

[Draft]

Companion Volume for Mutual Recognition of Entry Level Rail Competencies

TLI Transport and Logistics Training Package

Version 0.6 [DRAFT]

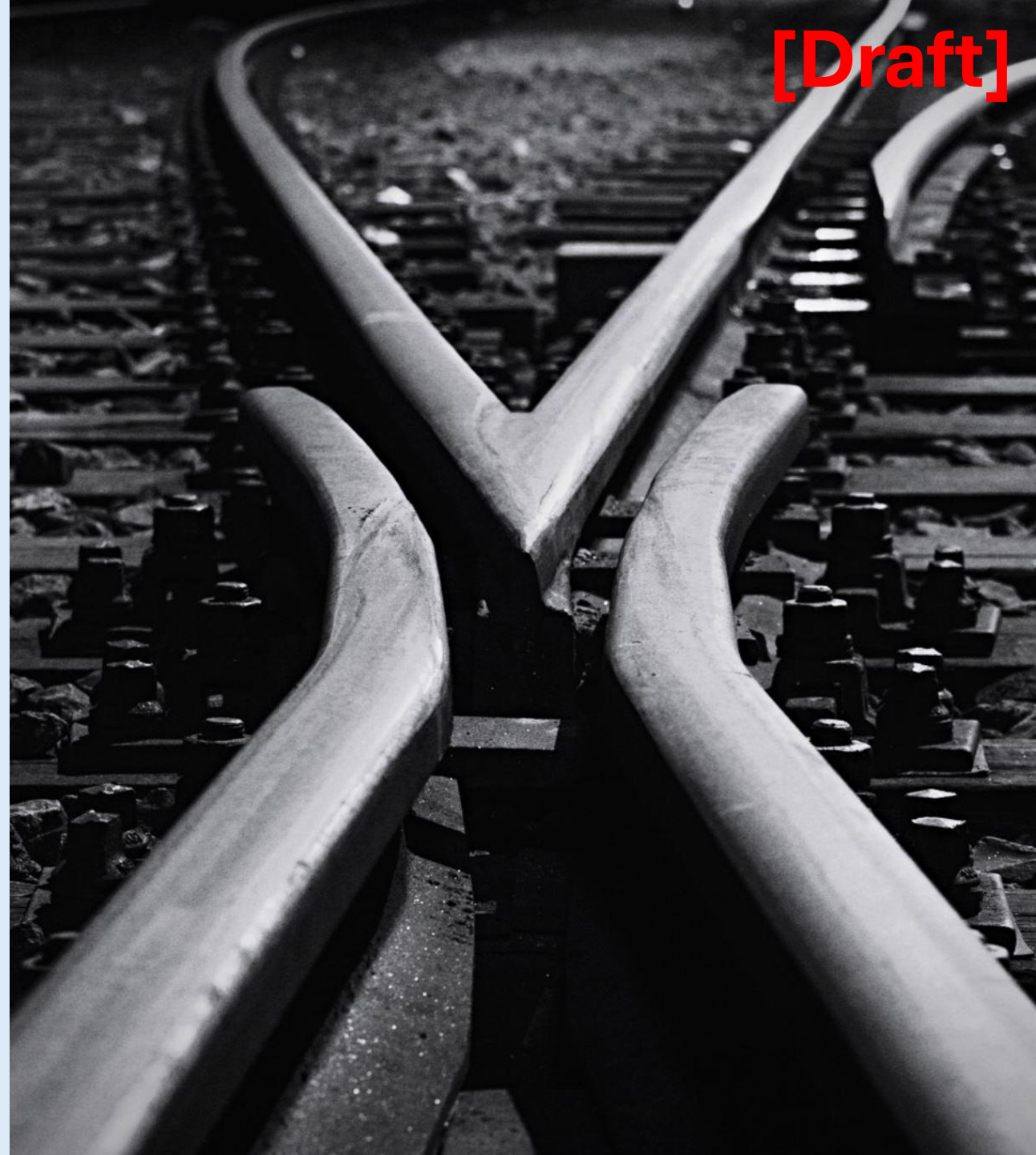
About ISA

Industry Skills Australia (ISA) was established in early 2023. ISA has been appointed as the Jobs and Skills Council for the nation's Transport and Logistics, Rail, Aviation and Maritime industries.

