Name:	Recognition Policy and Procedures
Endorsed by:	Continuous Improvement and Management Committee
Date approved:	May 2020
Review Date:	November 2021

PURPOSE

In accordance with the requirements of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 and state contract guidelines and policies, Benchmark College (the College) provides the opportunity for students to apply to have prior learning recognised toward a qualification or units of competence for which they are enrolled. The following policy and procedure outlines Benchmark College's systematic, robust, rigorous, transparent, fair and flexible *Recognition* process.

SCOPE

This policy and procedure document applies to all courses on Benchmark College's scope of registration. It also applies to all current and future students of the College, who wish to apply for recognition of prior learning.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Recognition Information Flyer
- Benchmark College Application form
- Assessment Policy and Procedures
- RPL Application Form
- Verification Consent and Credit Transfer Form
- Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures
- Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures
- Validation Policy and Procedures

- Student Handbook
- Qualification and Unit of Competence Recognition Kits
- Induction Paperwork – Traineeship / Classroom
- Pre-Enrolment Information flyer
- RPL Qualification-related documentation
- Pre-Enrolment Information flyer

RELEVANT STANDARDS, LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES

This Recognition Policy and Procedures addresses Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, Clauses 1.8, 1.12.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

- Smart and Skilled Contract Terms and Conditions (current)
- Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines (current)
- NSW Recognition Framework, NSW Government Department of Industry, July 2016[1]
- Recognition of Prior Learning: An Explanation, Australian Qualifications Framework Council, November 2012[2]

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[1] https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/forms_documents/skills_recognition/recognition_framework.pdf
[2] https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/rpl-explanation.pdf

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DEFINITIONS/ ACRONYMS

Recognition	A term used in this policy that refers to Recognition of Prior Learning and Recognition of Current Competence.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	RPL means an assessment process that assesses the competency/s of an individual that may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual meets the requirements specified in the training package or VET accredited courses[3].
	a) formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction and is linked to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, a certificate, diploma or university degree);
	b) non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction, but does not lead to the attainment of an AQF qualification or statement of attainment (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business); and
	c) informal learning refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities (for example the acquisition of interpersonal skills developed through several years as a sales representative).
Recognition of Current Competence (RCC)	RCC applies if a client has previously successfully completed the requirements for a unit of competency or module and is now required (for example by a licensing authority) to be reassessed to ensure that the competence is being maintained. In this case, no extra skill or competencies are nationally recognised (AVETMISS).
Credit Transfer	Assesses the requirements of an initial course or subject that the individual is using to claim access to, or the award of credit in, the destination course. The assessment is used to determine;
	▪ The extent to which the achievement of the previous qualification is equivalent to the required.
	▪ Learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards in another qualification. This may include credit transfer based on formal learning that is outside the AQF framework.

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[3] Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 – Glossary

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POLICY

1. Recognition

Recognition is an assessment process aimed at confirming and recognising the competencies students have obtained outside the formal education and training environment. These competencies may have been gained through informal training and/or through work experience. Through an assessment only pathway recognition allows individuals the opportunity to forgo training and move directly to having their competencies assessed against the requirements of a unit of competence (in respect of both entry requirements and outcomes to be achieved). By removing the need for duplication of learning, recognition encourages an individual to continue upgrading their skills and knowledge through structured education and training towards formal qualifications and improved employment outcomes.

Recognition can be used by Benchmark College students in two ways:

- as an alternative mechanism for gaining access to a course or qualification; and or
- for the award of unit(s) of competency that form part of the qualification, leading to the partial or full completion of the requirements for that course or qualification.

