
new areas, attend training, undergo a performance appraisal

Activity : Prepare the Application Form and Portfolio to bring to
Workshop 2

Workshop 2

Applicants to bring their Application Forms and the work they
have done on their portfolio for workshopping.

Strategy : Applicants will take on the role of both assessor and
assessee

Outcome : Finalise application form, identify where further work
needs to be undertaken on portfolio.

Aims of the RPL Workshop

- understand what you have to do to gain recognition
- identify your skills and knowledge
- match your skills and knowledge against the learning outcomes of the modules you have selected
- prepare your application form
- identify appropriate forms of evidence to support your application
- prepare for the actual assessment process (an interview)
- maximise the amount of recognition granted

Example 1 cont. (student handout)

Forms of Evidence for RPL Application

You will need to attach evidence to match the requirements of each of the modules in your RPL application. The following will provide you with a broad range of ideas.

Direct Evidence

Direct evidence is anything you have either produced yourself or for which you have been primarily responsible. Examples may include :

- reports ◊ should be certified as true work done by applicant
- procedure manuals
- photographs ◊ if you were a part of a team working on a project, then you should identify the extent of your role in the work

Indirect Evidence

- letters, testimonials include:
 - ◊ date
 - ◊ letterhead
 - ◊ position & role/qualifications of person
 - ◊ could be past or present employers, supervisors, colleagues
- performance appraisals
- certificates for training programs, seminars, workshops, or letter from your supervisor stating that you attended include:
 - ◊ who did the training
 - ◊ what was covered in the training
 - ◊ how you've been able to apply the training
- minutes of meetings ◊ those you attended and contributed to
- self appraisal ◊ how you solved challenging problems (techniques, etc)
 - ◊ your contribution to your organisation's goals
 - ◊ examples of activities which demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of procedures and policies
 - ◊ examples of activities which demonstrate how you have been able to transfer your knowledge and understanding from one activity to another

Statutory Declarations

If you have lost documents, or find it difficult to get evidence, you could use a Statutory Declaration to provide details of your experience. This is a legal document. It is made under oath that the contents are true and correct.

Recognition or RPL Awareness Session

Proposed Training Outlines

Example 2

A number of modules have been developed in different States and Territories for use as generic training programs. This example comes from the Department of Employment, Education and Training SA.

<i>Title</i>	Preparing for RPL Assessment
<i>Nominal Duration</i>	9 hours
<i>Purpose</i>	This module aims to provide the participant with knowledge and assistance in preparing for and undertaking RPL assessment
<i>Learning Outcomes</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand the RPL process2. Match existing skills and knowledge with the outcomes of the proposed course3. Understand the requirements of an RPL application form4. Identify and collect appropriate evidence to support the RPL application5. Assist other group members to prepare their RPL application and for their assessment meeting6. Take part in a simulated assessment meeting
<i>Suggested Learning Resources</i>	<p>National Plan of Action for Women in TAFE, <i>RPL magazine for women</i>.</p> <p>Simosko, S 1992, <i>Get qualifications for what you know and can do : A personal guide to APL</i>, Kogan Page, London.</p>

This program was run over three weeks (3 hours each session) with a focus on learner activities, either individually or in groups. The aim was to have an application form completed for at least one module, with appropriate evidence attached, and have participated in a simulated RPL Assessment Meeting.

Recognition or RPL Awareness Session

Proposed Training Outlines

Example 3

A module that is part of the National Office/Clerical Skills Program called Preparing for Skills Recognition may be useful in mounting a training program. Details are available from ACTRAC Products, phone (03) 9630 9800.

<i>Title</i>	Preparing for Skills Recognition
<i>Nominal Duration</i>	10 hours
<i>Purpose</i>	The purpose of this module is to provide the participant with the knowledge and skills required to apply for recognition for their skills. This may be through a recognition of prior learning process or other recognition processes.
<i>Learning Outcomes</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Determine the process for seeking recognition in a given organisation2. Match skill and knowledge to the learning outcomes of modules for which seeking Recognition of Prior Learning, or to the standard against which recognition is being sought3. Prepare a portfolio4. Substantiate claims made to a given audience
<i>Assessment Method</i>	<p>Presentation of a portfolio to support claim for recognition.</p> <p>Substantiation of claims through an outline of proposed presentation.</p>

Appendix 2 (Section 3)

Information Normally Required on Recognition Application Forms

The following items of information are supplied to ensure that the applicant has detailed both their formal and informal learning.

Item	Type of Information	Purpose
Personal Details	Applicant's name and contact details	registration and contacting
Work Experiences	List each position held throughout working life, including : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dates of employment • position title • part or full time • paid or unpaid • major duties 	ensure that knowledge and skills acquired in each position are not over looked
Other duties/activities undertaken	<i>For example, conferences, workshops, seminars attended or organised; public offices held on a voluntary basis secretary, publicity officer, publicity officer, chair); membership of clubs, societies, unions</i>	additional skills acquired through taking on a role in an organisation or assisting in special events
Other languages spoken	Number, level, experiences skills	languages and linguistic skills
Other interests or skills	<i>Include involvement in school committees, fetes; organising a family business, bookkeeping undertaken, involvement in hobby groups, childcare responsibilities</i>	indication of broader interests and aptitudes
Education and training details	Highest level of formal education achieved; additional formal studies (since leaving school) <i>include dates, level of study, statement of results (completed or not completed)</i>	indicates knowledge and skill levels
Other training courses	<i>Include staff development programs, community leisure courses</i>	include statements of attendance, course outlines, work undertaken
Any other information you think relevant or useful to your claims		

Appendix 3 (Section 3)

The Role of the Mentor

The term mentor is derived originally from the Greek name being the guide and counsellor of the young Telemachus and hence its meaning has become "An experienced and trusted counsellor" (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*).

The role of the mentor is in counselling and advising a protégé, whether student, colleague or workmate. The mentee is the person who wishes to be mentored.

The mentor must possess qualities to enable them to:

guide
advise
counsel
motivate
facilitate
be perceptive
be sympathetic
be accessible
offer professional advice

A mentor must be informed, experienced, open, not judgemental, a critical friend. Skills of primary importance to the mentor are listening, questioning and enabling. The role of critical friend is probably the most important in the recognition process.

A supervisor has a different role to that of mentor. The mentee must be able to open to the mentor their life history, work history and a range of other details that may place the mentee in a vulnerable position. An RPL/Recognition mentor takes the role of a listener, adviser, and memory jogger.

The mentor may not necessarily be employed in the library and information services industry. However, such a background may result in more immediately useful advice for the mentee. The mentor will need to inform themselves about the *Library Industry Competency Standards*. In a formal training environment, a course teacher who is not involved in the assessment process may also take on the role of the mentor.