Jobs and Skills Councils have four (4) broad roles:

1. **Industry Stewardship** which involves gathering industry intelligence to reliably represent the views and needs of industry back to the VET system and its decision-makers
2. **Workforce Planning** which enables industry to identify its workforce development issues and design high-impact solutions, which are then captured in the Committee's national Workforce Plan for the industry
3. **Training Product Development** which focuses on improving the quality, speed to market and responsiveness of training products to employer and workforce needs
4. **Implementation, promotion and monitoring** which involves supporting training providers, promoting careers and monitoring how well the system is meeting the needs of industry and learners.

More information about ISA can be found at www.industryskillsaustralia.org.au



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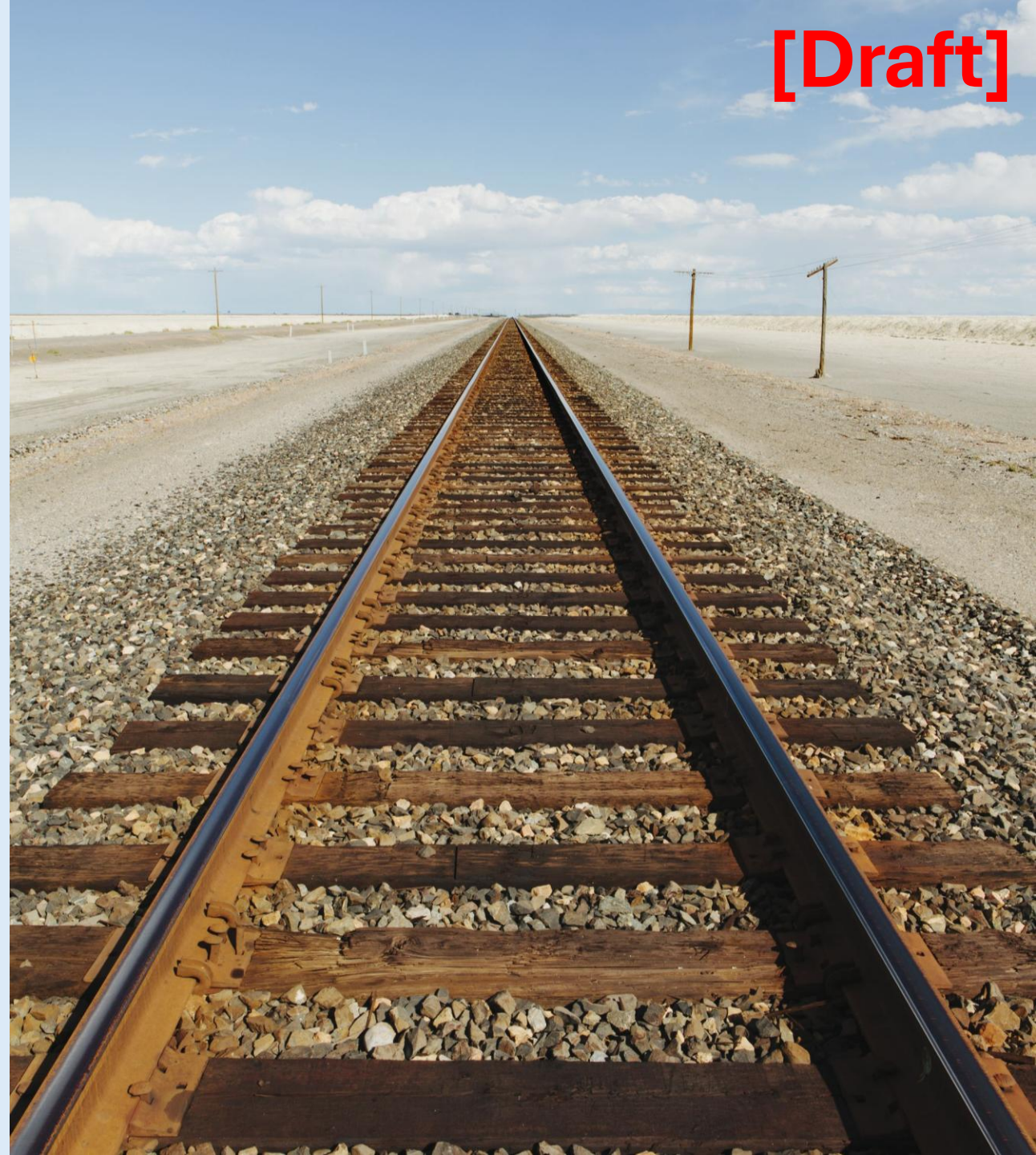
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Aim