The Benchmark College recognition process complies with the broad parameters outlined by the Standards for Registered Training Organisations ensuring that the quality of recognition assessments matches the quality required of all other assessment procedures. See Benchmark College's *'Assessment Policy and Procedures'*.
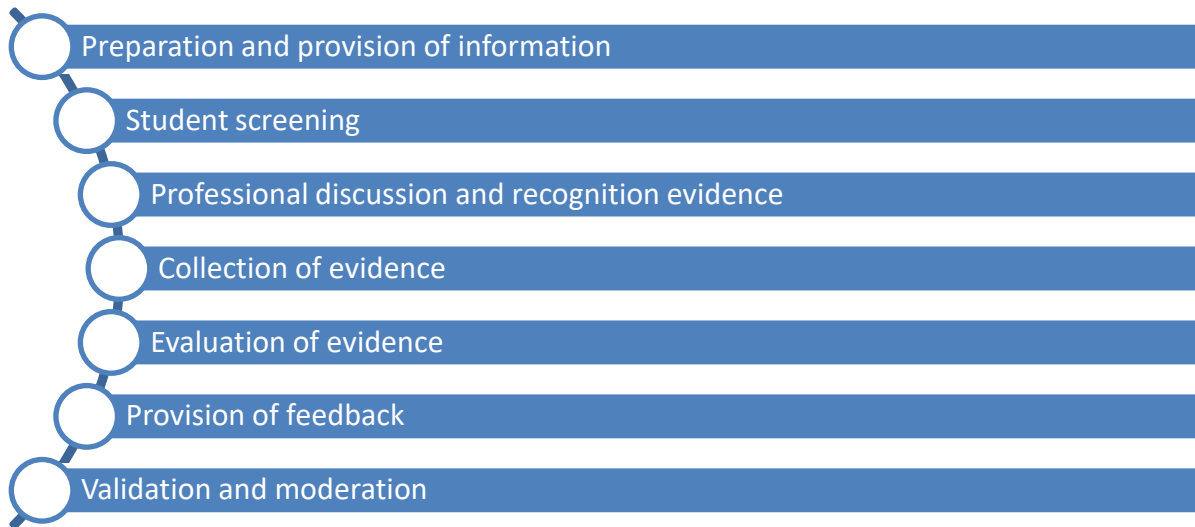
2. General Principles for Recognition

Benchmark College applies the following principles for recognition:
- Information about recognition is actively promoted and accessible to a diverse audience of students and employers.
- Recognition recognises learning acquired in any context.
- Recognition assessment is conducted according to the requirements of the Training Package, principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.
- Recognition assessment meets workplace and relevant regulatory requirements
- Recognition processes are timey, transparent and fair.
- Students enrolled in a recognition process have an opportunity to evaluate the process and service provided.
- Recognition decisions are accountable, transparent and subject to appeals and review.
- Recognition process is regularly validated and moderated.
- Recognition assessments are structured to minimise the investment to the individual and do not impede the implementation of the recognition process.
- Recognition is considered as part of a wider strategy for appraising and accrediting the skills of those who have been marginalised by the traditional training and assessment model.

3. Approach to Recognition

Benchmark College applies a systematic approach to its recognition. This approach includes:

- Preparation and provision of information
- Student screening
- Professional discussion and recognition evidence
- Collection of evidence
- Evaluation of evidence
- Provision of feedback
- Validation and moderation

3.1 Provision of Information

Information about recognition is actively promoted and accessible to all through a variety of different mediums including but not limited to information sessions, print and electronic mediums and face to face discussions. The following methods are used to ensure that Benchmark College's students or prospective students have access to the information, so they can be made aware of recognition pathways and that these pathways offer an alternative method for qualification and/or unit of competence completion;

- Marketing material (print and web based) outlines the possibility of recognition as a methodology for qualification and/or unit of competence completion.
- Students are provided with an information leaflet on course/program application. This leaflet can be downloaded from the Benchmark College website.
- Recognition is discussed as part of the orientation/induction process for both students and staff. Information is also included in the Student Handbook and pre-enrolment information.
- Comprehensive recognition kits provide information to students on the recognition process, rights and responsibilities of students and the organisation, tips for completion and examples of suggested evidence.
- Recognition kits provide the student with an opportunity to self-evaluate their suitability for recognition.
- Qualified and experienced staff attend a mandatory training session outlining the Benchmark College recognition process to ensure that they are familiar with our processes and actively promote a recognition pathway to their students.

3.2 Student Screening

The Benchmark College's application form and enrolment form have questions regarding recognition. Where the screening process indicates a student may be suitable for recognition, the Trainer/Assessor discusses the recognition process with that student, before they commence and engage in their qualification or course.

3.3 Professional Discussion and Recognition Evidence

A formal interview is conducted by the Trainer/Assessor at the beginning to explain the process for recognition, assessment evidence and grievances. The student is provided with a RPL Kit[4] for their use and completion.