The mentor may hold preliminary sessions on RPL/Recognition for a group of applicants. Advice on the process, forms, and construction of the portfolio then becomes the first step in the mentoring process.

In the gathering of evidence the mentor can assist the applicant to identify relationships between the evidence they have and individual competencies or groups of competencies.

A plan for the development and construction of the portfolio can be established with the support and direction of the mentor.

The mentor, who becomes familiar with the knowledge and skills underpinning

each competency, can help the applicant identify and match their skills. They can guide the learner to develop their own processes for matching skills and competencies, and linking the appropriate supporting evidence.

A professional relationship exists between the mentor and the applicant. Though able to offer criticism, successful mentors are close to being a 'friend' of the applicant.

Mentoring programs should be structured with regular meetings, issues to be discussed and goals to be achieved. The applicant may decide to keep a diary of every meeting and record results and progress made. This diary may then be used as part of the evidence. In busy work schedules a formal approach may be needed. However, informal approaches and peer support within mentoring programs have also proved successful.

Peer support where a number of applicants are seeking recognition may assist both applicants and mentors. Co-workers and/or co-learners are able to discuss their approaches to the RPL/Recognition process and the gathering of evidence for the portfolio. This is the 'buddy' or 'partner' approach used in many school and college mentor programs.

Mentoring assists the individual to empower themselves in the workplace. The mentorship program becomes a 'transactional learning process' (Cohen 1995).

In the pilots, the role of mentors in the workplaces and in training providers' organisations was acknowledged by the applicants and supported Parsloe's statement that the 'mentoring process was concerned with the longer term acquisition and application of skills in a developing career by a form of advising and counselling' (p73).

Case Study 4

Dianne submitted her application for RPL after discussing recognition at an enrolment workshop organised as part of the Library Technician program. She works in a small country town as a qualified teacher (both primary and secondary levels), and in the absence of a teacher-librarian, has voluntarily taken over the running of the library.

This case study differed in that it was undertaken solely by documentation, with the local library educator acting as intermediary.

Dianne was initially granted recognition for 6 modules in the Diploma program based on available evidence. It was suggested that she could gain further recognition if other relevant information and evidence was supplied. Following a resubmission, Dianne was granted an additional 11 modules, with suggestions for meeting the display and promotion modules.

A few weeks later, she supplied detailed descriptions of the outcomes of a very successful program she mounted together with a letter of congratulations from a parent, copies of newsletter articles, press releases, reports, letters to local businesses requesting donations.

A total of 19 modules was granted across both the Certificate III and Diploma courses. Dianne is now able to plan a much more effective study program. Recognition has substantially reduced her study load and moved her closer to completion of the desired qualification.

This example shows the support provided by both the local library educator acting as mentor and the flexible approach used to assist Dianne gain a level of recognition appropriate to her background knowledge and skills.

REFERENCES on Mentoring:

Australian National Training Authority, National Staff Development Committee
1996, *A guide to mentoring*, ANTA, Melbourne.

Note: This is part of an action learning kit produced to support the introduction of the Work Based Learning in Action Scheme.

Cohen, Norman H 1995, *Mentoring adult learners: A guide for educators and trainers*, Professional practices in Adult Education and Human Resource Development Series, Krieger Publishing, Melbourne.

Parsloe, Eric 1992, *Coaching mentoring and assessing: A practical guide to developing competence*, Kogan Page, London.

4 Evidence and other useful documentation

A critical part of the whole recognition process

The collection, organisation and packaging of evidence is critical to the success of the recognition process. The experience from the pilots reveals that a well-prepared application form with a strong supporting portfolio is the most effective way to present evidence. The portfolio may contain a variety of evidence in text, video, and graphical formats and any supporting information that will demonstrate skills and knowledge.

Remember that in many cases, the applicant will not be present to discuss their evidence with the assessors. Therefore it is essential that the evidence is able to argue on its own merits for its owner's knowledge and skills!

The nature of the evidence

Types of Evidence

There are two types of evidence that can be used for recognition purposes: direct and indirect.

Direct refers to something the person produced themselves, such as:

- a spreadsheet or database
- training or procedural manuals
- a report on the numbers of items handled by the Interlibrary Loans Section over a particular period, or a special training session run for clients
- a plan for a special event in Library Week
- a sample of work, eg a repaired book, bibliographic records created or updated, a bibliography, a model for a display.

Examples of *indirect* evidence may include :

- letters from past or current employers
- special awards or certificates
- newspaper articles about the applicant
- photographs of displays created and assembled by the applicant.

Generally direct evidence is considered stronger than indirect evidence but both are useful in developing the statement of claims and determining what should be included in the portfolio. Usually three pieces of evidence for each competency are required to ensure skills and aptitude can be demonstrated and confirmed.

Criteria for assessing evidence :

The evidence that is collected should be :

- **relevant**, in relation to the competencies specified, or the learning outcomes of a module
- **current**, just how current will vary according to the competency, for example, computing skills acquired some years ago and not used regularly, may not be acceptable
- **authentic**; this means that the evidence must be verified by a number of sources. For example, with letters or statements from key people corroborating the data, or answering questions at interview about the evidence
- **valid**; that is, the information provided does meet the required skill level and depth of knowledge required by the competency
- **reliable**, with different sources supporting the claim of competence.

Collecting and sorting

Where to begin?

The applicant should assemble details of their formal qualifications and other significant experiences. If an up-to-date curriculum vitae is available, this will be a good starting point; otherwise a recent job application, or other summary of experience, can be useful.

As these experiences are listed, the applicant should gather the formal statements which may accompany them, eg referees' reports, letters informing the applicant about their success in gaining the job; statements on their work, etc.

Using the Guides

The Recognition Exemplars

Two guides have been developed to assist the applicant in their claim for recognition. They aim to help both the assessor and the learner interpret the *Library Industry Competency Standards* consistently and fairly.

These Guides are not intended to take the role of full evidence guides which will be developed by CREATE Australia as part of their review of the *Competency Standards*.

Full guides would include :

- contexts for assessment (eg what types of environment or types of equipment are required to establish competency)
- critical aspects of a unit and its relationship to other units (eg units needing to be assessed together)
- the required evidence of competency (eg particular aspects of the knowledge or skill and their application for which evidence is required to establish competency; this could also be used to indicate the extent of sampling of evidence which could be undertaken).

