



**Australian
Aid**



Skills for Inclusive Growth



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
Assessor's Course and Toolkit

CONDUCTING RPL ASSESSMENT



Handbook



Skills for Inclusive Growth

Contact Person

Farheen Khurruum - Contract Representative
Scope Global
Level 5, 12 Pirie Street, Adelaide, SA, 5000, Australia
Tel: +61 8 7082 1431
Farheen.Khurruum@scopeglobal.com

Copyright

Copyright of this document remains the property Scope Global Pty Ltd. The contents of this document may not be reproduced in whole or part without the prior express consent of a duly authorised representative from Scope Global Pty Ltd, excepting for the internal use of the client. This document may only be used for the purposes of examination and evaluation with a view to entering into a contract with Scope Global Pty Ltd, for the purposes of carrying out the work, which is the subject matter of this agreement.

No other use whatsoever is to be made of this document or any recommendations, information, matter or thing, without the express permission of Scope Global Pty Ltd.

Version V1.0 (September 2021)



Contents

Introduction and Background	3
Introduction	3
About The Training Course	4
About S4IG	4
Background	5
Introduction to this RPL Handbook	6
Abbreviations	7
Definitions	8
Section One:	11
Introduction to RPL	12
Who is RPL for?	13
Competency-based Assessment	15
What does RPL Assess?	16
What are the Benefits of RPL?	17
What are the Core Features of RPL?	18
What are the Core Principles of RPL?	19
Section Two:	21
Assessment Methodology	22
Practical Considerations	25
Quality Assurance	26
STARR Interview Method	26
Section Three:	29
Evidence	30
Rules of Evidence:	30
Types of Evidence	31
Evidence Portfolio	34
Section Four:	37
RPL and the NVQ Framework	30
NVQ Qualifications	39
RPL and the NVQ System	39
Upskilling Pathways	41

Section Five:	43
RPL Process	44
Preparation	45
Phase One: Advice	46
Phase Two: Assessment	47
Phase Three: Feedback	49
Gap Training	51
Re-Assessment and Appeals	53
Record Keeping	54
Section Six:	55
RPL Stakeholders	56
Role of RPL Assessors	59
Assessor Requirements	60
RPL Assessor Competencies	60
Impartiality of Assessors	63
Maintaining Standards	64
Role of RPL Facilitators	65
Facilitator Requirements and Competencies	66
Section Seven:	67
National Competency Standards	68
Purpose	69
Structure	70
Frequently Asked Questions	71
NVQ System in Sri Lanka	72
Levels of Qualifications	73
Tourism and Hospitality	74
Quality Assurance	75
Flexibility	75
Methods of assessment	76
NVQ Level Competency Descriptors	76
NVQ Qualification Terminology	77
Overview of Responsible Parties	78
Section Eight:	79
History of RPL in Sri Lanka	80
Launch of RPL	81
Support for RPL	82
Further Development of RPL	82
Lessons Learnt	83
Appendix	85
Table 1: Unit of Competency: Elements	85
Table 2: Unit of Competency: Usage	87
Table 3: NVQ Competency Unit Categorisation	88
Table 4: NVQF Level Descriptors	89
Useful Links	91

Introduction and Background

Introduction

Research done between 2016 - 2018 showed major skills shortages across the hospitality and tourism workforce. This is particularly evident in rural and remote communities throughout Sri Lanka. Opportunities for the workforce to improve skills are not readily accessible in Sri Lanka which constrains industry productivity, quality and efficient service delivery and product quality. This is a major contributor towards hospitality and tourism sector growth, which constrains gainful employment and income levels. Tourism remains untapped in terms of its potential to raise living standards in Sri Lanka.

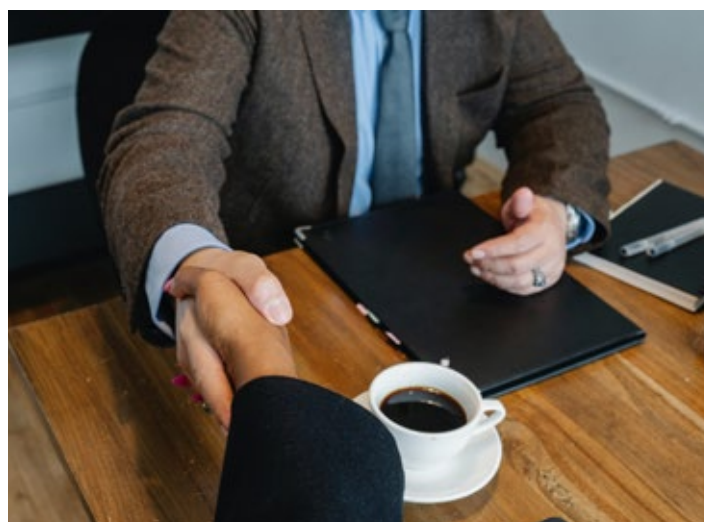


The tourism and hospitality sector has a high level of people working in the informal sector - i.e. without formal qualifications. 80% of the industry is micro and small business. Many businesses are not registered as tourism businesses (SLTDA) and are considered informal – but many of these are still registered business entities. However, significant numbers of people have skills in hospitality and tourism that they have acquired through workplace experience, industry short courses and self study, which are not recognised currently in the regulated vocational education system.

The RPL process provides an opportunity to recognise those skilled people, which can enhance the skilled worker base in the sector and create opportunities for the workforce to upskill to higher skills levels. The workforce seeking formal and recognised qualifications creates demand. These are the people that want to progress in the industry or take the skills overseas.

The RPL system currently has limited availability for use in the hospitality and tourism sector. As such, the sector needs qualified industry experienced people to become RPL assessors to support the implementation of RPL across the sector. This applies to other sectors, and the RPL model will support the supply of RPL in those sectors in time.

A course was designed to meet these needs by developing a system and a pool of assessors. The RPL system needs to be consistent and the assessors need to be (re)trained, to differentiate it from the current system. New roles within the system will require the recruitment of facilitators who will in turn support the implementation of a transparent and reliable quality assured RPL system.



About The Training Course

The course is designed for experienced members of industry who wish to become skilled RPL assessors. It also aims to support existing assessors in upgrading their knowledge on the RPL policy, the procedures, and requirements for conducting an RPL assessment. The RPL assessors course is prepared as a modular training with a training toolkit. Experienced trainers can utilise the course materials and resources to deliver this assessor training.



About S4IG

Skills for Inclusive Growth (S4IG) is an initiative of the Australian Government in collaboration with the State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research & Innovations. The S4IG Program delivers skills training to improve the lives of women, men and persons with disabilities in the tourism and hospitality industry in Ampara, Batticaloa, Polonnaruwa and Trincomalee to strengthen the performance of enterprises, improve their quality of services, generate employment and increase incomes.



Background

Skills for Inclusive Growth (S4IG) has been working with public and private tertiary providers to increase the quality of existing training methods and develop comprehensive and targeted programmes, drawing on international and local partners to build industry capacity and generate innovative employment opportunities. These opportunities support engagement with the visitor economy to generate higher incomes. One of the main challenges is growing the skill base and retaining employees within the industry.

There are a number of further challenges in providing the workers with opportunities for formal qualifications that lead to career growth, such as:

- That many workers across the tourism value chain have no formal qualifications
- That the existing workforce is unable to access TVET courses as these are often not available outside working hours.
- That TVET courses are not modular, and are needed for allowing the workforce to accumulate the skills they need to pursue careers in the tourism and hospitality sector.
- New industry relevant training courses are becoming available and existing workers want to be able to pursue these programs to advance their career and income earning prospects.
- There are actually no assessment materials in many tourism qualifications making assessment discretionary and not standardised or transparent.

S4IG recognises the challenge with delivering reliable Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment in Sri Lanka. Their remit to support skills training, job creation and business growth across the tourism sector sets the frame for S4IG to support the delivery of RPL for the sector. The implementation of the RPL Assessors course enables skilled personnel to access higher level skills development in the tourism and hospitality sector in Sri Lanka.



Introduction to this RPL Handbook

This document is designed for use by RPL assessors, facilitators and others involved in the training / education industry with an interest in RPL in the tourism and hospitality sector.

It is a resource document containing core background information designed to support those who are involved in the RPL process in Sri Lanka, and inform others who have an interest in learning about RPL.

This RPL Handbook is accompanied by an RPL Implementation Guide and an RPL Policy for the Tourism and Hospitality Sector.

This RPL Handbook contains 8 sections and an appendix, as described below.

- 1 Introduction to RPL** provides an introduction to RPL and competency-based assessment including who RPL is for, the benefits, core features and core principles.
- 2 Assessment Methodology** provides information on the RPL assessment methodologies and tools that can be utilised for the tourism and hospitality profession.
- 3 Evidence** outlines the different types of evidence that candidates may use towards their RPL application and the rules of evidence that should be applied.
- 4 RPL and the NVQ Framework** explains how the RPL system operates in relation to Sri Lanka's National Vocational Qualification Framework and how RPL can be used as an effective part of the NVQF's upskilling pathways.
- 5 Process** provides an outline of the three phases and seven stages in the RPL process. Assessors, facilitators and other RPL professionals can use this section to identify the actions and requirements involved at each stage.
- 6 Stakeholders** outlines the stakeholders in the RPL process and details the roles and responsibilities of RPL assessors and facilitators.
- 7 National Competency Standards and NVQ System** outlines the role of National Competency Standards in both RPL and formal qualifications and gives more detailed information on the National Vocational Qualification Framework in Sri Lanka.
- 8 History of RPL in Sri Lanka** provides background information on the development of an assessment system for non-formal and informal learning in Sri Lanka, from the National Trade Tests to development of the RPL and National Vocational Qualifications Framework and RPL.

The **Appendix** provides additional information and tables as referenced in the earlier sections. It also includes details of useful organisations.

Abbreviations

BMICH	Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall
CBT	Competency Based Training
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DG	Director General
DTET	Department of Technical Education and Training
GCE O/L	General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAITA	National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority
NCS	National Competency Standard
NTT	National Trade Tests
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
NVQF	National Vocational Qualifications Framework
PPP	Public-Private-Partnership
RoA	Record of Achievement
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
S4IG	Skills for Inclusive Growth
SDP	Skills Development Project
SLIATE	Sri Lankan Institute of Advanced Technological Education
TEDP	Technical Education Development Project
TVEC	Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNIVOTEC	University of Vocational Technology
VTA	Vocational Training Authority

Definitions

Applicant	is an individual who is interested in the RPL process and makes an application.
Assessment	is the process by which evidence of a candidate's work is collected and judged to decide whether an individual meets the predefined criteria for obtaining formal recognition. This could be credits, exemption of academic prerequisites, a part or full qualification or any other award. In an RPL assessment, the competence or non-competence of the candidate is judged against the specified National Competency Standards.
Assessor	is a person registered by the relevant body (TVEC) in accordance with established criteria to conduct assessments for registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications.
Candidate	is an applicant who has been accepted to undergo RPL assessment.
Credit	is the value given within a learning programme for achieved learning.
Competencies	refer to the knowledge, skill and understanding learned and mastered in a specific context.
Experiential learning	is the process of learning through experience, and is more specifically defined as 'learning through reflection on doing'.
Facilitator	is an RPL professional who supports applicants / candidates and acts as the main point of contact for them throughout the RPL process.
Formal learning	occurs in an organised and structured context in an educational setting, such as a school, university or workplace. Formal learning is systematic, with precise learning outcomes. It follows a given syllabus designed to achieve the desired competencies. It usually leads to the awarding of a qualification or part qualification. Formal learning is intentional.
Formative Assessment	is an on-going (continuous) assessment. They are the pieces of evidence a candidate collects over a period of time.

Informal learning	is at the opposite end of the learning continuum to formal learning. It is not organised according to a structured program or a curriculum. Informal learning results from everyday activities related to the workplace, family life, leisure or in the community. It usually occurs without the individual's awareness or deliberate intention. It is sometimes called 'experiential learning' or simply 'experience'.
Learning	is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in a particular occupation or trade.
Learning outcomes	are statements of what a learner is expected to know and/or be able to do. This is irrespective of the context of learning.
National Competency Standards (NCS)	specify the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to perform at a particular level in a particular occupation.
Non formal learning	takes place in activities not exclusively designated as learning activities but which contain important learning outcomes. Non formal learning can be located anywhere in the spectrum between formal and informal learning. It usually refers to short courses of education and training that are intentional but not fully formalised.
Portfolio	is a collection of designs, documents or other papers that represent a person's work.
Prior learning	refers to competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) that are acquired prior to an assessment and/or recognition process through work, earlier study or experience. Prior learning typically comes from non formal and informal learning (but in some cases could be an uncompleted period of formal learning).
Qualification	(also referred to as certification), is the final outcome of a successful assessment process. This could be a full qualification, credits or exemptions. It is the official recognition of learning. A qualification confers official recognition by the authority that awards it.
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	is the principles and process through which the prior knowledge and/or skills of an individual are given a value. It is a means to formally identify, assess and validate existing learning for the purpose of certification, alternative admission and future learning and development. In some quarters RPL is referred to (perhaps more accurately) as RLO - Recognition of Learning Outcomes.