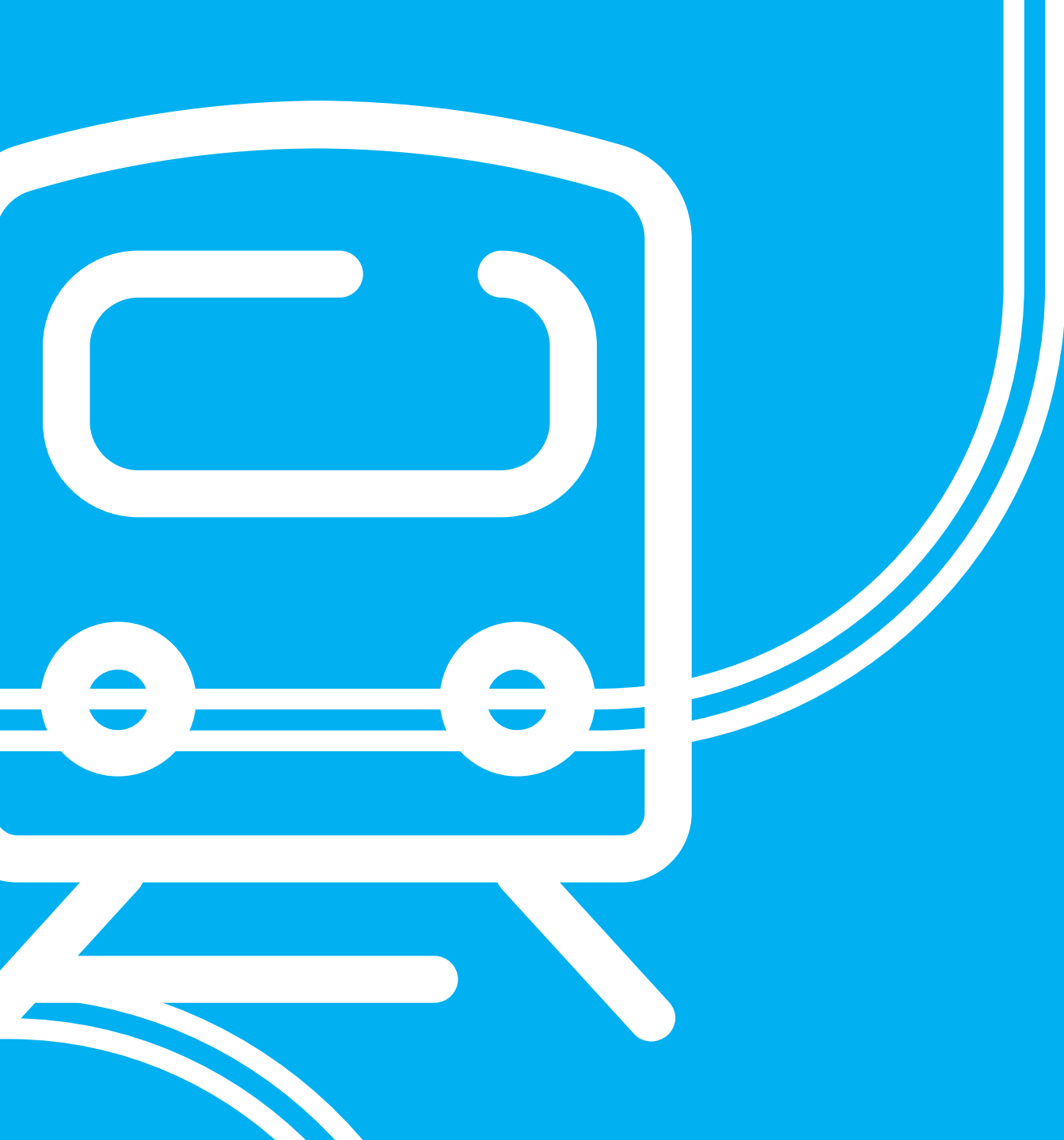
The intent of companion volume and the guidelines contained within is to support the mutual recognition of entry level rail Common Competencies across Australian networks.

The objectives are:

1. To provide an accessible tool that reflects existing 2025 Standards for RTOs.
2. To determine and define entry-level rail competencies.
3. To provide additionality to the 2025 Standards for RTOs through rail industry specific performance indicators, guidelines and/or additional quality assurance requirements. This reflects that rail is a safety critical environment.