Guide A is the Recognition Exemplar using the Library Industry Competency Standards. It includes, for each competency unit:

- the brief title, its number and Australian Standards Framework (ASF) level
- the key elements
- an indication of training strategies:
 - on-the-job
 - off-the-job, or
 - a combination of both
- the types of evidence that could be used to demonstrate competence
- the associated modules from the Certificate III in Library and Information Studies
- the associated modules from the Diploma of Library and Information Studies, and
- suggestions in relation to the knowledge, skills and other attitudes that could be considered in assessing competence.

Guide B is the Recognition Exemplar using the Modules within the Diploma of Library and Information Studies, and includes, for each module:

- the title of each module within the Certificate III and Diploma, its national module code, type of qualification, and learning outcomes
- the types of evidence that could be used to demonstrate competence
- the associated competencies from the *Library Industry Competency Standards*
- suggestions in relation to the knowledge, skills and other attitudes that could be considered in assessing competence.

If applying for Recognition against individual competencies, Guide A should be used; if against individual modules from the Certificate III or Diploma programs, Guide B would be used.

Copy the relevant pages for relevant units or modules and consider ways in which the applicant's experiences can be used effectively to demonstrate all aspects of the competency, and the level of skills and knowledge expected.

The levels are given on the next page. (With the review of the Competency Standards and the change to the Australian Qualifications Framework, there may be some changes to this diagram).

Related Units are provided in Guide A. These units may be considered where the applicant's work reveals a higher level of operation than the current unit. These related units should also be explored to see whether recognition should also be claimed.

Case Study 5

Amy presented as a confident and capable library officer, working part time in the TAFE library and parttime in Student Administration. She has worked in a regional branch library in the circulation area and is active in local community groups, especially theatrical. She runs a small business with her husband and is responsible for paying accounts, and maintaining the records. She has also worked as a personal assistant to the managers of a company which operates out of two cities.

Amy has undertaken a variety of staff development courses : first aid, OH&S, disability, working with Koori students, computing upgrades, Internet, etc.

Credit transfer is available from some of the study undertaken towards a library course at Box Hill TAFE (about 5 years ago).

Approximately 88% of the Certificate III course was recommended, based on the outcomes of credit transfer and recognition; 12 competencies were recognised (mainly at levels 2 and 3). The Guides were useful in matching Amy's knowledge, skills and attitude with the competencies and with the Certificate III modules.

Australian Standards Framework

(used in developing the Library Industry Competency Standards)

Industry Competency Level	Definition
ASF2	A level where application of skills is to a range of tasks, with defined procedures and methods, and generally under supervision, eg through intermittent checking. Choice of actions is usually clear but some judgement is needed, eg about appropriate procedures.
ASF3	A level where depth of knowledge and a broad range of skills is applied in a particular area, and/or knowledge and skills are applied to a range of tasks, under limited guidance. While work is within established systems, procedures and methods, some judgement is required to determine the extent and choice of actions required. Responsibility for coordination of a work area and/or group, and/or of a small budget may be required.
ASF4	A level where there is application of knowledge with depth in some areas and a broad range of skills applied in a variety of contexts. Judgement is required to determine between a range of alternatives, and only general guidance is provided. There is often responsibility for a work area, with or without responsibility for the coordination of work of or with others and/or a budget to administer.
ASF5	A level where there is self-directed application of a range of knowledge and skills, within broad policy, in both varied and highly specific contexts and/or a range of substantial knowledge and skills are applied across a broad number of areas. Significant judgement is required in planning systems and services within work areas. Responsibility for organising and leading in a work area may be involved.

The Portfolio

The portfolio may include the following items :

- samples of work (a repaired book, word processed document or spreadsheet, a photograph of a display; in all these cases, verification of the work as the learner's own is needed)
- samples of skill (a video of an actual task being performed, such as conducting a training program, operating a circulation system; or a bibliography which identifies sources, client group need, etc)
- scenario (this is a story or description of an event which took place at work, in a volunteer situation, or in any other life experience context; it can be used to provide a detailed description of a particular set of work skills which are linked to the knowledge, skills and other attributes required by the competency)
- knowledge and/or skills certification (the statement supplied by a training provider which identifies courses or modules completed satisfactorily, usually with a statement of the results of assessment)
- statements of attendance (these are normally issued for short training programs in which no formal assessment is undertaken; while they do not provide conclusive evidence about skills, these can be part of a collection of materials which together provide evidence about competence)
- evidence statement (this is a statement prepared by the applicant to support the evidence provided; this statement may also be provided by another person who is familiar with the applicant's work, or a person who witnessed an event)
- employer or supervisor's statement (this is a statement supplied by a current employer or their representative to confirm the authenticity of the evidence provided by the learner)
- position descriptions (whether in libraries and in information agency positions, or in positions in which the applicant has been able to demonstrate comparable skills)
- written descriptions of activities (which do not appear in the position description, but need to be highlighted in relation to competency acquisition).

Letters of validation

Letters of validation are used to confirm and support the evidence provided. Such letters differ from a current employer's statement.

They are requested from somebody who knows the applicant and the quality and level of their work, such as :

- previous supervisors or employers
- clients
- work colleagues (people working at the same level)
- persons from the community who are familiar with the applicant's work, and
- persons from voluntary organisations or agencies who are familiar with the applicant's work.

To request a letter of validation :

- ⇒ specify the purpose of the letter and the date by which the letter is required
- ⇒ detail the nature of the skills and knowledge required (it may be useful to include details of the relevant *Standards*)
- ⇒ request that the letter be sent directly to the assessor (provide the name and address of the assessor) to ensure an independent response; (as a courtesy, include a stamped addressed envelope)
- ⇒ request that the letter include a statement on the relationship between the writer and the applicant
- ⇒ request that an assessment of the level of performance is included.

Ideas to help in gathering evidence are located in Appendix 4 of this Section

Suggestions for organising the portfolio are located in Appendix 5 of this Section

Insufficient evidence?

If the evidence provided is insufficient, or there is some doubt about the level of operation, the applicant may be required to undertake one of the following :

- challenge test (a test designed to permit the applicant to display the required skills, knowledge or other attributes required by the competency (or competencies); the test may be performed in the workplace or in a simulated environment)
- discussion or debate (the applicant may wish to participate verbally to display their knowledge and skills)
- assessment interview (a formal meeting between assessor/s and applicant, usually on a face-to-face basis (but possibly by teleconference or videoconference), to explore the available evidence and assist the assessors in the judging process; this is useful for exploration of certain skills that are not easy to demonstrate in a portfolio, eg negotiation skills, dealing with conflict, etc.).