RPL practitioner	is a person that functions in one or more aspects of RPL provision. This includes: policy development, advice, portfolio course design and facilitation, assessment and moderation, administration, monitoring and evaluation, research and development.
Record of Achievement (RoA)	is a certificate awarded for successful completion of a unit of competency. It is provided to the candidate in cases where they are competent in one (or more) units, but not the full NCS.
Summative assessment	refers to an assessment conducted collectively at the end of a unit or set of units
Training providers	are bodies that deliver learning programmes which culminate in specified registered qualifications and part qualifications.
Unit of competency	is the specification of knowledge and skill, and the application of that knowledge and skill, to the standard of performance expected in the workplace. A unit of competency is the smallest unit that can be assessed and recognised.



SECTION 01



Introduction to RPL

Introduction to RPL

RPL is one of a number of processes for establishing credit or advanced standing. RPL broadens access into formal learning by enabling credit to be given for prior achievement, skills and experience gained through other formal, non-formal or informal learning.

Candidates for RPL qualifications are judged on the competencies that they already have, based on their work experiences. During the RPL process candidates demonstrate that they are capable of performing certain tasks or working in certain industries based on the evidence of skills and knowledge gained throughout their life. Unlike other forms of assessment, they are not judged solely on the credentials or qualifications they have achieved (although this may form part of their evidence).

RPL is a process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying those learning outcomes against standards that are also used in formal education. Through RPL, individuals can obtain qualifications or credits (towards a qualification or exemption) without needing to undertake additional formal education or study programmes.



Who is RPL for?

RPL is available to an individual who already has some experience, understanding or skills in a particular industry or occupation.

Potential beneficiaries of RPL include (but are not limited to):

- Workers in the informal economy
- Craftspersons
- Working students
- Unemployed
- Economically inactive
- Apprentices who did not complete their training
- Individuals wishing to work after retirement
- Individuals employed in sectors where qualification requirements have changed
- Overseas workers seeking a qualification in another country (for example migrant workers)
- Individuals qualified in one sector of a particular industry wishing to gain qualifications relevant to another sector (for example a bartender seeking recognition as a waiter/steward).



RPL is designed to formalise learnings that occurs in formal, non-formal and informal environments:

- **Formal learning:** learning occurs in a formal environment according to a given syllabus designed to achieve desired knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- **Non-formal learning:** learning takes place in activities not exclusively designated as learning activities but which contain very important learning outcomes.
- **Informal learning:** learning takes place in day to day activities.

Example candidate 1: Sumaiya

- Sumaiya is from Ampara. She is working as an assistant to an experienced and qualified tour guide who specialises in taking small groups of tourists into the mountain ranges in Sri Lanka.
- Sumaiya loves trekking and camping outdoors in the mountains and wants to become a qualified guide who is qualified to take tourists on trekking trips/ holidays in the mountains.
- She wants to apply for qualification as an assistant trekking / hiking guide.



Example candidate 2: Rohan



- Rohan has been working in a hotel in Dubai, UAE as a Barista and Bar Steward for the past five years. He loves serving people. He returned to Sri Lanka and wants to get a job as a bartender at a hotel resort in Pasikuda.
- He wants to apply for recognition of prior learning towards a Bartender - Food and Beverage Service NVQ Level 4.

Competency-based Assessment

In a competency-based assessment system, assessment is based upon clear and unambiguous benchmarks. In the case of RPL, these are supplied by the National Competency Standards (NCS). These specify skills, knowledge and attitudes, and the minimum standards of performance expected by the industry.

Criterion referenced assessment assumes that the assessment decision is based upon a collection of evidence gathered over a period of time (evidence based judgement) rather than one event, such as a test or exam. In a competency-based assessment system, a combination of formative and summative assessment is used to reach an assessment decision.

Formative assessment is an on-going (continuous) assessment. They are the pieces of evidence a candidate collects over a period of time.

Summative assessment refers to an assessment conducted collectively at the end of a unit or set of units. This can be administered through the decision of an assessor based upon a judgment of:

- Evidence through documented formative assessment.
- Summative assessment demonstrated at a formal testing.
- A combination of the above.

Candidates must show sufficient evidence of their competence. Sufficiency can be defined as evidence which has demonstrated that the candidate can:

- Perform the required tasks / skills
- Perform according to specific workplace environments
- Transfer skills to different situations



What does RPL Assess?

The RPL system assesses existing knowledge, understanding and skills regardless of where or how these were learned. Age, gender, physical attributes and where a person has worked are not relevant for RPL.

Candidates for RPL qualifications are judged on the competencies that they already have. During the RPL process candidates demonstrate that they are capable of performing certain tasks or working in certain industries based on the evidence of skills and knowledge gained throughout their life. Unlike other forms of assessment, they are not judged solely on the credentials or qualifications they have achieved (although this may form part of their evidence).

Candidates have their skills assessed against clear industry standards for performance, knowledge and behaviour. Each level of qualification is composed of a collection of competency units which can be completed individually or progressively. As part of the process, candidates provide evidence of their competencies. They may also be asked to perform tasks or jobs, talk about how they do those jobs and/or provide samples of work.



Remember:

- RPL does not require candidates to undertake a formal learning program.
- RPL is learning focused. The learning is important, the mode of learning is not.
- RPL assesses competencies against clearly specified, industry relevant standards.



What are the Benefits of RPL?

For individuals:

- Receive qualifications based on existing knowledge and competencies
- Psychological benefits of increased confidence and self-esteem
- Receive a nationally and internally recognised qualification. Attractive to domestic and foreign employers
- Increased earnings potential and access to the jobs market
- Reduced cost of education, including time commitment. Quick and easy process



For employers:

- Upgrade employees from unskilled to skilled. Support their career development
- Identify and reward skilled employees
- Reliable qualifications designed in collaboration with industry, focussed on relevant skills for the workplace



For society and the economy:

- Increase the size of the skilled workforce in the country
- Improved ability for employers to identify new hires and fill vacancies
- Reduction of the skills mismatch issue
- Improved labour market mobility, with more opportunity for employees to change career and employer
- Expanded opportunity for movement from rural to urban areas and overseas
- Better motivated labour force with increased earnings potential
- Enhanced ability to empower disadvantaged groups and recognise competencies gained in volunteering and unpaid work
- Stronger qualifications system that bridges the formal and informal economy
- Expanded lifelong learning opportunities and vertical mobility
- Access to formal education and training becomes more accessible with reduced cost and time commitments



What are the Core Features of RPL?

The RPL process includes the following core features:

1. Guidance and advice

Applicants are advised on the application process and the requirements for the qualifications they are considering. Candidates are advised on the evidence gathering and assessment process.



2. Ongoing support

The RPL process is designed to be a gateway to qualifications and the needs of the learner (applicant and candidate) are central. They will be supported throughout the process, including selecting and presenting evidence of their learning, and identifying areas for further learning.



3. Evidence gathering and presentation

Mechanisms are in place to gather a wide range of evidence of prior learning to support RPL applications. Candidates need to demonstrate evidence of the learning outcomes or competencies they have required. This does not mean they need to undertake a formal exam.



4. Assessment criteria

The prior learning of a candidate is assessed against clear criteria and learning outcomes to make an assessment of their competencies. These criteria are based on industry standards and the candidate is made aware of them in advance.





5. Feedback and recognition



If a candidate does not yet meet all the competencies for a qualification they are informed of the areas that require further learning and are supported to complete this. Detailed feedback is given and the RPL process includes the opportunity to resubmit evidence and/or appeal a decision.



What are the Core Principles of RPL?

The core principles of Recognition of Prior Learning should always apply. RPL is flexible, accessible, reliable, fair and inclusive, transparent, valid, quality assured, and learner-focused.

Principle	Description
Flexible	<p>Individuals who come to the RPL process will have a diverse range of backgrounds, experience, abilities and come from different occupations and industries. The RPL system must be flexible to accommodate and adapt to their wide range of needs, goals and experiences of the major stakeholders.</p> 
Accessible	<p>RPL is an inclusive and accessible process. It applies to learners of all ages and levels of experience, including vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. RPL should be a gateway to learning, not a barrier to entry. Applicants and candidates should be supported and encouraged in the process.</p>
Reliable	<p>The RPL system ensures that candidates' learning outcomes and assessment procedures comply with all regulatory requirements to award credit or a qualification. An assessment process is reliable when there is consistency in results between assessors. That is, when two or more assessors give the same result based upon the same evidence.</p> 

<p>Fair and inclusive</p>	<p>RPL applies to learners of all ages and levels of experience, including vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. It should be equitable and sensitive to the social context of applicants, and take into consideration personal factors of the candidate, such as informal learning backgrounds, historical disadvantages and barriers to education.</p> <p>Support services should consciously address invisible barriers to success in the RPL process. These barriers could take many forms, such as levels of numeracy, literacy or non-technical barriers such as the anxieties that arise when adult learners, who may be unfamiliar with formal education, enter the RPL process.</p>
<p>Transparent</p>	<p>Candidates shall be aware of how they shall be assessed, when and by whom, what the national competency standards are and what they will be assessed against.</p> 
<p>Valid</p>	<p>Assessment methods for RPL must be of equal rigour as other assessment methods such as formal education. They must be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning.</p>
<p>Quality assured</p>	<p>Procedures, documentation, record keeping and system verification should be detailed and available for scrutiny.</p>
<p>Learner focussed</p>	<p>RPL must promote and recognise the positive aspects of an individual's learning, rather than their deficiencies. RPL is a learner centric system and the needs of the applicant / candidate should be paramount.</p> 

SECTION 02



Assessment Methodology

Assessment Methodology

RPL assessment is not only about the act of assessment (i.e. scoring a written test, or observing a work demonstration), but about enabling the candidate to be assessed, so they can provide evidence of their competence and skill. The assessment becomes a mechanism whereby improved ways of teaching and learning can be developed. Assessors should understand:

- **Why** we assess - to determine the existing competencies
- **What** we assess - how to select assessments that can demonstrate if a candidate has achieved the desired level of competence
- **How** to assess - how to making use of the most appropriate methodologies and tools

To ensure the parity of qualification (between formal and RPL), the same National Competency Standards (NCS) should be applied for non-formal and informal assessments as for formal learning assessments. However, different assessment methods can be used for RPL assessments.



Within RPL, there are two overarching assessment methodologies, verification and portfolio:

Verification method	Portfolio method
<p>Is used to verify the value of a candidate's prior learning to which credit can be awarded. This is especially useful to the assessor when they need to assess specific skills and/or knowledge on a subject.</p> <p>Example assessment tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Practical demonstration ■ Practical demonstrations in simulated work conditions ■ Observation ■ Interview / oral examination ■ Written questions ■ Observation checklists ■ Oral presentations ■ Problem solving 	<p>Includes evidence of the candidate's achievements, the analysis of learning from their experiences (i.e self-analysis), and other evidence the candidate links to competencies.</p> <p>Example assessment tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Portfolios of evidence ■ Third party statements ■ Log books ■ Journals ■ Critical incident reports ■ Videos / visuals / slides / audio tapes

It is the task of the assessor to match the evidence of the relevant prior experience to the performance criteria of the specified units of competency of the qualification for which recognition is being sought.

When selecting an assessment method, the RPL professional should take into account:

- The nature of the unit
- The strengths of participants
- The number of participants in the class
- Time required to complete assessments
- Time dedicated to assessment
- Equipment and resources required



Variety in the methods of assessment is encouraged. TVEC's Operations Manual states that demonstration, attestation, interview, or the evaluation of work samples or projects shall be commonly used.

Flexibility and learner-centredness are core principles underpinning RPL and the National Qualifications Framework. When translated into candidate support, this includes the extent to which candidates are able to choose assessment tools they feel most comfortable with. This does not mean the alternative tools are in any way inferior, but they may reduce the barriers to making a claim for RPL for candidates. The candidate does not have an open choice of tools, however, alternatives could be provided, for example using a number of small assignments instead of one major project, or an oral rather than written examination.