3.3.1 Professional Discussion

At this initial meeting, the Trainer/Assessor will conduct a '*Professional Discussion'*. A professional discussion is used (in combination with the preliminary screening tool) to ascertain whether the student has the required skills and knowledge to successfully complete recognition and to identify if any gap training will be required.

A professional discussion may comprise of either a series of direct questions or a list of topics for discussion, drawn from the unit of competence/s required skills and knowledge. The Trainer/Assessor is required to document and map the professional discussion as part of the process to assess evidence collected against unit of competence requirements.

3.3.2 Recognition evidence

Once the student's knowledge is assessed verbally to be at a sufficient standard, the next step is for the student and Trainer/Assessor to complete the Recognition Assessment Plan section of the Recognition Kit for the collection of evidence. The process is documented using the Recognition Kit for the relevant qualification.

Evidence can be collected in a variety of different ways and may include but is not limited to;

- Observation of performance in work based and/or simulated environments[5]
- Third party reports
- Questioning (oral or written)
- Work based projects
- Letters/references
- Audio/visual
- Portfolio of work
- Certificates / Course transcripts

Students are supported by their Trainer/Assessor throughout the collection process to support successful completion of their qualification by ensuring that all evidence submitted is valid, sufficient, current and authentic. A second interview may be required depending on the currency, sufficiency, validity and authenticity of evidence. The Trainer/Assessor may visit the student at their place of employment (if applicable) and where required, conduct observational assessments on required skills.

3.4 Evaluation of Evidence

Evidence is evaluated based on the fact that it is valid (covers all requirements of the unit of competence), sufficient (quality, quantity and relevance) - this enables the assessor to make a decision about competence over time and in different situations, current (this requires the assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past) and authentic (the evidence is the student's own work).

An evidence matrix is used to demonstrate how units of competence are assessed within the recognition assessment tool. The evidence matrix validates the assessment process against the qualification/unit of competence requirements. The Trainer/Assessor maps all evidence submitted to the qualification/unit of competence requirements recording their findings in the student's RPL Kit. The Trainer/Assessor must aggregate all the evidence to determine whether it meets the rules of evidence and enables the candidate to be deemed competent against the unit/s of competency.

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[4] Recognition kits are designed to facilitate the student's ability to collect evidence that meets the rules of evidence and are issued / explained at the initial meeting.
[5] Recognition of Prior Learning: An Explanation, Australian Qualifications Framework Council November 2012 http://www.aqf.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/RPL-Explanation.pdf

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3.5   Provision of Feedback

Feedback is provided to the student both formally and informally throughout the recognition process. Students are encouraged to seek additional feedback if they are unsure of recognition requirements or disagree with a Trainer/Assessor's decision. Students unsatisfied with an assessment decision are encouraged to follow the *'Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures'*.

3.6   Validation and Moderation

To ensure the overall quality and consistency of recognition assessment practices they are subjected to the same validation and moderation processes as all other assessments and assessment tools – See *'Validation Policy and Procedure'* for more information.

Assessments conducted as part of recognition assessment are moderated alongside other samples of regular assessment processes to ensure consistency and parity of assessment across all instances of assessment, whether undertaken at the end of a course of training or as a result of recognition application.

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RECOGNITION PROCEDURE – FLOW CHART

1 Student provided with pre-enrolment information & relevant information on how to apply or enrol

2 Student decides to complete qualification / UoC via a Recognition Pathway, student then applies/enrols

3 Student prepares documentation for Professional Discussion meeting with Trainer/Assessor (Refer to Section 3 of this Recognition Kit). Assessor completes the Recognition Assessment Plan section of the Recognition Kit. Assessor conducts Professional Discussion

4 Student compiles their portfolio of evidence as per the Recognition Assessment Plan

5 Student submits the portfolio of evidence for review by the Assessor

6 Assessor reviews the evidence presented against rules of evidence and UoC requirements

IF REQUIRED

Assessor may ask for up to 2 additional meetings if required before reaching a final decision

7 Assessor decides whether or not the application for recognition has been successful and advises of that decision in writing

IF NOT YET

IF COMPETENT

Student may choose from the following two options:
1. Discuss unit completion options with the College
2. **Accept** the NYC result, or
3. **Appeal** the NYC result.

8 Assessor submits the results to Benchmark College office for processing

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