Appendix 4 (Section 4)

Ideas for Gathering and Evaluating Evidence

In gathering evidence for the portfolio, it may assist the applicant to consider the following :

Evidence Summary			
Evidence	List each piece of evidence in your portfolio in a contents list at the front		
Mind maps	Create a mind map to show the relationship of the competencies/modules and learning outcomes to your pieces of evidence		
Relationship	You may wish to relate some evidence to more than one competency unit or module		
Rate each piece of your evidence	inadequate	satisfactory	excellent
relevant			
current			
authentic			
valid			
reliable			
Best fit	Select the evidence that is most appropriate for the competencies/learning outcomes for which recognition is being sought		
Context vs Specificity	Make sure that the evidence covers a variety of contexts but can be related to specific competencies or learning outcomes.		

Appendix 5 (Section 4)

Suggestions for organising the Portfolio

Portfolio Item	Purpose
Cover sheet with details of applicant (name, address, contact telephone numbers, etc)	Identifies the applicant and provides contact details
Table of contents listing each section of the portfolio with page numbers	Provides a map to the contents of the portfolio
Detailed curriculum vitae emphasising applicant's competencies	Displays applicant's history in relation to the recognition application
Relevant industry competency standard and key elements or Relevant module name(s), learning outcomes	Clearly identifies areas requested for recognition
A narrative statement in relation to the specified competencies and their key elements or in relation to the modules and learning outcomes	Shows relationship of the applicant's competencies to the environment in which gained
Evidence items, each labelled and identified with the reason for its inclusion in the portfolio (should include both direct and indirect evidence)	This is the crux of the application and supports the previous statements

5 The Assessment Process

The assessment process focuses on the combination of **knowledge, skills and attitudes** required to perform specified tasks at the identified level.

Methods of assessment

The chief methods of assessment for Recognition purposes, whether conducted in on-the-job or off-the-job (whether off-site or in a training room at work) situations are :

- interview with applicant and prepared portfolio (often supported by a supervisor or critical friend)
- assessment of documentation (desktop evaluation)
- observation in the workplace, or testing in the workplace, followed by questioning.

These techniques form the most effective initial strategy for assessment and singly, or in combination, have been widely used in many industries and training environments.

Other useful assessment methods

Other assessment methods can be used, either as a follow-up where insufficient evidence is available, or as a supplement to methods above :

- challenge, performance or knowledge test
- practical demonstration/work sample
- practical experience in a simulated work environment
- role plays (may be designed by the applicant)
- oral presentations
- scenario development and testing
- case studies or project work.

Factors influencing assessment

Which techniques are used will vary according to time, cost, availability of assessors, purpose of the Recognition process, and other factors related to the environment in which the Recognition is conducted.

What is important is the consistency, fairness and quality of the outcomes of Recognition.

Quality Assurance processes

The quality of Recognition outcomes is influenced by the following factors :

- the amount and type of evidence required
- the degree of rigour used in the process
- the number of assessors involved in the decisions
- the costs of implementing the process.

Evidence

This Strategy provides two guides (Guide A for the *Library Industry Competency Standards* and Guide B for the Modules in the Diploma of Library and Information Studies) to help assessors identify the type and level of evidence required. The preferred pieces of evidence are listed, together with the knowledge, skills and other attributes that underpin the competency. This list can be developed as the organisation's expertise and understanding of the recognition process grows.

Case Study 6

Pamela came to the interview with her supervisor and a very detailed portfolio. She completed the Associate Diploma recently and sought to upgrade to the Diploma course, mainly for her future career prospects and also with encouragement from her supervisor. She has worked for five years with her current employer, and is now at a senior technician level.

She brought very detailed comparisons of her previous work and study, position descriptions, and an up-to-date curriculum vitae which included staff development courses she attended.

Pamela talked convincingly about her work, her contributions to the overall functioning of the library, and her work with colleagues. Her supervisor attested her claims and provided other examples of her aptitude.

Her impressive skills, both at study and work, resulted in recognition being recommended for 95% of the Diploma course. This was an example of excellent preparation for, and understanding of the recognition process. Although there was a great deal of self-motivation, the supervisor demonstrated a strong commitment to the process through her attendance at interview, and encouraging her staff to meet and discuss their preparation for RPL together.

Degree of rigour

Based on the experiences of the piloting, it is recommended that the assessment process employs the following strategies :

- a formal written application is the first stage in presenting an overview of the applicant's knowledge and skills
- a portfolio of evidence with letters of validation is submitted to support the applicant's claims to competence
- the evidence :
 1. is matched against the *Competency Standards* as the accepted benchmark
 2. has to meet the criteria of being :
 - * relevant to the particular competency (competencies) being sought
 - * current
 - * authentic
 - * valid, and
 - * of sufficient variety (preferably three examples) to ensure comprehensiveness and transferability to different work environments

3. is assessed by at least two people, at least one of whom holds workplace-assessor qualifications, and one who is at the same AQF¹ level or higher of the competencies sought by the applicant
 4. must be no more than that required to demonstrate competence against the criteria listed in the *Standards*
- decisions are made based on the evidence submitted, resulting in :
 - * recognition granted
 - * more evidence required for the decision to be made, eg a challenge test, demonstration, etc
 - * requirement for a formal interview to discuss or clarify evidence
 - * recognition not granted
 - feedback to the applicant is informative and prompt, allowing for discussion on further submissions, or confirming the applicant's own self-assessment outcomes; feedback should include appeal information for unsuccessful applicants
 - the outcome of the Recognition process is formally reported and recorded, with formal acknowledgment provided to the applicant
 - a personal development / training plan is developed from the results of recognition for each applicant.

Assessors

Assessors for the Recognition Strategy should be industry endorsed, with qualifications and training in workplace assessment, and industry experience at an agreed level.

The current national assessment project being undertaken by CREATE Australia will address staff development issues on a national basis.

In the interim, recognition is being undertaken in TAFE institutes by RPL trained educators with library qualifications and experience. At least one person should hold workplace assessor qualifications, and at least one other person should provide the discipline expertise (whether in aspects of library and information studies, or in information technology, management, communication, and occupational health and safety).

While different processes may operate in library and information workplaces, the same basic approach could be used. For example, with

- at least one person holding workplace assessor qualifications, and
- one other person with :
 - (a) subject expertise (cataloguing, collection development, lending, etc) and
 - (b) at the AQF level or higher of the competencies sought by the applicant.

Assessors should also have good communication and interviewing skills, be open to innovative methods of displaying competence, committed to the recognition process as valid and fair, and committed to the *Standards* as a benchmark for assessment decisions. Using a panel of assessors will bring a wider range of views to the assessment decision, and increase the level of confidence in the outcomes.