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Background

Mutual recognition of rail skills training is intended to:

1. Reduce training burden
2. Enable portability of skills
3. Provide confidence in training
4. Create transparency and fairness
5. Increase workforce diversity

In 2023 the National Transport Commission (NTC) developed the *Mutual Recognition Blueprint for nationally recognised entry level rail skills training*. The Blueprint's objective was to establish a process by which both public and private sector organisations can collaborate to 'authorise' or agree a national portfolio of entry level rail courses. Utilising existing AQF Units of Competency, these courses and the associated full / part qualification achieved will be mutually recognised, and therefore transferable across the rail industry.

The Blueprint report gathered the insights of the rail industry, education sector, and regulators through collaborative workshops. The Blueprint report identified the benefits, assumptions, and systemic barriers pertaining to the mutual recognition of rail skills training. It also outlined how to achieve the mutual recognition of entry-level rail training courses across Australia.

The Blueprint

The blueprint identified five key components to achieving mutual recognition.

*National Rail Skills Mutual Recognition Principles
(National Guideline & National Code of Practice)*

Validation and moderation guidance for competency assessment

Guidance for the development and delivery of rail skills training and assessment

Rail Skills portfolio providing publicly accessible entry-level rail training programs (future phase)

Governance Group with industry, education, regulators and government (future phase)

The companion volume

The companion volume provides additional guidance to enable mutual recognition for entry level rail competencies.

The 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) outline the minimum requirements that RTOs are expected to meet and the outcomes they are expected to deliver.

The Standards are designed to be fit-for-purpose across different RTO settings and delivery contexts. However, achieving mutual recognition of entry level rail skills requires additional guidance based on the expectation of rail industry participants.

The companion volume provides additionality to the 2025 Standards for RTOs by establishing a quality framework that prescribes additional guidelines and performance indicators to support mutual recognition.

The companion volume is also intended to complement the TLI Transport and Logistics Training Package.



Who is companion volume for?

The companion volume is intended for use by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). However, Rail Infrastructure Managers (RIMs), Rail Operators, industry associations, and regulatory bodies are stakeholders with an interest in its content.

Through the adoption of the practices described in the companion volume by RTOs, RIMs and Rail Operators can confidently recognise competence acquired and/or assessed in other jurisdictions, networks and/or domains.

The companion volume represents the first three deliverables associated with the *Mutual Recognition Blueprint for nationally recognised entry level rail skills training*. The remaining blueprint deliverables, related to standardized courseware and governance) will be delivered in a future phase (referred to as Phase 2).



Terms and definitions used in companion volume

Mutual recognition is where the rail industry recognises assessment outcomes for Common Competencies assessed by any participating RTO.

AQF Units of Competency provide **Common Competencies** that can be applied and are portable across all Australian networks.

Local Competencies are an addendum to Units of Competency that relate to specific domain or product knowledge and skills within a defined network(s). Examples may include Local Safeworking rules, route knowledge and specific rollingstock knowledge and skills.



What are entry level rail competencies?

Entry level rail competencies are those that support access to employment in the rail industry for new entrants.

The TLI Transport and Logistics Training Package Release 15.0 identifies the Units of Competency (UoC) that must be achieved to award Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) qualifications.

The TLI Transport and Logistics Training Package Release 15.0 comprises of:

- Qualifications
- Units of Competency and associated assessment requirements
- Skill Sets

The Blueprint analysed over thirty (30) rail career pathways to identify common units of study. This analysis identified two (2) core entry-level skill sets comprised of nine (9) associated Units of Competency.

The mutual recognition Industry Advisory Group proposed seven (7) of the UoC’s could be considered “entry level rail competencies”.

Skill Set	Units of Competency
TLISS00128 – Rail Infrastructure Induction Skill Set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TLIF0020 Safely access the rail corridor • TLID0020 - Shift materials safely using manual handling method • TLIF0025 - Follow work health and safety procedures • TLIW0007 - Operate under track protection rules • TLIB0012 - Maintain and use hand tools
TLISS00224: Rail Operations Fundamentals Skills Set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TLIE2007 - Use communications systems • TLIF0020 - Safely access the rail corridor • TLIF2010 - Apply fatigue management strategies • TLIG0003 - Work effectively with others in a team • TLIB3118 - Apply awareness of railway fundamentals • TLIF0025 - Follow work health and safety procedures • TLIF0008 – Apply safety critical communications in the rail environment

Rail career pathways

There are over 450 roles in the Australian rail sector¹.