Assessment Methods

Different assessment methods and tools can be applied in the RPL process. For example, RPL in higher education for credits might require a test while, in TVET, work observation might apply. To ensure parity of qualifications (formal and those acquired through RPL), the same **assessment standards should apply for non-formal and informal learning as for formal learning**. However, assessment procedures can - and probably should - differ, since evidence of competencies has to be established.



Practical Considerations

Logistics: Assessment arrangements shall take into account logistics and the limitations of industry where necessary, such as:

- Availability of assessors
- Workplace policies and procedures
- The need for specialist tools, equipment and materials
- Time constraints
- The inability for some candidates to gather direct workplace evidence of competence
- Candidates from geographically isolated locations

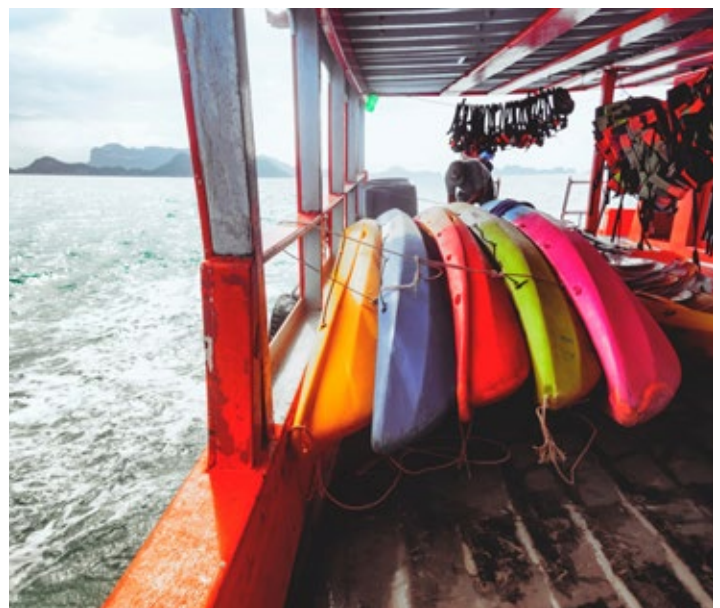
Authenticity: The assessment system must enable assessors to document that the evidence presented for assessment really is the work of the candidate.

Environment: It is important that the assessment be carried out in a comfortable physical, cultural and psychological environment. This environment shall be conducive to participation and contribution by the candidate throughout the assessment process.

Venue: The assessment venue (where applicable) has to be decided by the assessor with the consent of the candidate. If the RPL assessments are conducted in training institutions those institutions should have accreditation obtained from TVEC for the relevant occupations.

Cost: The system must be cost effective for both the establishments conducting the assessments and for candidates.

Assessors: Two assessors should be involved with the assessment process in the roles of assessor and verifier/moderator. The assessments should be conducted as per the criteria, guidelines and methodology specified by TVEC.



Quality Assurance

The qualification awarded by RPL assessment is equal to the same qualification gained through formal education and training system, however, in a formal system, quality assurance is carried out at all stages including the input, learning process and assessment. The RPL system does not have any control over the candidate's evidence gathering. To ensure that only competent candidates can obtain certificates, rigorous assessment methodology has to be used.

Quality assurance mechanisms and processes are critical for successful implementation and protection of a credible and accountable RPL system. It is important for RPL providers to demonstrate that RPL is not an 'easy' route to obtaining a qualification. All stakeholders in the RPL process should adhere to the core RPL principles. The assessment procedure must ensure that evidence provided is valid, authentic, current and sufficient, and that the process is fair, flexible, reliable and valid.

STARR Interview Method

The STARR method can be used by an RPL assessor / interview panel of assessors during an assessment interview. The method can be used to formulate questions (posed to the candidate during the interview) covering: situations, action plans, models, concepts as well as highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate's application.

This method requires the Assessor to ask open questions that start with: what, who, how, why, where etc. The RPL assessor/ interview panel of assessors can determine whether the candidate has acquired, and demonstrated, the required knowledge/skills/competencies for each learning outcome.



The STARR method



- S** **Situation:** the situation, where the learning was gained (the background, people involved, location, etc.), e.g. description of the place of work or a particular work function.
- T** **Tasks:** the tasks and roles performed, e.g. role, responsibilities, tasks performed on a regular basis and the person who assigned the tasks.
- A** **Activities:** the activities and methods, such as, learning new skills and techniques, attending training courses etc.
- R** **Results:** the analysis of the results: who, how, and on the basis of which assessed the results; what was done with the results. It is best if the explanation is provided on the basis of “then and now” – the candidate can differentiate between previous and current results, describe the difference between the results and show his or her learning development.
- R** **Reflection:** the candidate’s self-evaluation which indicates the links between his/her competencies and the learning outcomes of the course/qualification applied for. The candidate should point out the following areas: when and where significant learning took place, what went well, what didn’t go well, and what could have been done differently.



SECTION 03



Evidence

Evidence

The candidate will provide evidence that they believe supports their claim for competence against the given set of standards. There are different types of evidence for RPL purposes, including direct, indirect and historical evidence. All evidence of learning must meet the rules of evidence.

The form, quality and sources of evidence suitable will depend on the purpose, outcomes and performance criteria of the competency units, standards and qualifications. It is critical that RPL professionals clearly understand what kinds of evidence will be required to offer proof of competence in relation to the target qualification.



Rules of Evidence:

Rule	Description
Valid	The evidence addresses the elements and performance criteria. It reflects the skills, knowledge and context described in the qualification specification.
Authentic	The evidence being submitted is in its original format, can be verified as genuine and can be confirmed as the work of the learner.
Sufficient	The assessor must see sufficient evidence to cover all aspects of the unit(s) or qualification being claimed. The evidence must demonstrate competence over a period of time and that it is able to be repeated.
Current	The evidence must demonstrate the current skills and knowledge of the candidate and must comply with current best practice guidance.
Reliable	Evidence must be from a reliable source and in a reliable format, such as on organisation headed paper or certification. Translated documents should be translated by an official translator to ensure authenticity.

Types of Evidence

Direct evidence is material created by the candidate and that can be used as proof of the relevant competencies, skills and knowledge. Physical items, including documents and texts, can be examples of direct evidence. Videos and audio recordings of activities requiring the competency can be deemed to be a combination of direct evidence and observation.



Indirect evidence is information that a third party has supplied about the candidate's competencies, skills and knowledge. It includes the types of documents proving the existence of competencies, skills and knowledge acquired through formal and non-formal learning as well as opinions and assessments regarding the candidate's competencies (e.g. feedback from clients/customers and assessment from the direct supervisor).



Historical evidence is information that a candidate can supply which proves his/her curriculum vitae or resume. Examples include: training records/logs, certificates of attendance/achievement, industry awards, verified attestations from employers and/or voluntary organisations. Employers' service certificates can also be considered as historical evidence.

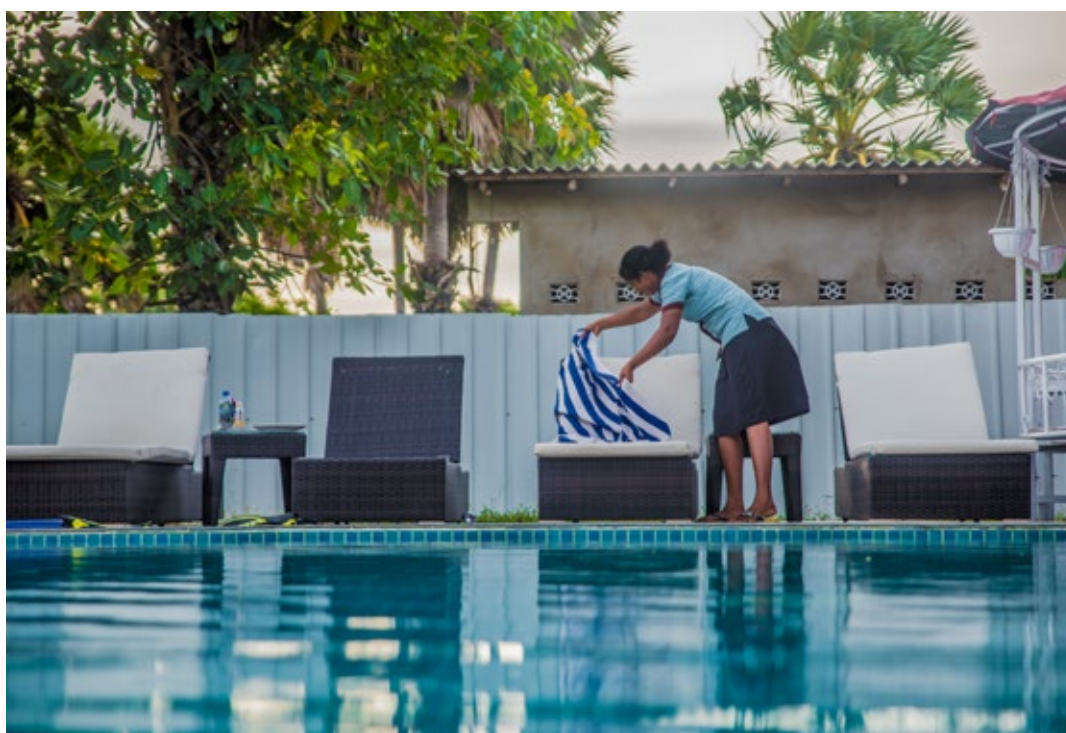


Examples of evidence include:

Direct evidence	Indirect evidence	Historical evidence
Workplace observation	Job specifications or position descriptions	Written references from past employers
Demonstration of skill	Referee or supervisor's reports	Log books, Rosters or timesheets
Samples of work	Visual presentations or written speeches	Industry awards
Videos / slides	Letters, emails or memos from the workplace	Certificates or qualifications
Audio files	Letters of support	Record/transcript of academic results or
Photos	Past competency-based assessments	Scrapbooks
Published works, such as operational manuals		Magazine or newspaper articles
The materials or tools with which the candidate works		

Adapted from: Queensland Government (2014) (from Aggarwal, 2015)

The examples given above represent a number of types of evidence that could, once authenticated (and therefore assessed), be accepted as proof of competence. However, not all candidates will be able to produce such a range of evidence and additional forms of evidence may be required



The below table demonstrates several assessment tools that can be used for RPL. These can be used to authenticate the evidence provided, and can also provide proof of competency where documentary evidence, such as listed in the table above, is not available.

Assessment tool	Purpose
Interview (structured / unstructured)	To clarify issues raised in the documentary evidence, to review the scope and depth of learning. Particularly useful in areas where judgement and values are important.
Presentation	To check ability to present in a way required per the competency standard
Performance testing	To test applications of theory in a structured context in the correct/ safe manner.
Direct observation	To check the performance of skills and tasks in a workplace environment.
Examples of work done, performed or designed	To check the quality of work, relevance to the performance criteria sought and authenticity.
Oral examination	To check for a deep understanding of issues and the ability to explain in simple terms.
Simulation	Useful in situations where it is not possible or safe to observe skills and tasks in the real work environment.
Evidence portfolio	To provide a collection of materials that reflect the candidate's prior learning and achievements. To identify relevant connections between the learning and the qualification sought.

The above table is not exhaustive but provides useful options and inspiration for the development of assessment methodologies for RPL.

Evidence Portfolio

One option is to organise evidence into a portfolio format. A portfolio is an organised collection of materials providing evidence of the competencies acquired through experience instead of formal learning. It may take the form of a binder that contains the candidate's articulation of identified relevant learning and sufficient supporting documentation.

While evidence portfolio's are new to RPL in Sri Lanka, they are widely applied internationally. They may also be referred to as a workplace portfolio or learning portfolio, study portfolio is typically used in formal education. The benefits of an evidence portfolio approach include:

- The candidate is at the centre and drives the evidence gathering process
- The assessor is able to assess the evidence more effectively
- The candidate can identify learning gaps and make goals for achieving them
- The candidate gets experience in creating a portfolio document and creating a focussed narrative of their learning
- The candidate doesn't have to repeat learning



It must be stressed that it is not mandatory to use an evidence portfolio and the introduction of a portfolio approach, as one option, should not be a barrier to entry or success in the RPL process for any candidate.

The evidence portfolio should be combined with other assessment tools as required by the individual context.