1. AQF Australian Qualifications Framework

Costs

In industry, costs will be influenced by :

- the numbers of staff to be trained as workplace assessors
- the amount of time spent by workplace assessors on the actual assessments
- the amount of time provided for the staff member to spend on collecting evidence, liaising with colleagues and previous supervisors for letters of validation, and developing the portfolio
- method(s) of assessment used (interview, workplace observation, desktop assessment of portfolio, written test, activity or project, demonstration in a simulated environment or off-the-job, or combinations of the above)
- amount of rigour incorporated into the process, which may mean resubmission of further evidence, and further assessment
- development of processes to handle the outcomes of recognition, eg :
 - * certification of competence
 - * management of the appeals process
 - * development of a personal development / training plan for each staff member

In TAFE institutions, costs are set by RPL policies and procedures, but in general, address the same costs as above.

Purpose of assessment

In the workplace, Recognition processes are usually linked to staff development and management practices. The outcomes of Recognition should result in some benefits or changes acceptable to both staff and management, whether this be entry to a training path, opportunities for promotion, or other accepted reward system.

in the workplace

Such practices will affect both the conduct of the Recognition process and its ultimate costs. As part of an accepted strategy for organisational growth and extension, costs become part of an investment in human resource development.

in a training environment

In a training provider's establishment, recognition may be a more formal and structured process, undertaken prior to commencement of classes, or early in the training program (so that the successful applicant can be moved into modules more appropriate to their skill levels). The application form with a portfolio is used, followed by an interview if necessary.

Assessment of documentation

This mode of assessment is recommended as the first step in a recognition process. It is also the most cost-effective in terms of the amount of time and staff resources needed.

It will answer the following questions :

- which competencies/modules are to be assessed?
- for those competencies/modules, is the evidence :
 - * relevant
 - * current
 - * reliable, verifiable and consistent
 - * supported by different sources
 - * valid and authentic?
- does the evidence support recognition for competencies/modules other than those specified?

The results of this initial assessment may be conclusive, that is, recognition can be granted, or cannot be granted at this point in time. Or, the assessor may require further evidence to be submitted to address specific concerns.

Assessment of additional evidence

Where further evidence is required, the assessor may indicate a preference for particular types of evidence (some of these will be dependent on costs).

At this stage, there are three options :

- the applicant can submit further documentation (examples, etc) which can be assessed at a later point in time;
- the applicant may request assessment by interview to challenge/clarify, or otherwise demonstrate the extent of their knowledge and skills
- lacking further evidence, the applicant may agree to:
 - * submit a special piece of work (eg. a project, report)
 - * organise to demonstrate their skills in the workplace or in a simulated situation
 - * sit for a challenge test, or
 - * undertake other mutually agreed tasks.

Appendix 6 at the end of this Section contains a list of different assessment forms and their value to the assessment process.

Assessment by interview

This form of assessment should be undertaken only in conjunction with assessment of documentation, and after the application form and portfolio have been read.

Some suggestions from the interviews undertaken in the piloting include :

- keep the interview to one hour or less (ie to two levels at one time, or to a Certificate III level first, then Diploma level later)
- provide a relaxed non-threatening environment where the applicant is encouraged to ask questions, provide information, etc
- explain the procedure that will be followed and the possible outcomes
- encourage the applicant to bring a supporter (supervisor, mentor, colleague, critical friend, etc)
- ensure that the room is well ventilated, and a minimum number of assessors are present at any one time
- ensure that disadvantaged learners are provided with the assistance they need (noting the special needs of persons from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds, people with disabilities etc).

Appendix 7 at the end of this Section details a standard interview procedure.

The experience gained in piloting the Recognition Strategy clearly identifies a strong preference for an interview style of assessment. This permits both assessor and applicant to clarify evidence or its interpretation, explore the documentation in hand, identify areas of competence and areas where the applicant is not yet competent. The applicant can respond directly to any concerns of the assessor and argue a case for recognition more effectively.

Negotiating the form of assessment

Ideally the applicant should negotiate the form of assessment that suits the way they wish to present themselves and their materials. This may also cut down the cost and time spent on assessment, as well as demonstrate the applicant's skills in time management, self management, and organisation.

A number of participants in the pilots ran their own interviews, presenting detailed portfolios and taking the assessors through the work and life experiences which they deemed relevant. Others brought their supervisors with them to support their statements.

Evidence from the literature and from piloting confirms that many applicants underestimate their skills and are likely to seek a more limited amount of recognition than is possible. A fear of failure may also contribute to fewer competencies being sought. In a training environment, a student may feel that they may miss some critical part of training.

Case Study 7

Violet presented with twenty odd years experience in a variety of jobs, her current position relating to the management of a resource agency focussed on the needs of children. Previous positions have been working in a TAB agency, residential care program, accounts, clerk, community service, etc. Much of her work has required skills in supervision, policy development, change management and team work.

Violet presented as an initiator of ideas, a good project manager and a people person. She has attended a variety of short courses, but has no formal qualifications. She brought three large folders to interview, demonstrating her substantial work in promoting and

managing community agencies. She was closely involved in the development of a video as producer, has created a range of brochures and pamphlets, written annual reports, and so on. Her work in using computers is limited.

Violet was an unusual applicant in that she had undertaken an enormous amount of work for the interview, and had reflected in depth on the extent of her experience in relation to the competencies. Being committed to recognition and articulate, she was able to use the interview to demonstrate the breadth and depth of her skills, and support this with an impressive amount of evidence.

She had been supported by a friend who 'knew about RPL but not about libraries' but who was able to advise her on the best way to present herself and her evidence.

Her evidence supported acquisition of 11 competencies (ranging from levels 2-5) or 34% of the Diploma course.

Violet presented a variety of challenges to the assessors, particularly in relation to the transfer of skills to a library environment. While she was successful in her information gathering, acquiring, organisational and distributing roles, she was unaware of the full range of traditional library services and the mechanisms used for document delivery and so on.

Some Points on Assessment of Competence

Assessing competence

It is important to recognise that many competencies cannot be adequately assessed only in the workplace, because of the complexities and uniqueness of actual workplace performance. However a simulated environment also lacks some of the critical features that operate in the real workplace, eg

- the physical surroundings (eg the type and age of the equipment, the constraints of the physical set-up, etc)
- the time and team demands of the workplace (working under pressure when clients are queued, working with a team so that tasks are shared)
- inability to see the total task completed (the time required to observe all aspects of the one competency performed at the level and complexity required may be quite significant).

Key factors in Competency Based Assessment

The process of assessment needs to encompass :

- transferability of skills to different work environments
- contingency work situations (eg unexpected events which interrupt normal flows and procedures)
- a holistic approach which incorporates the knowledge, skills and other attributes underpinning the competencies sought.