The Blueprint analysed over 30 rail career pathways included in the National Rail Skills Hub². There are nine occupations that contain the seven Units of Competency from the existing TLI skill sets in their requisite courses.

The nine occupations are listed in the adjacent figure. Many of these occupations are currently experiencing (or are projected to experience) a workforce shortage.

The mutual recognition of the entry-level rail skills within these Units of Competency enables improved workforce mobility and the potential for pre-employment training pathways for these critical occupations.



**Resurfacing /
Grinder Operator**



Network Controller



Train driver



Signalling Engineer



**Track Welder and
Train Welder**



**Railway Track
Worker**



**Rail / Tramway
infrastructure
worker**



**Rail Safety Office
and Track
Protection Officer**



**Leading Hand /
Supervisor
(Construction)**

¹Australian Railway Association (2023). The Rail Workforce: An Analytical Overview. https://ara.net.au/wp-content/uploads/ARA-Skills-Report_Final.pdf

²National Rail Skills Hub: Jobs in Rail. <https://www.railskillshub.gov.au/careers-in-rail/search-pathways>

Development of the companion volume

The companion volume was developed under the direction of an Industry Advisory Group comprised of subject matter experts representing:

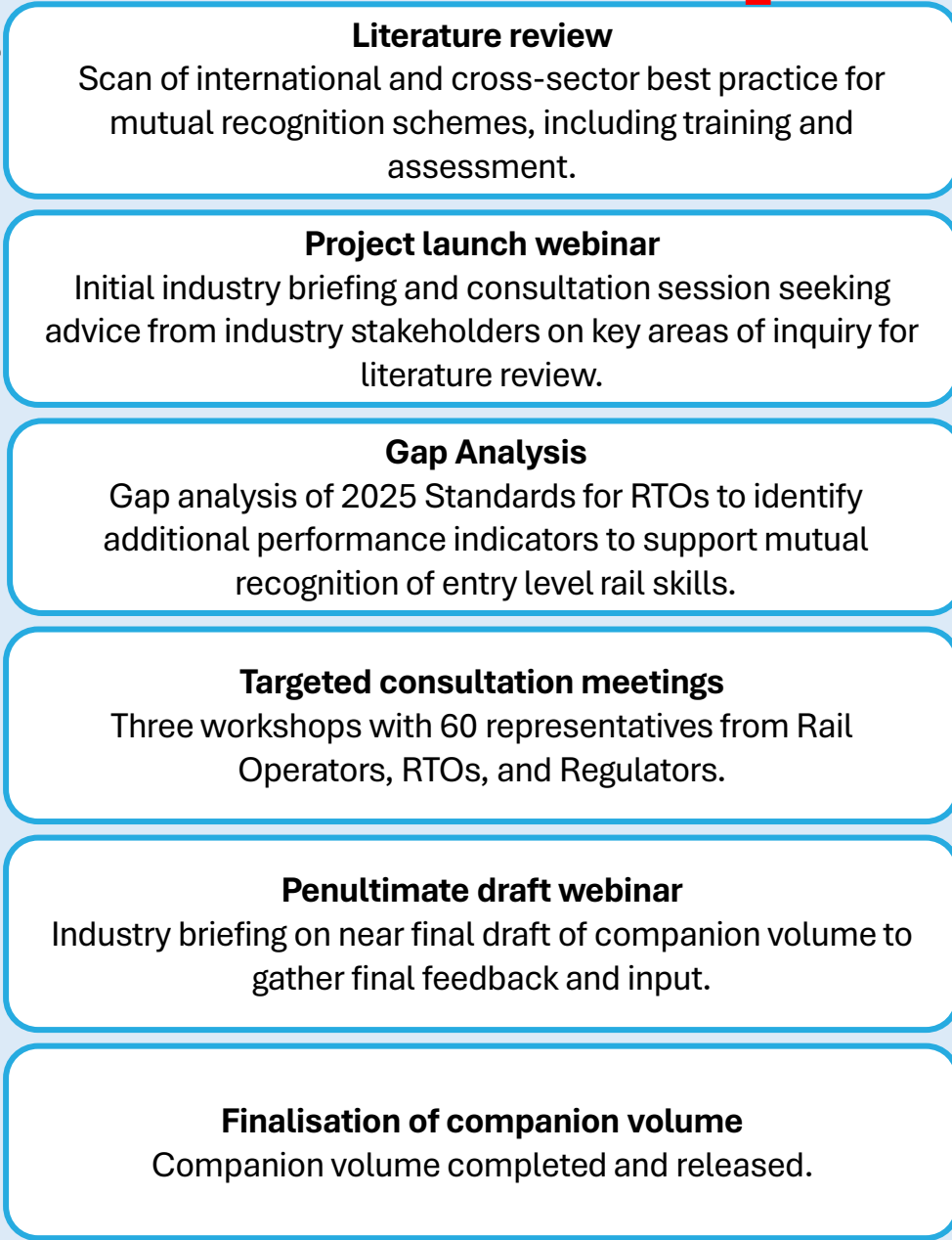
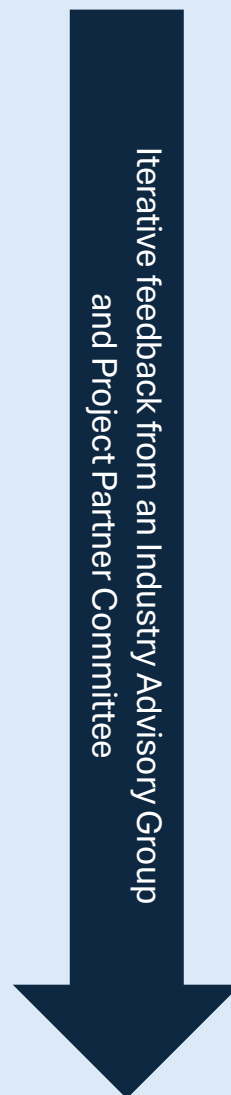
- RIMs
- Rail Operators
- Rail contractors
- VET Training providers including enterprise RTOs
- TAFEs