The portfolio is prepared by the candidate with guidance from the RPL facilitator on what to include. In general, a good portfolio - in the eyes of the assessor - is one that focuses on specific matched learning outcomes. The candidate should gather the information about their skill, knowledge and performance mentioned in the unit(s) of competency.

A portfolio should contain:	In addition, the following may also be included:
<p>Title page (including candidate name, contact information, qualification applied for and date)</p> <p>Table of contents</p> <p>A written outcome of education and career goals</p> <p>Learning outcomes and competency statements</p> <p>Documentation verifying the learning and experience claims.</p>	<p>A chronological record of significant learning experience</p> <p>Informal records of past learning achievements</p> <p>Learner introduction / Cover letter (signed)</p> <p>CV / resume</p> <p>Other documentation that supports the competencies claimed.</p>



SECTION 04

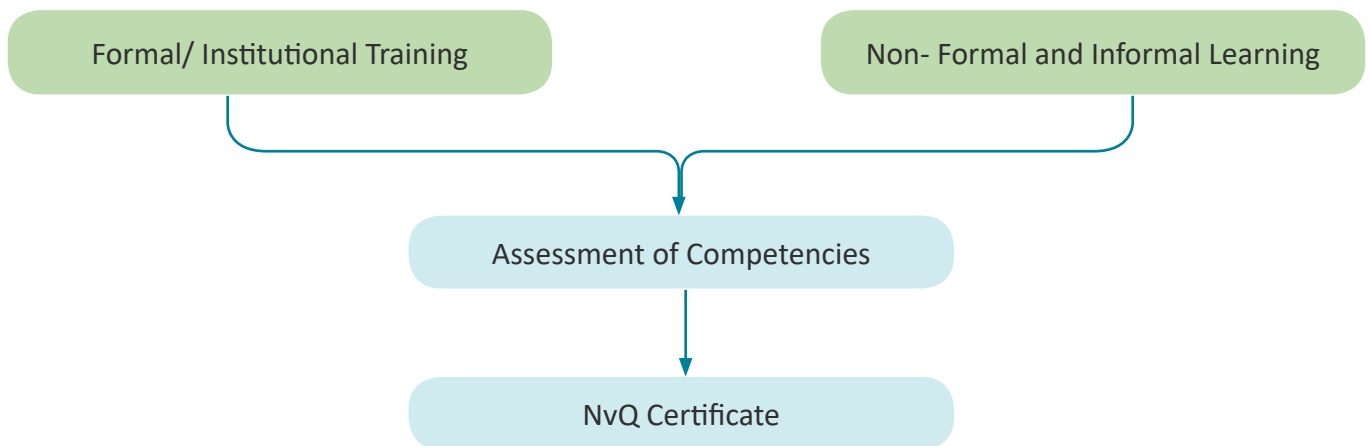


RPL and the NVQ Framework

RPL and the NVQ Framework

The Sri Lankan National Qualifications Framework (NVQF) is one of the key elements in unifying Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

The NVQ framework allows for individuals to acquire qualifications through formal institutional training. It also recognises competencies acquired through informal (non-institutional means) like RPL.



NVQ Qualifications

Successful completion of an NVQ level results in a nationally recognised qualification. This attests that the candidate has reached the level of a national standard determined by the respective industry. The qualifications at different levels have been identified to suit the employment requirements of the respective industries.

Each NVQ Level is made up of a certain number of units of competency. These units can be acquired individually for a Record of Achievement (RoA) that demonstrates partial recognition of learning, or progressively leading towards a full award.

The National Vocational Qualification Framework encourages skills and competencies acquired informally to be assessed and recognised towards national vocational qualifications.



RPL and the NVQ System

RPL assesses the competencies an individual already has to determine the extent to which they have achieved the required competencies as set out in the relevant skills standard. This may be for the purpose of obtaining a national vocational qualification or for the purpose of credit transfer for further study. In the case of assessment for credit transfer, the particular course is assessed to determine the extent to which it is equivalent to the performance levels as set out in the relevant skills standard.

RPL is implemented in two ways:

- Assessment of an individual for national vocational qualification
- Assessment of a course for credit transfer

The qualification awarded by RPL assessment is equal to the same qualification gained through a formal education and/or training system. To maintain parity, the same National Competency Standards apply to both RPL assessments and formal assessments.

However, different assessment methods can be used for RPL assessments. One of the core features of the RPL system is flexibility to suit the needs of the candidate and the required competencies being assessed.

In Sri Lanka, qualifications via RPL range from entry level (NVQ Level 1) to mastercraftsman (NVQ Level 4). RPL can also be used towards diploma and higher education NVQ level qualifications in conjunction with other requirements.



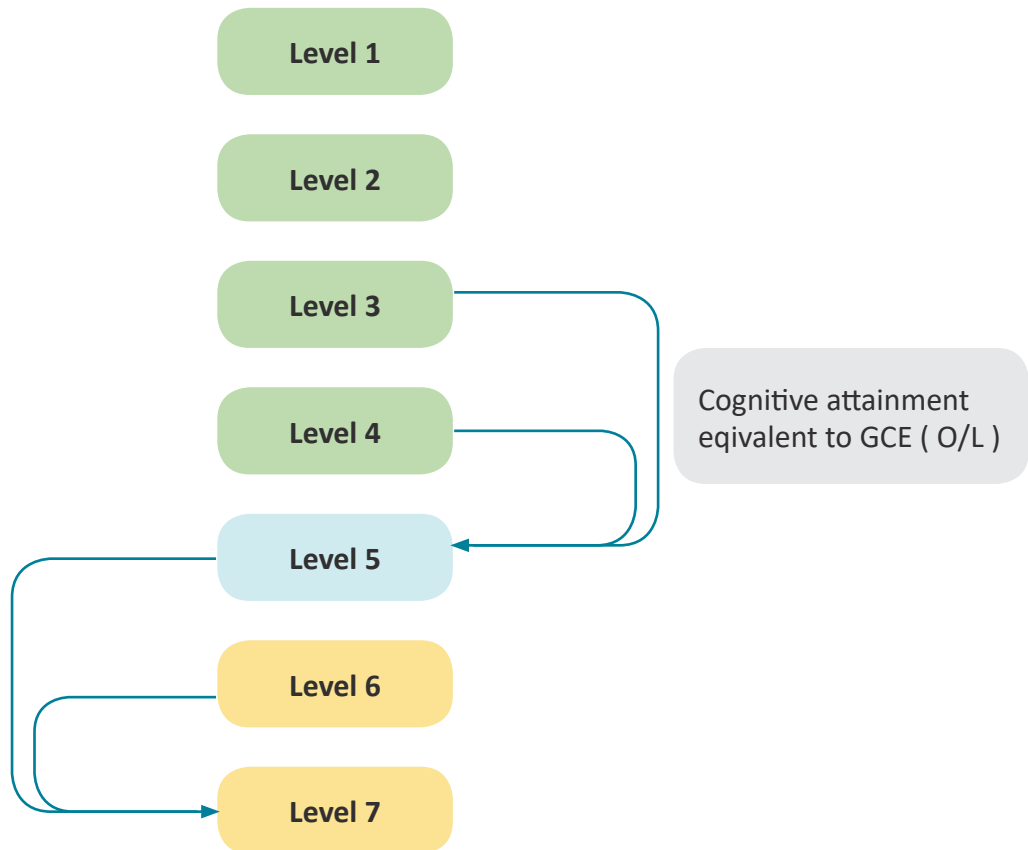
Remember:

An NVQ qualification earned through RPL assessment is the same as an NVQ qualification earned through formal education. There is no difference in the qualification awarded. One mode of assessment is not better or worse than the other.



Upskilling Pathways

Vertical mobility upwards through the NVQ system is straightforward. Candidates can enter the system at different levels, depending upon their experience and/or qualifications. Those with existing skills and knowledge can enter through the Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) route.



Access to qualifications at levels 1-4 is possible both directly and progressively through an accredited course or through the recognition of prior learning. The prerequisite for access to level 5 diploma courses is NVQ level 3 plus academic ability equivalent to General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level. The entry qualification for level 7, the degree programme, is NVQ level 5.



SECTION 05



RPL Process

RPL Process

The RPL process is broken down into three phases: advice, assessment, feedback. Within these phases, there are 7 stages, and an additional preparatory phase.

Phase	Stage	Description
Preparation	-	Training of RPL professionals. Awareness and publicity for RPL.
Phase One: Advice	1	Initial contact. Applicant contacts RPL provider to receive information.
	2	Counselling and facilitation. RPL facilitator guides the candidate and maps their experience against the units of competency. The evidence requirements are identified.
	3	Evidence gathering. The RPL assessor gathers evidence and submits it with the RPL application.
Phase Two: Assessment	4	Evidence review. RPL assessor reviews evidence against specific competency standards.
	5	Assessment decision. RPL assessor makes the assessment decision.
Phase Three: Feedback	6	Feedback. Assessor provides feedback to the candidate.
	7	Certification. The appropriate certificate is issued



Preparation

Before the RPL process begins there is a preparatory phase where RPL practitioners (including facilitators and assessors) are required to familiarise themselves with the unit standards and qualifications they will be assessing. This includes being clear on all aspects that can impact the design of the assessment process, including purpose, outcomes and assessment tools.

Preparation also includes awareness and publicity to build understanding and interest in RPL among potential candidates, employers, industry experts (who could serve as RPL professionals) and other stakeholders. The awareness and publicity message should include:

- What is RPL
- What are the benefits of RPL (to individuals, to employers, to the nation)
- Who to contact for more information.

The publicity messages should be tailored to the target audience, for example materials aimed at potential candidates could also include estimated costs and timeframes, the support available and a brief overview of the RPL process.

The publicity and awareness building programmes can take place in different platforms such as on social networks, websites, workplaces, private and public schools and other education institutes, fairs and media. Materials should be available in three languages (Tamil, Sinhala and English).



Phase One: Advice

In the advice phase, applicants begin their RPL journey, receive personalised advice on their evidence and competencies relating to the qualification requirement, and are supported through the application and evidence submission process. The applicant is also informed about the RPL provider's appeals process should that be required.

A central part of the advice phase is the counselling and facilitation that takes place between the applicant and the RPL facilitator. During this phase, the facilitator has a detailed competency conversation with the applicant to find out about their skills, knowledge and competencies. The facilitator begins to match these against the learning outcomes and units of competency required by the qualification. The facilitator identifies the appropriate RPL assessment package for the applicant, and prepares the Assessment Plan, which guides the candidate on the type and amount of evidence required, the most appropriate assessment methods and tools, as well as alternative methods which may emanate as a result of discussions with the applicant. The facilitator also actively manages the applicant's expectations.



This is a very important phase as the counselling and facilitation decides the applicant's suitability to continue in the RPL process, and the most appropriate route they can take to achieve their desired goal. During this phase, applicants may be directed towards skills gap training or further training programmes to improve their skills, knowledge and competencies.

This counseling and facilitation is new to the current RPL system in Sri Lanka. The role of Facilitator is also new. It is expected that as a result of introducing the facilitator role, success rates will increase, candidate satisfaction rates with the RPL process will increase and drop out rates decrease. However, for this to be achieved the counselling and facilitation must be handled carefully and professionally, with expert advice and sensitivity.

Facilitators should be based locally in district offices and provide support to the applicant/candidate both on the phone and in person. An online application and progress tracking portal would further increase transparency, accessibility and efficiency. To avoid potential barriers to those who do not have access to a computer or are less digitally literate, applications will also be welcomed in person and the facilitator can assist with entering into the online system.

Phase Two: Assessment

The assessment phase includes review of evidence, gathering of additional evidence including the use of verification assessment tools, and the assessment decision.

During this phase an assessor is assigned. This should be done by a system to ensure a transparent and impartial selection of assessor. The assessor reviews the candidate's Assessment Plan and submitted evidence. The assessor informs the candidate about the requirements, discusses the forms and types of evidence used and reaches agreements with the candidate on the assessment tools that will be used to gather and/or verify the evidence. They inform the candidate about the standard and level of performance expected and the support structures in place. At this point, where appropriate, the candidate and the assessor may agree to use alternative forms of assessment. Discussions and decisions regarding evidence and the assessment methodology will be updated on the Assessment Plan.

The assessor may select from a variety of assessment tools for verification assessment, including direct observation and simulation. All assessments should be conducted in an environment that is comfortable and enabling for the candidate. Ideally assessments should be conducted in the workplace, training centres may also be used where required.