Elements or units

The piloting process also revealed that focussing on each element of the competency unit was not productive. It was easier to group elements into tasks and address task performance as evidence of competence.

Options for Managing an Assessment Process

Least Expensive

Most Expensive

Environment	Assessment of Documentation only	Assessment of Documentation + Interview	Observation in the workplace + Questioning	Observation in the Workplace + Stimulations
Large public library	done centrally with followup on phone	done locally or with support from headquarters	need checklists, questions etc with outcome reviewed away from working environment; undertaken by qualified assessor(s) and supervisor	need to be adapted to particular requirements of library, with those aspects not readily observable stimulated in a training environment
Small library (public, private, government department)	could be handled locally by qualified assessors or arrangements made for assessment by external assessors who are briefed on requirements	review of documentation could be undertaken by external assessors (briefed) with followup interview handled by supervisor (reporting back for final joint decision)	need checklists, questions, etc with outcome reviewed away from working environment, possibly by external assessor	observation could be undertaken in the workplace, with arrangements made to use simulations set up in other sites
Large research library (state, university)	undertaken in a team approach consisting of qualified assessors and supervisor	initial review by team followed up by supervisor and/or member of team	undertaken by supervisor, who submits outcomes to qualified workplace assessor	special requirements of the library can be catered for
Medium sized library (TAFE, public)	review by supervisor and qualified assessor on staff	review by supervisor and qualified assessor with followup interview handled jointly	undertaken by qualified assessor and supervisor	
Training Provider	undertaken by some TAFEs to minimise costs	documentation should be reviewed prior to interview to minimise time spent and direct the focus of the interview	undertaken cooperatively with applicant's workplace, usually following assessment of documentation	undertaken following review of documentation to streamline process but permits opportunity to demonstrate skills in near-real work environment

Developing procedures to suit the workplace

A combination of approaches may be developed to suit the workplace (or a group of workplaces with similar characteristics) to ensure that the process remains valid and consistent yet addresses their individual needs. The following diagram proposes options for consideration by different types of libraries and information agencies and in training providers' institutions.

A process will need to be developed for each workplace with a focus on the skills and knowledge required for its local environment. Larger organisations could use a network of roving assessors who make their services available on request to sections and work in conjunction with supervisors and managers.

Smaller libraries could develop links with local training providers who have been trained as workplace assessors, and who take part in workplace observations when needed. They can also issue the certification if required.

Public libraries with applicants scattered in many branches may have to rely on a portfolio and supervisor's checklists and records being submitted for recognition as a desktop assessment process. Interviews can be conducted by phone or videoconference if needed.

The same process can be used by TAFE institutes where applicants are undertaking study through flexible delivery materials. An application form and completed portfolio can be submitted to RPL assessors, who may opt to follow up any queries by phone, fax, etc.

Monitoring

Most industries report the need for vigilant monitoring of the Recognition process. This may concern :

- the training and registration of workplace assessors
- use of a mechanism (such as 'industry assessors') to monitor the outcomes of the recognition processes on a national basis; (industry assessors may also handle appeals and re-assessments)
- mentoring workplace assessors
- maintaining a database of the results of workplace assessment and recognition.

Processes for monitoring Recognition procedures across the industry will be needed

to ensure consistency of the outcomes over time and across States and Territories.

Appendix 6 (Section 5)

Summary of RPL Assessment Forms (adapted from *The A to Z of RPL*)

Assessment	Most appropriate instruments	Conditions & numbers	Recommendations regarding use	Usefulness in assessing
Work	observation checklist + product checklist	normal working conditions + moderate level supervision + one-to-one	confirming competency standards + achievement of individual skills	very high for skills achievement; low to moderate for demonstration of individual unless questioning is used
Simulated work	observation checklist + product checklist	controlled working conditions + moderate level supervision + one-to-one	confirming competency standards + achievement of individual skills	high for skills achievement, but contingency skills should be included; high for demonstration of knowledge as process can be interrupted and learner questioned
Practical exercise	product checklist + some use of observation checklist	controlled workshop/ laboratory conditions + high level supervision + numbers of 10-15 (max)	confirming competency standards + achievement of individual skills where product more important than process	high for achievement of particular skill in isolation, not for skills integration; low for knowledge acquisition unless specific process inbuilt
Project	project checklist	moderate level of control + little supervision + numbers relate to demands on assessor's time	confirming competency standards + achievement of individual skills + product more important than process + time and cost limitations	moderate to high for skills acquisition; moderate to high for knowledge component if parameters structured to demonstrate this
Oral	oral questions	from normal to controlled conditions + high level supervision + one-to-one	confirming knowledge underpinning performance + authentication + supplementing other forms + interpreters can be used + support (of supervisor) can be used	very high for knowledge component; moderate to high for skills acquisition if authenticated
Written	mainly multiple choice & short answer tests + short reports	controlled 'classroom' conditions + high level supervision + numbers can be large	authentication + supplementing other forms	high for confirming underpinning knowledge; low to moderate for skills acquisition

Appendix 7 (Section 5)

Suggested Interviewing Process for Recognition

Note that the purpose of the interview can differ. Some industries begin the Recognition process with an interview at which the applicant presents their portfolio and takes the panel through their life and work experiences. In other situations, the interview may follow a desktop evaluation of the portfolio and be used to seek additional information or clarification of points raised by the evaluation. The notes below address the first situation.

1. Introduce everybody in the room and explain their role in the process
2. Explain what will happen in the interview, what sort of outcomes can be expected, and what will happen after the interview
3. Ask the applicant to present their portfolio and their claims; don't necessarily begin with the first competency unit, begin where the applicant feels most comfortable (ie, with their strongest skills and knowledge)
4. Encourage the applicant to ask questions of the panel, refer them to related pieces of evidence, etc
5. If the applicant is accompanied by a supervisor, mentor or critical friend, explain their role as one of authentication, of memory-jogging, etc rather than answering on behalf of the applicant
6. Identify a person to take notes which can be referred to at the end of the interview (sometimes the application forms allow the notes to be inserted beside competencies or modules); alternatively use the forms supplied in the Additional Materials Section (*Developing Recognition Statements using the Competency Standards*)
7. Try to work with groups of competencies or groups of modules, beginning at the lower levels and working up until the applicant's knowledge and experience ends; don't always accept what the applicant says, for example, one applicant may explicitly state that they have had "no experience in cataloguing" when questioning elicits that they have retrieved records for copy cataloguing purposes, added holdings, etc.
8. Ask open-ended questions (that is, questions requiring more than a yes/no type of answer), and use follow-up questions to identify the range and depth of experience
9. Make notes of points raised by the applicant in answer to one question when such experience could be relevant to other areas; try not to interrupt and distract the applicant without explaining what you are doing
10. Plan the interview after reading the application form and sighted the available evidence; in some areas a short question will identify a total lack of exposure, eg some applicants have had no training or experience in occupational health and safety; with other candidates, the same question provides information about their work on the OH&S Committee and the courses undertaken
11. At the end of the interview, summarise the outcomes :
 - the competencies/modules for which recognition will be recommended
 - the competencies/modules for which recognition cannot be given at this point in time
 - the competencies/modules for which additional evidence is needed