A Project Partner committee was also formed comprised of organisations with an interest in mutual recognition of rail skills:

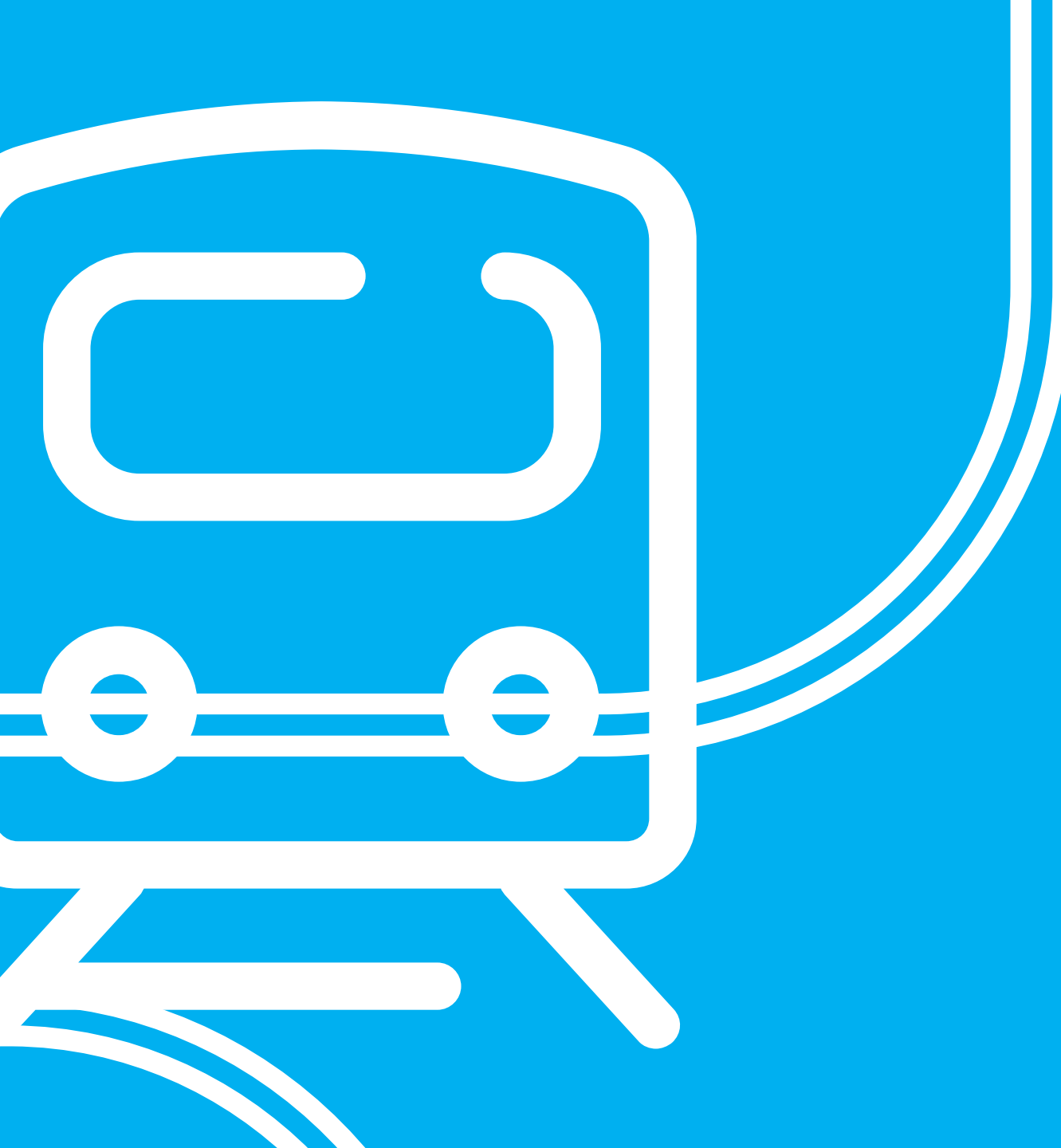
- Industry Skills Australia (ISA)
- National Transport Commission (NTC)
- Australasian Railway Association (ARA)
- Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR)
- Rail, Tram & Bus Union (RTBU)