Assessment arrangements shall take into account logistics, health and safety guidelines and the limitations of industry where necessary, including:

- Availability of assessors
- Workplace policies and procedures
- The need for specialist tools, equipment and materials
- Time constraints
- The inability for some candidates to gather direct workplace evidence of competence
- Candidates from geographically isolated locations
- The candidate's language, literary, numeracy, socio-economic background, religion, ethnicity, and gender.

The assessment decision is made by the assessor(s) after reviewing all of the evidence against the pre-agreed criteria. The decision is recorded on an Assessment Decision Report.



Remember:

The competency standards used in RPL should be the same as those used in obtaining the same qualification via a formal route. Rarely does a 'pass' in a formal education setting require the candidate to obtain complete coverage of the syllabus. The essential reference point for 'marking' in RPL is the lowest mark that enables a candidate in a formal classroom environment to 'pass'. To expect more from RPL candidates than learners in full-time study would be considered unfair.



Phase Three: Feedback

In the feedback phase the assessor informs the candidate of the outcome of the assessment and provides feedback to them. Certifications are awarded to candidates who meet the competency requirements, and candidates also have the opportunity to appeal the assessment decision.

While the outcome of an RPL assessment is either 'competent' (C) or 'not yet competent' (NYC) feedback plays an important role and candidates should be provided with detailed feedback on their performance against each applicable competency unit. This includes areas they did well in, and areas where their skills require improvement and/or additional training, or where there is insufficient evidence. If the candidate is found not yet competent in one or more of the units, the feedback should include the specific areas that require improvement together with timelines for possible reassessment. If additional training is recommended, the RPL facilitator can assist the candidate to contact the relevant training provider.

The assessor completes two documents during the feedback stage. First is the Assessment Decision Report which is a formal record of the decisions made in the candidate's application, including feedback on the performance and recommendations for further improvement. This report is signed by the assessor(s) and the candidate and there is space for the candidate to comment, such as to request an appeal. This form is retained by the RPL provider and shared with TVEC for record keeping.





The second document is the Assessment Decision Summary, which is a shorter version of the report. This is for the candidate to keep as a reference of their performance and the assessment decisions. This will be particularly useful for the candidate in instances where there is a delay in receiving the official certificate.

Results of the RPL assessment are submitted to the TVEC by the assessor. All results (C and NYC) are remitted to the TVEC national database. TVEC awards the national vocational qualification to candidates based on the submitted results.

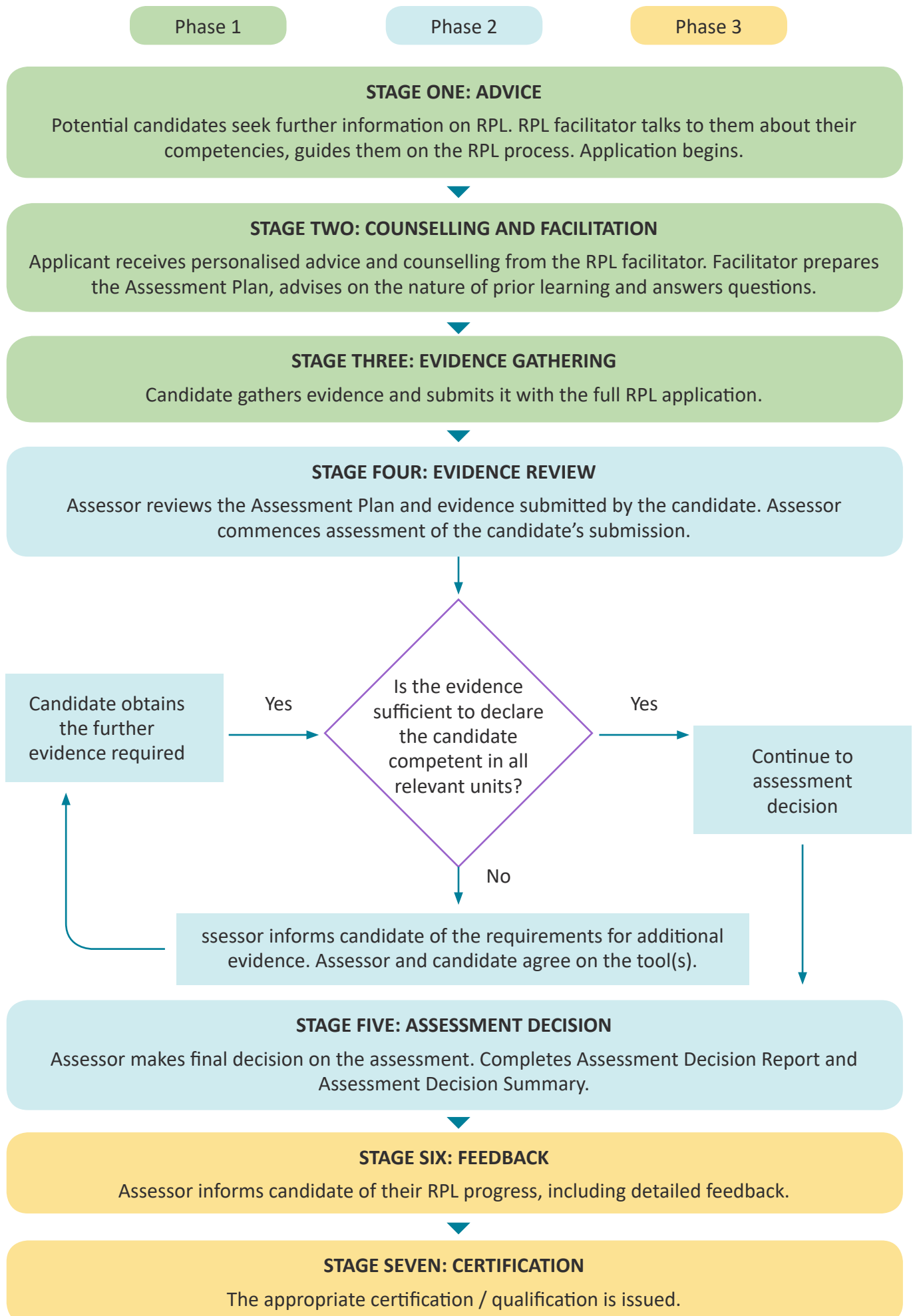
Assessment decision	Certification
Competent	Qualification is awarded by TVEC
Not yet competent	No qualification is awarded
Competent in some but not all units of competence forming a national diploma or national certificate.	A Record of Achievement (RoA) and credits are issued by TVEC for each unit where the candidate is competent

Gap Training

Throughout the RPL journey, applicants and candidates may be directed towards skills gap training where required. These trainings should be provided with flexibility, avoiding the potential bottleneck of training infrastructure availability, and allowing individuals to attend on weekends and outside of normal working hours. Such flexible approaches have been introduced in India where the Skill Development Initiative (SDI) has trained over one million people in five years based on the principle of flexible delivery. A strategy like this would particularly benefit the tourism and hospitality industry where employees often struggle to find suitable time to attend training.

A flexible training methodology was recommended in the Vocational and Tertiary Education National Policy Document published by the National Education Commission in November 2018 under 1.5.3 as a strategy to increase the opportunities to enter the vocational and tertiary education system, especially for the current employees and other interested groups. It also recommended providing the on-line theoretical inputs using e-learning techniques.





Re-Assessment and Appeals

The RPL process includes an opportunity for the candidate to appeal the assessment decision. The candidate shall be informed of their right to appeal when they begin the process. The right to appeal is as follows:

1. In case of a disagreement regarding the assessment result it shall be recorded on the Assessment Decision Report with due signatures of the candidate and the assessor(s).
2. The appeal shall be forwarded in writing to the person in charge of assessments with a copy to the Director General (DG) of TVEC.
3. The RPL provider verifies the assessment record with the representative of the DG TVEC.
4. Based on the verification, TEVC informs the candidate if their appeal is successful or not. They also inform the candidate of the right to re-assessment with another assessor.
5. Appeals must be lodged within two weeks from the release date of the assessment decision.

Appeal Fees

- The appeal fee is decided by the DG TVEC.
- If the assessment process is found faulty the candidate's appeal fee shall be refunded. The RPL provider should arrange the candidate to be reassessed with no fees charged.
- Funding for the new assessment shall be arranged by the respective RPL training provider responsible for the conduct of the assessment. This shall apply to continuous assessments, summative assessments and competency-based assessments.



Record Keeping

Documentation of the assessment, recommendations and appeal (if any) should be completed for each candidate. A file should be kept by the NAITA for each candidate. It shall include the following information:

1. RPL Application Form
2. The name of the assessor(s)
3. The method(s) of assessment and rationale (Assessment Plan)
4. The Assessment Decision Report describing the assessment process and recommendations
5. Description of (or actual) evidence submitted

It is the responsibility of the assessor to ensure that the documentation is accurate, detailed and submitted in a timely manner. It is the responsibility of all the establishments concerned to maintain confidentiality and integrity of the above records.



SECTION 06



RPL Stakeholders

RPL Stakeholders

For the RPL system to run effectively and efficiently, all stakeholders must be engaged in and aware of their responsibilities.

As part of the increased focus on advice and guidance for the candidates, this revised RPL model includes the new role of RPL facilitator. The facilitator supports the candidate through their RPL journey, from informing them of what to expect, to creating an Assessment Plan and supporting them in gathering evidence, and assisting with gap training needs.

The core functions of RPL professionals include:

- Provision of information and guidance to potential applicants
- Development and/or application of assessment tools
- Counselling and facilitation for applicants throughout the RPL process
- Assessment and certification of applicants
- Quality assurance
- Conducting audits
- Following up on appeals, among other tasks.



Stakeholder Responsibilities in RPL include:

Stakeholder	Role
Applicant / candidate	To gather and collate relevant evidence
RPL facilitator	<p>To inform the applicant of the RPL process. To engage and support potential applicants</p> <p>To answer frequently asked questions from applicants/candidates about RPL</p> <p>To work with applicants to appraise the extent and depth of learning outcomes</p> <p>To support the applicant in gathering the required evidence and completing the application form.</p> <p>To submit completed application and evidence to the training provider</p> <p>To support candidate preparation for assessment</p> <p>To provide assessors with required information</p> <p>To guide candidates after the assessment decision</p>
RPL assessor	<p>To seek, review and check evidence of a candidate's learning and to judge whether it meets specific competency standards.</p> <p>To facilitate additional evidence collection (if needed)</p> <p>To plan and arrange suitable assessment tools</p> <p>To map candidate evidence against units of competency</p> <p>To judge the candidate's evidence against the unit of competency assessment criteria</p> <p>To inform candidates of the assessment decision and provide feedback</p>
NAITA / VTA / DTET (and other RPL providers)	<p>To assign assessors</p> <p>To inform TVEC of outcomes of assessments</p> <p>To retain RPL documentation for quality assurance purposes</p> <p>To support candidates with additional training / qualifications</p>

Stakeholder	Role
TVEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To issue the NVQ qualification to successful candidatesTo issue Record of AchievementTo store the records of the PPL processTo deliver assessor training courses and appoint assessorsTo ensure consistency of RPL assessment procedures
Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To initiate or respond to an employee's need for recognitionTo provide evidence of relevant candidate workplace experienceTo assess candidate performance in the workplace



Role of RPL Assessors

RPL Assessors play an important role in ensuring the impartiality, credibility and transparency of the RPL system.

The main duties of an assessor are:

1. To seek, review and check the evidence of a candidate's learning, and to objectively assess whether it meets the respective learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
2. To provide constructive feedback that is understandable to candidates.

To fulfil these duties, the assessor must be knowledgeable about the RPL process and documents, fully comprehend the standards and relevant assessment methodologies for referencing evidence against those standards, and be able to communicate clearly.

RPL assessors may also be involved in:

- Providing information
- Developing and/or applying assessment methods and tools
- Anticipating, identifying and mitigating risks that could affect the quality of the assessment
- Facilitating and providing counselling during the RPL process
- Assessing and certifying qualifications, quality assurance
- Conducting audits
- Appeals and reassessments



Assessor Requirements

RPL assessors are generally required to have a number of years of experience in the respective field. Assessors can include retired professionals, senior managers, expert representatives of academia or teachers with direct experience in the particular educational or occupational sector where RPL is applied. TVEC is responsible for the appointment, training and registration of assessors.



RPL Assessor Competencies

Assessors should have both professional and methodological competencies. Professional competencies allow the assessor to identify whether candidates have acquired the learnings demanded by the units to the required extent. Methodological competencies allow the assessors to choose the most suitable assessment methods and to provide constructive feedback.