12. Ideally the applicant should leave the room with a copy of the intended recommendations (it is quite acceptable to ask the applicant to leave the room for a few minutes while the assessors discuss the outcomes briefly and agree on the amount of recognition that is undisputed)
13. Ensure that the applicant understands the outcomes of the interview; explain clearly why recognition was/was not granted; ask if the applicant wishes to raise any issues or bring further information to the panel (the assessors might have overlooked a piece of evidence); ask the supervisor/mentor/critical friend for their reaction to the outcomes; discuss any concerns at this point, as it may mean the difference between an appeal or not
14. Thank the applicant (and supervisor, etc) for attending the interview; this is an opportune time to highlight the applicant's strengths and potential opportunities
15. Record results according to established procedures and ensure applicant is informed later through official channels
16. Review the process and outcomes with assessor colleagues
17. Ask the applicant to fill in a small survey form to provide feedback on the process.

6 Judging and Reporting

Principles

The principles underpinning recognition are :

- competence
- commitment
- access
- fairness
- support

The quality of the judgement process is linked to processes relating to training and support of the assessors, support for the applicant at all stages of the recognition process, transparent criteria for decision making, and the linking of assessment outcomes to further development and certification.

Criteria for Assessing Evidence and Making Decisions

For the evidence to be deemed acceptable, the following criteria are used. The evidence must be :

- relevant to the learning and experiences being assessed
- clearly definable
- consistent when applied within and across areas of learning and experience, and over time
- credible, both for the applicant and the organisation using the results of recognition.

The figure on the next page develops the criteria further.

The *Library Industry Competency Standards* provide the benchmark for judgement. As they do not incorporate evidence guides, the Guides developed for this project provide a format for interpreting the knowledge, skills and other attributes required of the applicant to meet the *Standards*.

Criteria for Assessing Evidence

(adapted from *Assessment of Prior Learning : Guidelines for Assessors of Prior Learning in Tasmania* (1993) p.12)

Criteria	Definition	Procedure
Authenticity	the applicant has actually acquired the skill or completed the module/learning outcomes that is being claimed	Ensure that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the applicant is competent in the skills and underpinning knowledge being claimed
Currency	the competency is still valid and can be performed	Confirm that the skills and knowledge are still valid. Consider areas liable to change, such as technology, policies, legal requirements, etc.
Quality	the learning has reached acceptable levels	Establish if the skills and knowledge are at the level specified in the <i>Standards</i> .
Relevance	the learning is applicable to the competency claimed	Identify those learning experiences that are clearly relevant for recognition. This may be a combination of knowledge and skills gained from experience at work or on training programs.
Transferability	the competency can be applied outside the specific context in which it was learned	Does the assessor believe, given the evidence in front of them, that the applicant can successfully transfer their knowledge and experience to different work situations?
Validity	a valid connection can be made between the skills and knowledge being demonstrated and the competency in question	Establish if there is a valid link between the knowledge and skills of the applicant and the intent of the competency.

Risk analysis

Degree of Risk

An analysis of conventional types of assessment shows that all assessment is based on available resources and usually involves some degree of sampling, which is exactly what a Recognition process does.

In some industries the risk of granting Recognition is considered great. A surgeon receiving recognition of his competence in surgery may put a patient at risk if the Recognition process does not represent a valid assessment. Similarly a farrier's proficiency may mean that a valuable race horse is made lame.

Librarianship is not viewed as a profession where risk or poor performance is life threatening; however the provision of the wrong or incorrect information may cause all sorts of risk to the receivers of that information, as well as damage the reputation of the library.

See Appendix 8 at the end of this Section for a chart showing Assessment of Risk in relation to Recognition Processes

with library experience

Where an applicant has a successful record of work, study and engagement in life experiences, and where documentation is well assembled with supporting letters of validation, the risks are low.

Where an applicant has no direct experience in the library industry, but has worked in information-based situations undertaking comparable work with similar clients, a high correlation of skills and attitudes may occur. Part of the difficulty in this case will be the underpinning knowledge component, where the applicant demonstrates a lack of awareness of commonly used mechanisms and networks in the library industry.

with experience in related industries

If the previous work and study is in other service industries such as welfare, child care, and education, or related industries such as computing, management, etc, the skills transfer process will probably be limited to skills directly comparable with library work. The fact that the applicant may have completed a recognised program of study in such areas can also attest to their skills and application.

with new entrants

A Recognition process may be used in workplaces to assess new entrants to the library workforce. This provides an excellent perspective of their skills and knowledge prior to commencing inhouse training, and may direct training efforts more productively.

A Recognition process for new entrants (either to the industry or to a training program) will need to encompass relevant and valid evidence which is authenticated by a recent supervisor. Otherwise, the secondary options of challenge tests, demonstration, project or workplace observation can be considered.

If the claims for recognition cover many competencies or modules, other types of evidence may be required. These include :

- workplace observation or demonstration (observing the applicant handling loans or interlibrary loans)
- challenge test (for cataloguing competencies)
- specific evidence which is supported by supervisors (development of procedural manuals, training programs, promotional work, community liaison programs)
- examples of project work undertaken (developing and mounting a Library Week program, creating a database or spreadsheet to manage particular types of information).

Note that some competencies or skills are more important and intrinsic to the nature of library work than others. For example, understanding the construction of a bibliographic record is critical to effective and efficient searching and retrieval in many databases, a knowledge and efficient use of standard reference tools underpins good ready-reference skills, and so on. The expert assessor will spend additional time on the common units and other areas considered important to the objectives of the organisation.

Underpinning all skills are attitudinal aspects : attention to detail, responsiveness to client needs, etc. Only with a detailed supervisor's report, a supervisor's presence, or a series of character statements, can such judgements be valid and consistent.

Reporting and recording

The Recognition process requires detailed records to be kept as part of the whole quality assurance process. These include:

- copy of the completed application form with any additional information provided in a portfolio, eg statutory declaration, copies of evidence, supporting statements etc
- record of assessment process and its outcomes
- official results indicating the specific industry competencies recognised (which may also be translated against the modules in the Certificate III and Diploma courses)
- any appeals that took place and outcomes of such appeals.