VET regulators were also consulted throughout the project, primarily through 1:1 meetings and written feedback.

The diagram on the right outlines the process by which the companion volume was developed.



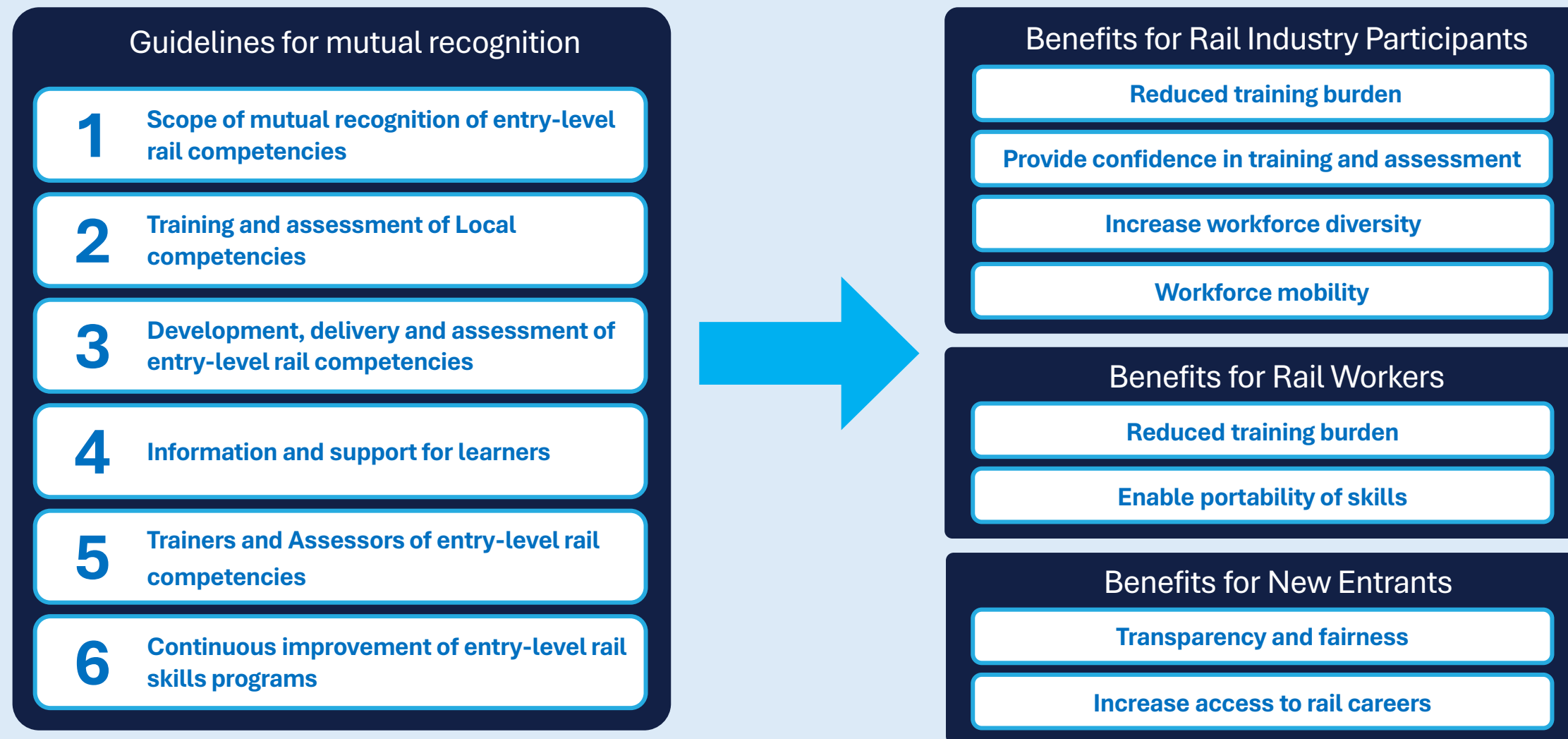
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National guidelines for mutual recognition