The key knowledge and skills required by RPL assessors are as follows:

Requirement for Assessors	Description
Understand the principles and process of RPL and be familiar with the relevant regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can explain the main principles of RPL and why they are important. ■ Can name the main phases and stages in the RPL process. ■ Can name the key organisations involved in RPL in Sri Lanka and describe the functions of each organisation. ■ Can name the regulations relevant to RPL. ■ Can explain which education and training systems their work is based on.
Be familiar with the components of a competency-based study program and the professional standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can describe the structural logic of the national competency standards for a range of national vocational qualifications. ■ Is familiar with different assessment methodologies and tools. ■ Is familiar with the assessment and validation process.
Know and follow the principles of RPL assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is independent and impartial in assessments. Has no personal interest in the outcome. ■ Uses relevant methods of assessment. ■ Applies appropriate and relevant assessment/ performance criteria that are consistent with national competency standards. ■ Adheres to the guidelines and policies for RPL assessment. ■ Is knowledgeable on quality assurance systems. ■ During the assessment, relies on suitable evidence and asks for additional evidence, if necessary. ■ Assesses in a manner consistent with the learning outcomes and/or competency requirements. ■ Relies on suitable evidence and obtains additional evidence, if necessary.

Requirement for Assessors	Description
Know and follow the principles of RPL assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can ensure that language, literacy or other accessibility considerations are not unnecessary barriers to candidates obtaining qualification. ■ Gives assessment feedback that will support candidate's in their claim for RPL and which promotes lifelong learning.
Knowledge of the field of assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is familiar with and knowledgeable on the field of assessment. ■ Has experience in the field of work. ■ Complies with the qualification requirements and criteria of the applicable qualification and RPL authority (TVEC).
Cooperates with different stakeholders/parties involved in the RPL process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communicates with candidates, facilitators and if necessary external bodies/parties/key stakeholders ■ Cooperates with other assessors to reach a unilateral assessment decision
Able to express themselves clearly and document accurately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Records and documents the evidence and assessment process appropriately and in a way that is comprehensible to all parties/external bodies/stakeholders. ■ Can inspire trust and create a proper psychological setting for the candidate's assessment to take place. ■ Communicates in a manner that is comprehensible to all parties.
Aware of risks and able to take appropriate steps to mitigate them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can anticipate and identify risks to the quality of the assessment process. ■ Can mitigate them whenever feasible.
Able to critically evaluate own performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can self-evaluate their own competencies as an RPL Assessor. ■ Can self-reflect on awareness of identifying and mitigating the risks which might affect the quality of assessment for RPL. ■ Can self-analyse their own learning

RPL assessors should keep themselves up to date with developments in the field of work. This is important to maintain the quality of their assessment, as well as to enable them to assess whether the competencies the candidate claims to have learned in their field of work, are possible in the situations and ways described by the candidate.

RPL assessors should also keep up to date with the procedural aspects of the RPL system.

Impartiality of Assessors

RPL assessors must remain impartial and independent at all times. This means:

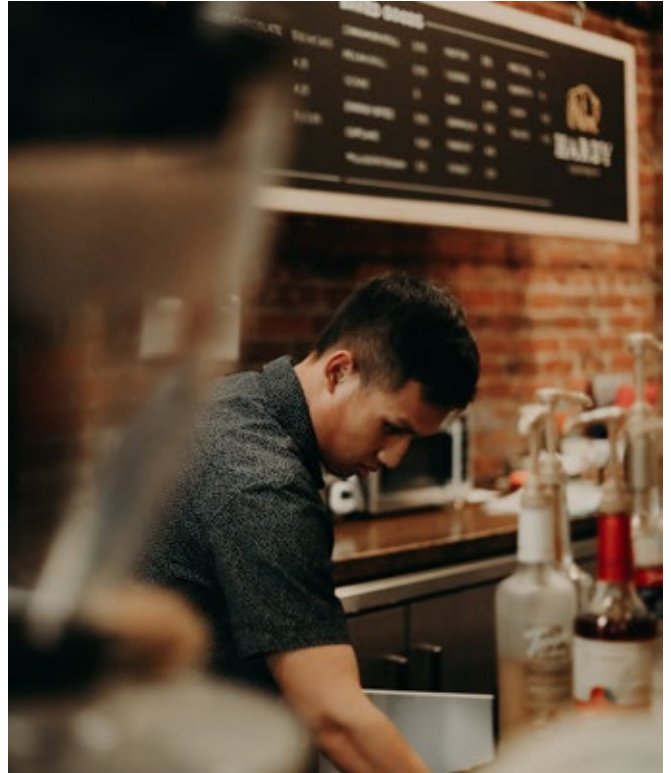
- Assessors should not have direct conflicts of interest regarding the candidates
- Assessors should have no personal interest in the outcome of the assessment
- If an assessor has background information on a candidate's competencies, this information cannot form part of the assessment and must be disregarded. Unless it also forms part of the documentation the candidate provides.
- Assessors must not be influenced by any personal aspects or attitudes of the candidate, for example different beliefs, values or disciplines.
- If the candidate is assessed by an RPL committee, impartiality must be maintained. The views of one assessor, even an expert or eminent member, should not influence the decision of the other assessors.
- The working arrangements of assessors should support independent assessments.



Maintaining Standards

Below is a list of good practice ideas that RPL training providers can implement in order to further extend the capacity of RPL professionals in their work contexts.

- Accredit RPL assessors at the level of the recognition authority including the necessary capacity for certification and management.
- Implement ongoing training for RPL assessors and encourage the sharing of knowledge between training institutions.
- Develop a database for qualified and accredited RPL practitioners.
- Train different professionals on the RPL processes and the common assessment methodologies.
- Develop and implement mechanisms for RPL practitioners to share experiences and ideas.
- New RPL assessors can participate in RPL assessments as observers, and be mentored by experienced assessors.
- Design and establish training programmes for potential RPL practitioners according to their training needs.



Remember:

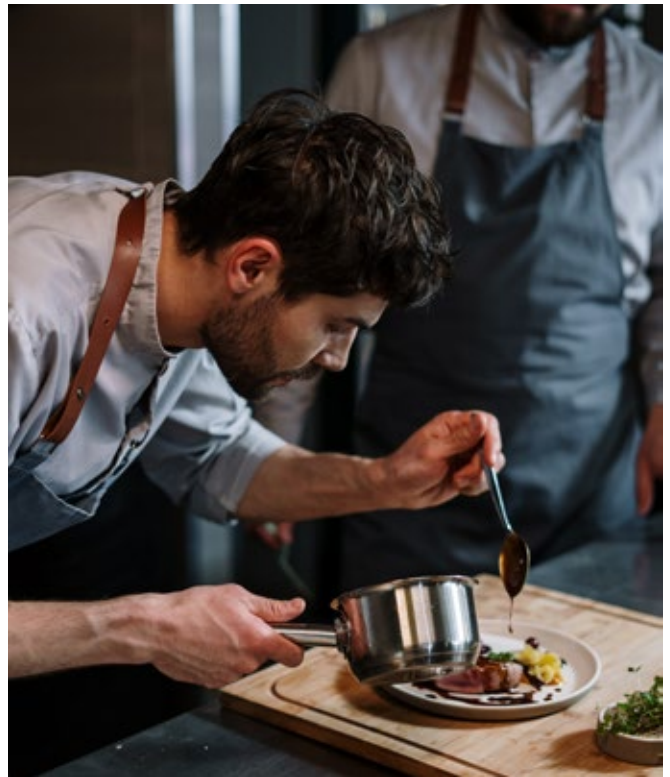
RPL assessors must act in compliance with the RPL principles and quality criteria. They should select appropriate assessment tools and take into consideration the needs of the candidate.

Role of RPL Facilitators

Provision of advice is one of the three phases in the RPL process. The role of an RPL facilitator is to support applicants and act as a main point of contact for them throughout the RPL process. Facilitators support applicants to identify and provide proof of their knowledge and skills, and understand how this fits into the study program or professional qualification.

RPL facilitators are mostly active in Phase One of the RPL process. They may also assist candidates who require gap training by directing them towards the relevant resources / training providers at any point in the process.

Learner-centredness is a core principle of RPL. In the area of candidate support, learner-centredness means providing advisory or other support services that complement the processes of identifying and gathering evidence, and preparing for assessment. One of the core functions of the RPL facilitator role is to provide this support to candidates. The main duties of an RPL facilitator are:



- To provide information to individuals interested in the RPL process including answering frequently asked questions.
- To match applicants' skills and knowledge to the right level of qualification.
- Supporting applicants in filling in their application, starting with mapping the required elements of competency and performance criteria and ending with submitting accurate and complete documentation.
- The exchange of information between assessors and applicants, including informing applicants of the need to submit additional documentation (if required).
- Advising applicants of any gaps in the evidence submitted (and/or errors and omissions); introducing them to the relevant training department where appropriate.
- Submitting completed applications and supporting evidence to the training provider and assessor(s) assigned.

Facilitator Requirements and Competencies

The role of RPL facilitator is new in Sri Lanka. This is an advisory role that requires facilitators to have both a broad and detailed understanding of the RPL process, RPL best practices, the NVQ framework, National Competency Standards, learning outcomes and training options. In addition, and equally importantly, facilitators must have the personal skills to advise and guide applicants and candidates through the RPL process. Facilitators must be trained in the RPL process and supported by the RPL assessors.

The competencies required from RPL facilitators are varied and multi-skilled. They include:

- Knowledge and understanding of the RPL process, NCS and NVQ qualifications.
- Counselling skills
- Ability to liaise with multiple people from diverse backgrounds.
- Ability to extract and pass on information in an accurate and timely manner
- Ability to communicate and express themselves clearly.
- Ability to document accurately and methodologically.



SECTION 07



National Competency Standards

National Competency Standards

RPL is a competency-based assessment process where the competencies of the candidate are assessed against clear standards for performance, knowledge and behaviour. In Sri Lanka, these standards are called National Competency Standards (NCS). The NCS unambiguously specify the competencies that a candidate must acquire in order to obtain a national vocational qualification in a particular occupation or industry sector. The competency standards describe realistic workplace outcomes, they are developed in consultation with industry and designed using a nationally agreed specific format to maintain uniformity and consistency amongst occupations.

National Competency Standards (NCS) form the basis for the National Vocational Qualifications Framework of Sri Lanka. They are an essential element for the implementation of a unified technical and vocational education and training system. To ensure parity of the qualifications the same National Competency Standards should be applied for RPL (non-formal and informal learning) as are applied for formal learning assessments, however, the assessment tools and techniques should be changed accordingly.

The National Competency Standards specify the standards of performance of a competent worker and the various contexts in which work may take place. National Competency Standards also describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes required in the particular occupation.



The National Competency Standards:

- Focus on what is expected from a worker in the workplace rather than on the learning process.
- Are concerned with what people are able to do and the ability to carry out a given task in a given context.
- Place emphasis on outcomes and the application of knowledge and skills.
- Are designed to be effective for performance in a particular industry sector or occupation.
- Place emphasis on the ability to transfer and apply skills, knowledge and attitudes to new situations and environments.
- Include all aspects of workplace performance rather than narrow tasks.
- Provide explicit advice to assessors and employers regarding the knowledge, skill and attitudes to be demonstrated by the candidates seeking formal recognition for the competencies acquired either following training or through work experience.



Purpose

National Competency Standards:

- Provide advice to curriculum developers about the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be included in the curriculum.
- Provide specifications to competency-based assessors about the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be demonstrated by candidates.
- Provide advice to the industries about job functions which in turn can be used for the development of job descriptions, performance appraisal systems and work flow analysis.

Structure

The NCS are composed of competency units. Competency units may be packaged together to form one or more qualifications under the NVQ of Sri Lanka.

Units of competency are the smallest component of achievement that can be nationally recognised. This is a key principle of the Sri Lankan National Vocational Qualifications Framework. In other words, it is the unit as a whole, not individual elements or performance criteria, which can be recognised in the system.

A unit refers to a competency which, when applied in a work situation, can logically stand alone. For example, the occupation of trekking / hiking guide NVQ Level 4 includes the following units of competency:

- Prepare for a trek / hike
- Carry out briefing and reviewing
- Practice health and safety measures
- Carry out navigation activities
- Handle necessary gear
- Perform survival techniques
- Perform casualty evacuation procedures
- Perform camping during the trek

Competency units provide the basis for:

- Recognition of skills within and across industries
- Work organisation reviews and options
- Development of training
- Assessment
- Certification
- Credit transfer and articulation



There are five components in a competency unit:

1. Task operation
2. Task management
3. Problem solving
4. Job, role or work environment handling
5. Application of competencies to different environments.