Appeals

Each accredited assessor or training provider must be able to demonstrate that they have mechanisms in place to handle appeals against assessment, whether classroom based or recognition based. Usually the applicant is required to lodge an appeal within a set period of time (eg 14 or 21 days) to a specified person or office-holder.

Grounds for an appeal might include :

- the assessors did not fully consider all the information provided;
- the process did not comply with NFROT² principles

The person charged to handle appeals will investigate and may be able to give an independent judgement or, may be required to establish another panel of assessors to reconsider the decision reached.

The applicant must be informed of the outcomes and advised about any further choice they have.

Appendix 8 (Section 6)

Assessment of Risk in relation to Recognition Processes

Assessment mode	Amount of risk	Comment
Credit transfer (used by training providers)	None	This arrangement is based on previous study which has been assessed by an accredited training provider
Assessment of documentation	Low to moderate	Recognition is dependent on adequate and authenticated documentation, and usually follows stringent guidelines. Some form of contact between assessor and assessee may be needed to clarify points
RPL Interview (face-to-face or telephone)	Moderate	Usually follows prior assessment of documentation to minimise time, and is therefore directed to the modules or competencies for which RPL has been sought. Authentication of evidence is essential for validating level of skills. Often includes advice as to the type of evidence needed or skills needed where recognition cannot be granted at this point in time. It can identify competencies or modules which can be recognised with the documentation in hand but which the applicant has overlooked.
Workplace assessment	Moderate	Usually follows prior assessment of documentation to minimise time, and is therefore directed to specific skills or competencies. May be undertaken through observation and/or use of a checklist. Must include assessment of underpinning knowledge to ensure valid outcomes.
Project work/ challenge test/ report	Low to moderate	Used in addition to one of the above forms where some skills not authenticated or insufficient evidence provided.

7 The roles of the Recognition provider and the applicant

This section provides a generic approach to recognition which will need to be adapted to suit the processes of the workplace or the training provider.

The Recognition Provider's role

Step	Explanation
1. prepare a Recognition package which meets the policies and procedures for Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Application Form</i>• <i>Statutory Declaration</i> form (if required)• <i>Steps for applicant seeking Recognition</i> (see attachment)• <i>Overview of the Library Industry Competency Standards</i>• <i>Other brochures on recognition/RPL</i> (guide to the process)• <i>Additional information required by a student entering a library studies program</i> (overview of the course/s; credit transfer information.)
2. begin the induction process/ speak to intending applicants about the process and how it will be managed	Identify any particular concerns, eg support mechanisms, options for the process. Explain the process from the perspective of the workplace / training provider, eg in a training environment, the applicant may have to enrol in the course before Recognition can be undertaken, or Recognition may be undertaken as part of an agreement with the employer.
3. establish any credit transfer arrangements (training provider only)	Using applicant's documentation, fill in forms for credit transfer or assist applicant to locate official transcriptions of results from other training providers.
4. provide information about the Recognition process	Arrange for suitable ways for distributing information, eg a one-hour introductory briefing session, Recognition Awareness training and support sessions, enrolment in elective RPL module (if available), or other suitable mechanisms.
5. identify competencies /modules that the applicant's evidence will support (could be a mentor's role)	Discuss types of evidence which will support recognition of identified competencies/ modules, eg records from working on school committees, local history society, sports club.
6. show the applicant samples of evidence that could be used (could be a mentor's role)	Explain the organisation and arrangement of a portfolio, relating samples of evidence to <i>Guides A and B</i> .
7. ask if applicant would like support from a mentor	Organise, in conjunction with applicant, for support from a supervisor, critical friend, teacher, etc. if required.

Step	Explanation
8. organise a suitable time for type of assessment proposed	Explain when application form and portfolio are required, whether an interview is needed; if so, what format the interview would take, length, etc
9. set up assessment panel as per policy	Depending on the approach used for assessment, an assessment panel may be established with accredited assessors and supervisors.
10. undertake assessment	This will follow the policy and processes used by the organisation and agreed with the applicant to ensure consistency and quality outcomes. All evidence should be examined, and clarification sought from the applicant when needed.
11. record outcomes	The outcomes of the process should be reported so they can be checked at a later period of time (for appeals) and recorded on the official database of results.
12. provide feedback to the applicant	The results of assessment should be provided to the applicant quickly, enabling them to decide whether to undertake additional work if required, or to appeal against the decision. Ideally this feedback should be in print format with verbal counselling if required.
13. undertake further assessment if required	Timeline for submission of additional evidence should be clearly specified to applicant. This evidence should be examined and recorded according to the same procedures followed in 10 and 11.
14. provide additional feedback to the applicant, identifying opportunities for career development and learning	The results of this assessment should be advised as soon as possible to the applicant and explanations provided.
15. update all records	The official database of results should be updated as soon as possible to ensure that the applicant can be informed officially of the outcomes.

The Applicant's role

- 1 Seek information about Recognition from employer / training provider.
- 2 Prepare initial list of skills, knowledge, learning episodes, etc (a mind map may be useful).
- 3 Identify the competencies which you wish to claim (you will need an overview of the *Library Industry Competency Standards* and/or the structure of the library courses).
- 4 List possible types of evidence that you already have in your possession, and evidence that would be useful to your case.
- 5 Collect evidence that will support the competencies/modules selected.
- 6 Gain validation of evidence from referees.
- 7 Review evidence in the light of the validation statements, categorising it into groups which relate to specific competencies and/or bundles of competencies (or modules/bundles of modules).
- 8 Check your results with a mentor or critical friend.
- 9 Identify the learning resulting from your experiences that you will be able to demonstrate with the portfolio and/or at interview. You may wish to contact a Recognition assessor to talk through the type of assessment that will be conducted and alert them to the need for particular styles of assessment, eg a challenge test may be needed; or a computer for you to demonstrate a particular skill for which no documentation exists.
- 10 Write statements linking your learning to competencies/modules claimed.
- 11 Compile portfolio, label, and provide a contents list.
- 12 Complete and submit Recognition application form with portfolio to assessor.
- 13 Include Statutory Declaration form if required.
- 14 If interview is organised, ask if you can bring along a support person, eg supervisor, mentor, critical friend, etc.
- 15 Bring additional information to interview if necessary.
- 16 Demonstrate your organisational and communication skills at interview.
- 17 Ask for initial assessment at the end of the interview and raise additional points if necessary.
- 18 Confirm results of recognition assessment when they are sent.
- 19 Consider whether you should appeal.
- 20 Review outcomes in relation to proposed training program, career development plan; discuss with supervisor if in working situation or library educator in training situation.
- 21 Plan next recognition assessment event.