Refer to Table 1 and 2 in the appendix for more information on understanding the structure and use of units of competency standards.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who should use the National Competency Standards (NCS)?

NCS can be used by assessors to determine if a candidate meets the required levels of skills, knowledge and attitudes for recognition with a specific qualification. NCS can also be used by employers to understand the competencies that an employee or individual with a particular qualification has mastered.

Who is responsible for creating NCS?

National Competency Standards developed by National Industry Technical Advisory Committees (NAITAC) under the National Competency Standard and Curriculum Development Unit of NAITA. TVEC identifies the industry or occupational areas for NCS development. The standards developed by NAITA are endorsed by TVEC as national documents.

Where can assessors and candidates access the NCS?

RPL providers and/or TVEC should supply the relevant NCS.

If a candidate is assessed as not yet competent at a level, can they still receive a certificate?

Yes, they may receive a Record of Achievement (RoA) for each unit of competence they successfully complete.

Which part of the NCS is relevant for assessing a candidate's evidence?

The entire NCS for the qualification being sought is relevant and assessors should be familiar with the NCS as well as the units of competence that form part of it. It is the task of the assessor to match the evidence of prior experience to the performance criteria of the specified units of competency of the qualification for which recognition is being sought.



NVQ System in Sri Lanka

The internationally benchmarked National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) system in Sri Lanka was developed with support from the Asian Development Bank funded Skills Development Project (SDP) and the Technical Education Development Project (TEDP).

The aims of the NVQF include:

- To achieve national and international recognition for the qualifications, knowledge, skills and attitudes of Sri Lankans in an increasingly globalised and competitive world.
- To enhance the mobility of Sri Lankan workers nationally & internationally.
- To enhance credibility to credentials awarded in Sri Lanka through the internationally benchmarked policies and processes adopted by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC).

The framework includes:

- National competency standards set in consultation with the industry.
- National quality standards for teaching and assessment using a competency-based approach.
- National certification of learners and workers.



The NVQF system is linked with secondary and higher education to provide pathways for continuing worker education and lifelong learning. Technical and Vocational Training may take place in one, or both of 'institutional training' (off the job) and 'industrial training' (on the job).

The National Vocational Qualifications Framework in Sri Lanka is of an international standard. International good practices have been studied as part of its development. The Framework and its components, in particular the national competency standards identified by industry, are suitable for formal benchmarking with vocational training systems in other countries.

The National Vocational Qualifications of Sri Lanka are based on national competency standards identified by industry stakeholders. These competency standards include relevant technical and employability competencies. The system awards qualifications at seven levels, as detailed below.

Levels of Qualifications

NVQ Level	Qualification	General Description
Level 1	National Certificate	Recognises the acquisitions of entry level competencies
Level 2, 3, 4	National Certificate	Recognises increasing levels of competencies. Level 4 qualification provides for full craftsmanship / workmanship
Level 5, 6	National Diploma	Recognises increasing levels of competencies including supervision and process management
Level 7	Bachelor's Degree	Recognises the vocational/technological competencies at Bachelor's Degree level, includes planning and management processes

A broad framework has been developed that integrates technical / vocational and higher education. Further levels may be added. The framework allows for an interface with secondary education and provides a progression for individuals with technical and vocational qualifications to proceed to higher education. Industry and professional bodies participating in the development of the national competency standards are therefore in a position to plan for a smooth progression through qualifications from craft to technician to higher education levels. Table 3 in the appendix provides more information on the categorisation of units of competency by NVQ level.

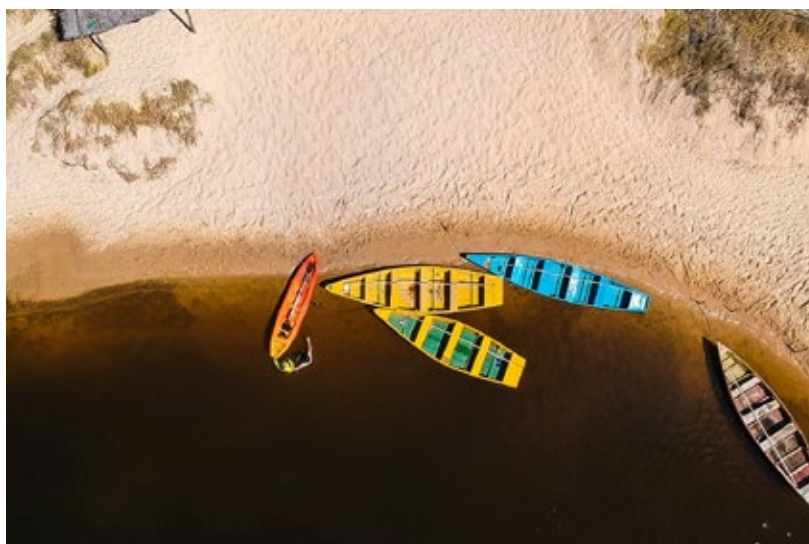
Responsible Institutions

NVQ Level	Institution
Level 1 - 6	Institutions accredited by the Tertiary Vocational Education Commission (TVEC)
Level 7	University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC)

Tourism and Hospitality

Current qualifications available in the Sri Lankan NVQ system under tourism and hospitality occupations include (but are not limited to):

Levels 1 - 4 Waiter / Steward Room Attendant Cook / Professional Cookery Guest Relations Agent - Front Office Operations Housekeeping Supervisor Food & Beverage Services - Assistant Steward Trekking / Hiking Guide Water Craft Operator	Levels 5 -6 Tour & Travel Management Hospitality Management Level 7 Hotel Management
---	--



Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is fundamental to all aspects of the National Vocational Qualifications Framework. It includes the determination of the national competency standards, delivering training to learners on and off the job, the assessment of competencies of candidates and the award of qualifications.

Technical and vocational qualifications that comply with the national quality requirements are formally recognised through the National Vocational Qualifications of Sri Lanka. The NVQF is based on national competency standards which form the criteria for accreditation of courses. All other qualifications, including foreign qualifications, that conform to the requirements of the framework should be aligned with the National Vocational Qualification system.



Flexibility

Flexibility is a core principle of the National Vocational Qualification Framework in Sri Lanka.

- Training providers may develop modularised courses, which can be offered either full or part time.
- Candidates can join and leave the system at different stages, with different levels of qualifications.

Progressive competency acquisition is recognised. A candidate achieving some, but not all of the competencies specified in the respective national competency standard for a level will be provided with a Record of Achievement (RoA).



Methods of assessment

All NVQ assessments shall be conducted by a registered / licensed assessor. Records of the continuous and summative assessments shall form part of the evidence used in deciding the competency of the candidate.

NVQ Level	Method of Assessment
Levels 1 - 4	Competency-based assessment focused on the performance criteria given in the units of competencies
Levels 5 and 6	<p>Two stages of assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formative: A competency-based assessment. The identification and documentation of existing skills against some levels of the NVQF. 2. Summative: An oral examination (viva voce) with an assessment panel of three members, at least one of whom represents the industry.

NVQ Level Competency Descriptors

Table 4 in the appendix provides the information on the level descriptors for the National Vocational Qualifications. The units of the competency standards are individually assigned to a level. Vocational qualifications are also assigned levels.

The factors considered in the assignment of levels for the units of competency standards are as follows:

- Process that a qualification holder will carry out
- Learning demand
- Responsibility



NVQ Qualification Terminology

Below is a summary of the different qualifications available through the Sri Lankan NVQ system.

‘National’ qualifications are available from registered providers, who offer accredited courses. For new courses, ‘National’ certificates must have the approval of the Territory Vocational and Education Commission (TVEC).

There are four types of National Vocational Qualifications.

1. National Certificate
2. National Diploma
3. Record of Achievement
4. Bachelor’s Degree

National Certificate

- National Certificates are awarded for NVQ levels 1 to 5.
- The NVQ level of the certificate is dependent on the level(s) of the unit(s) of competency in a qualification package.
- On the reverse of the certificate is a listing of units of competencies achieved. This is helpful information for employers or candidates seeking further studies.
- National certificates are awarded by TVEC and accredited training providers.
- All data of NVQ certificate holders are stored in the TVEC database.

National Diploma

- National Diplomas are awarded for NVQ level 5 or 6.
- On the reverse of the certificate is a listing of units of competencies achieved. This is helpful information for employers or candidates seeking further studies.
- There are two categories of competencies for National Diplomas: core and elective.
 - Core competencies are compulsory
 - Elective competencies can be selected by the candidates to fulfil the credit requirements for the qualification.
 - Level 5 requires 60 credits; level 6 requires 120 credits.
 - Details of the units of competency forming a qualification can be found in the TVEC database.
- National Diplomas are awarded jointly by TVEC and approved training providers.
- All data of NVQ certificate holders are stored on the TVEC database.

Record of Achievement

- Records of Achievement (RoA)s are awarded for those who demonstrate competency in some but not all of the units of competence forming a National Certificate or National Diploma.
- Records of Achievements are useful as an individual reference for learners who have yet to attain all the requirements to be awarded a National qualification, and employees.
- Records of Achievement are awarded by TVEC.
- The necessary data is transmitted and stored in the TVEC database.

Bachelors' Degree

- Bachelors' degrees are awarded for NVQ level 7
- Bachelor's degrees are awarded by the University of Vocational Technology.
- The development of the curriculum, conduct of assessments and awarding certificates are under the purview of University of Vocational Technology.

Overview of Responsible Parties

The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) is the authority for the implementation of NVQF and the active participation of all the training agencies.

National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), Department of Technical Training Education (DTET), Vocational Training Authority (VTA) and University of Vocational Training (UNIVOTEC) and other public, private and NGO sector training institutions play a vital role in the effective implementation of the National Vocational Qualifications of Sri Lanka.



SECTION 08



History of RPL in Sri Lanka

History of RPL in Sri Lanka

Several decades ago policy makers in Sri Lanka realised the importance of developing recognition systems to identify, access and certify the skills, knowledge and abilities of individuals without formal qualifications. The formal education and training system did not have provisions to carry out this sort of task, hence a new assessment system was required.

In the beginning, this assessment system was introduced as a Trade Test to certify skills acquired through non-formal and informal education and training systems, such as a basic apprenticeship or as a helper in a workplace. From 1991 to 2005 the National Apprentice and Industrial Authority (NAITA) conducted National Trade Tests (NTT) to certify the skills and competencies of unskilled workers. After the introduction of the National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF) in 2005, those tests were linked to the NVQF and called the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system.

The RPL assessment method was implemented under the purview of NAITA with the supervision of the Tertiary Education and Vocational Commission (TVEC).



Launch of RPL

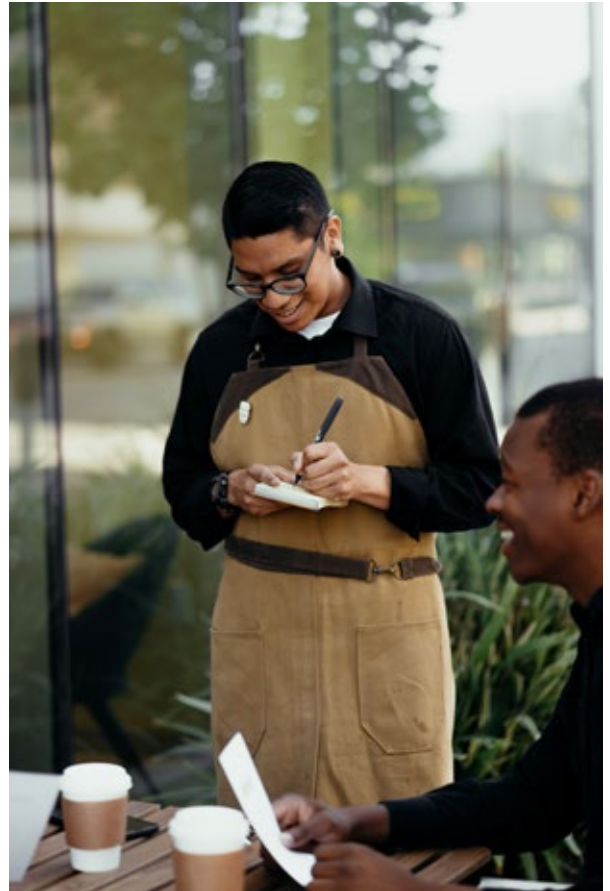
Sri Lanka has a long history of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) going back long before the introduction of RPL. The Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET) is the oldest network providing TVET; its first technical college was established in 1893 in Colombo.

Between 1968 and 1995 four networks came into operation: the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), the National Youth Services Council, the Vocational Training Authority (VTA) and the Sri Lankan Institute of Advanced Technological Education (SLIATE).

In 1997 the government decided to embark on a substantial reform of TVET. The goal of the reform was to develop a system that could equip the Sri Lankan workforce with the competencies desired by industry. Part of this was to offer courses oriented to the labour market needs and a unified system of qualifications that adhered to a quality framework.

The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) led the formulation and implementation process of the reforms. The initial development of the NVQF, the competency standards and the course curricula at the craft level (NVQ Level 1-4) took two years to develop prior the launch.

In 2004, the NVQF was officially launched with 45 competency standards developed at the craft level, implemented in several training centers.



Support for RPL

The competency-based training system was introduced to the Sri Lankan vocational training and education sector in 2004 under the Skill Development Project funded by Asian Development Bank.



Further Development of RPL

Between 2004 and 2010 the focus was on developing course curricula to cover Levels 5, 6 and 7; implementing craft level courses; developing the NVQF; establishing colleges of technology and establishing the University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC).

During this period, RPL was delivered only by the National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA). The Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No. 20 of 1990 of Parliament gave NAITA the power to conduct industry based National Trade Tests (Part II Chapter VI, Clause No 38(a)). Under this clause, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment system was established under the purview of NAITA by the Skills Development Project operated from 2004 to 2009.

All the RPL assessors were registered with NAITA. Assessor training was conducted by the National Institute of Technical Education of Sri Lanka (the predecessor of UNIVOTEC) during this period.

According to a request made by Secretary of Ministry from his letter numbered 4/2/A-3 and dated 1st April 2007, the NAITA board of management took a decision to delegate their power to conduct RPL assessments up to Level 3 to the Vocational Training Authority (VTA) and the Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET) (Board Management Paper No. MP 07.04.2). However, DTET did not join this process and only the VTA presently conducts RPL assessments.

Today, NAITA is still the main, but not sole, institute that provides NVQ qualification through the RPL system.

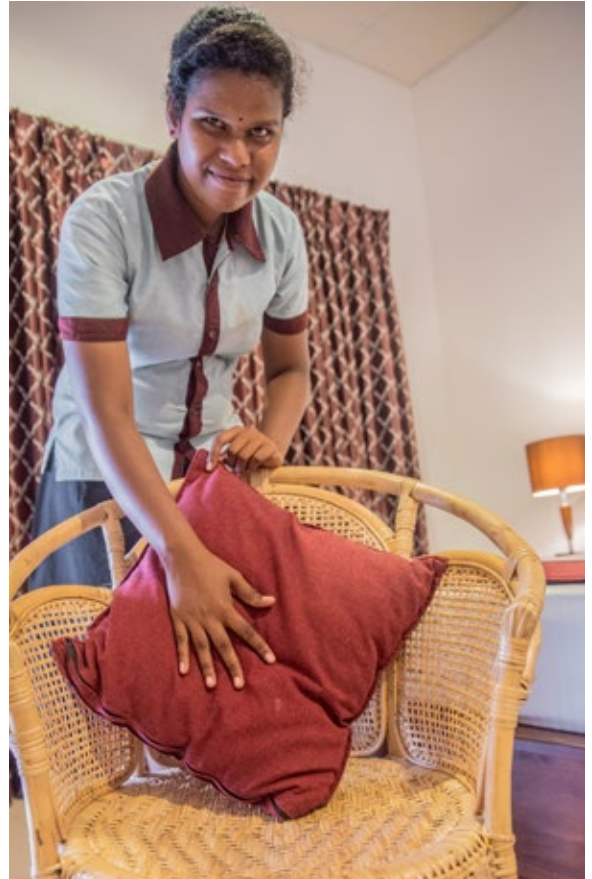


Lessons Learnt

From 1991, National Trade Tests (NTT) were successfully conducted by NAITA and were very popular among unskilled craftsmen who needed to get their competencies certified before applying for foreign employment. Low assessment fees and a fast process aided the popularity of the NTT.

In the 1990s and 2000s a number of private organisations came forward to sign Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with NAITA as Public Private Partnership (PPP) Programs to conduct NTT programs for their dealers and craftsmen in certain industries.

The first MOU was signed with an organisation called “Maharaja” to conduct NTT for electricians and plumbers who purchased materials from their island-wide dealer network. This program had two main parts: 1) a one-day skills upgrading module with demonstrations, 2) a final assessment. This program operated from 1991 to 2018. As an extension of that program, the company established separate associations for certified plumbers and electricians and held an Annual Certificate Awarding Ceremony at BMICH to recognise the workers’ achievements and issue them with trade licenses as a NAITA certified plumber or electrician.



After introducing the NVQF, NAITA requested the company to convert the assessment from NTT to RPL. However, the higher cost and increased time required for the final RPL assessment made the company reluctant. Under NTT, the success rate was high, with an 80% pass rate. Analysis of participant’s feedback showed that the skill upgrading module was the main cause for this success rate. The lessons learned by this program were used to improve the quality and success rate of RPL assessments.



Appendix

Appendix

Table 1: Unit of Competency: Elements

Element	Description
Unit title	The title of a general area of skill. Expressed as an outcome or function.
Descriptor	Assists with clarifying the unit title and identifies any relationships with other units.
Unit Level	In addition for Levels 5 & 6, credit value.
Unit code	Provided by TVEC.
Element of competence	<p>The basic building blocks of the unit.</p> <p>Describes in outcome terms the functions that a person in a particular area of work is able to perform.</p> <p>The outcomes described are assessable and demonstrable.</p> <p>The elements of competency combine together to build the unit.</p>
Performance criteria	<p>Evaluative statements that specify what is to be assessed and the required level of performance.</p> <p>Indicate the sequence of major tasks.</p> <p>Concentrate on how a person applying the competency acts in the cognitive, attitudinal and sensory-motoric domain. One can imagine the statement “a competent person will be able to....” placed in front of each of the performance criteria.</p>
Range statement	<p>Relates to the unit as a whole and expands upon the technical terms and processes identified in the Performance Criteria.</p> <p>Specifies the range of context and conditions to which the performance criteria apply including a list of tools equipment and materials, location(s), regulations and relevant national and international standards</p>
Assessment Guide	<p>Assists both assessors and candidates to identify the crucial aspects of evidence to be supplied/collected and performed for assessment.</p> <p>Identifies the form and context of assessment and any specific issues or conditions applicable, such as time frames, resources required and where the unit can be assessed.</p>
Underpinning skill and knowledge	<p>The knowledge and skill crucial to successfully undertake the outcomes described in the unit.</p> <p>Acts as guidelines for training and assessment.</p>

Table 2: Unit of Competency: Usage

What do you need to know about the work activity?	Where is the information found?
What is the work activity?	Unit title
What does the work activity involve?	Description
What skills are needed to perform the work activity?	Element of competence
What level of skill is needed?	Performance criteria
What are the conditions under which this work activity may be conducted?	Range statement
What knowledge and skills are needed to perform this work activity?	Underpinning skills and knowledge

Table 3: NVQ Competency Unit Categorisation

NVQ Level 1 - 4 units are clustered into occupation specific packages in accordance with industry requirements.

NVQ Level 5 and 6 have sector-specific core competency units. These carry a credit value to be used towards further qualifications as well as a level.

NVQ Level	Competency Units
Levels 1 - 4	<p>Occupation Specific Competency Units: Compulsory units. Specific to the occupation of the certificate. The key competencies in that occupation that the holder of the qualification must possess.</p> <p>Basic Employability Competency Units: Generic competency units. Required by all employees in order to function effectively in the workplace.</p>
Level 5 and 6	<p>Sector Specific Core Competency Units: Compulsory units. Specific to the main area of the qualification. The key competencies in that sector that the holder of the qualification must possess.</p> <p>Employability competency Units: Generic competency units. Required by all employees in order to function effectively in the workplace. These include those generally referred to as soft skills, for example, problem solving and decision making.</p> <p>Elective Competency Units: These focus on specific areas of the sector or on related areas from other sectors. The option is given to select elective units in order to specialise in a particular area.</p>

Table 4: NVQF Level Descriptors

Level	Process Description	Learning Demand The candidate employs	Responsibility
1	<p>limited in range, repetitive and familiar</p> <p>employed with closely defined contexts</p> <p>single processes</p>	<p>recall</p> <p>a narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills</p> <p>no development of new ideas</p>	<p>direct activity</p> <p>under close supervision</p> <p>no responsibility for the work or learning of others</p>
2	<p>established and familiar</p> <p>offers a clear choice of routine responses</p> <p>involves some prioritising of tasks from known solutions</p>	<p>basic operational knowledge and skill</p> <p>readily available information</p> <p>known solutions to familiar problems</p> <p>little generation of new idea</p>	<p>in directed activity</p> <p>under general supervision and quality control</p> <p>some responsibility for quantity and quality</p> <p>possible responsibility for guiding others</p>
3	<p>requires a range of well developed skills</p> <p>offers a significant choice of procedures requiring prioritisation</p> <p>employed within a range of familiar contexts</p>	<p>some relevant theoretical knowledge</p> <p>interpretation of available information</p> <p>discretion and judgment</p> <p>a range of known responses to familiar problems</p>	<p>in directed activity with some autonomy</p> <p>under general supervision and quality checking</p> <p>significant responsibility for quantity and quality of output. Possible responsibility for the output of others</p>
4	<p>requires a wide range of technical or scholastic skills</p> <p>offers a considerable choice of procedures requiring prioritisation to achieve optimum outcomes</p> <p>employed in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar contexts</p>	<p>a broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts</p> <p>analytical interpretation of information</p> <p>informed judgment</p> <p>a range of sometimes concrete but often unfamiliar problems</p>	<p>in self-directed activity</p> <p>under broad guidance and evaluation</p> <p>complete responsibility for quantity and quality of output</p> <p>possible responsibility for quantity and quality of the output of others</p>

Level	Process Description	Learning Demand The candidate employs	Responsibility
5	<p>requires a wide range of specialised technical or scholastic skills</p> <p>involves a wide choice of standards procedures</p> <p>employed in a variety of routine and non routine contexts</p>	<p>a broad knowledge base with substantial depth in some areas</p> <p>analytical interpretation of wide range of data</p> <p>the determination of appropriate methods and procedures in response to a range of concrete problems with some theoretical elements</p>	<p>in self-directed and sometimes directive activity</p> <p>broad general guidelines or functions</p> <p>full responsibility for the nature, quantity and quality of outcomes</p> <p>possible responsibility for the achievement of group outcome</p>
6	<p>requires a command of wide-ranging highly specialised technical or scholastic skills</p> <p>involves a wide choice of standards and non standards procedures, often in non standards combinations</p> <p>employed in highly variable routine and non routine contexts</p>	<p>specialised knowledge with depth in more than one area</p> <p>the analysis, reformatting and evaluation of a wide range of information</p> <p>the formulation of appropriate responses to resolve both concrete and abstract problems</p>	<p>in managing processes</p> <p>within broad parameters for defined activities</p> <p>complete accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes</p>
7	<p>requires a command of highly specialised technical or scholastic and basic research skills across a major discipline</p> <p>involves the full range of procedures in a major discipline</p> <p>applied in complex, variable and specialised contexts</p>	<p>knowledge of a major discipline with areas of specialisation in depth</p> <p>the analysis, transformation and evaluation of abstract data and concepts</p> <p>the creation of appropriate responses to resolve given or contextual abstract problems</p>	<p>in planning, resourcing and managing processes</p> <p>within broad parameters and functions</p> <p>complete accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and/or group outcomes</p>

Useful Links

Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC): <http://www.tvec.gov.lk/>

Vocational Training Authority (VTA): <http://www.vtasl.gov.lk/>

National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA): <http://naita.gov.lk/>

Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET) <http://www.dtet.gov.lk/en/>

TVEC Operations Manual 2009: http://www.tvec.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NVQ_Operation-Manual-2009.pdf

TVEC Tertiary and Vocational Education Policy: <http://www.tvec.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Policy-Book-English-web.pdf>



Skills for Inclusive Growth