National guidelines for mutual recognition overview

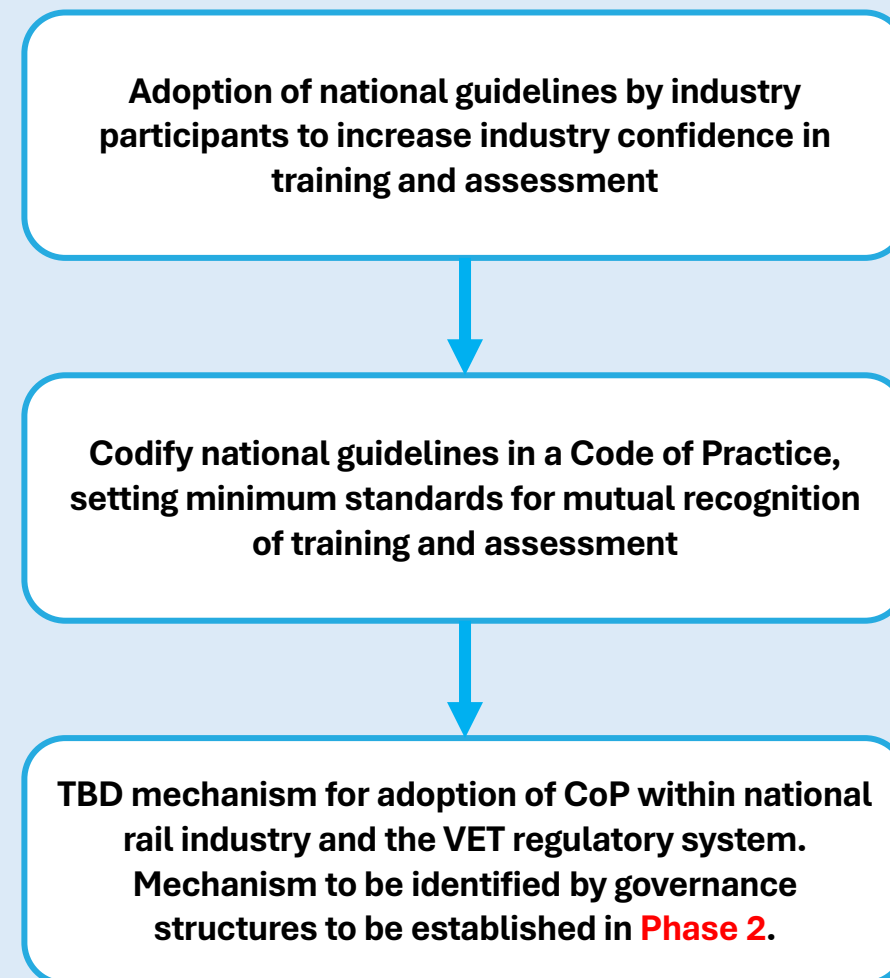
The diagram below summarises the six mutual recognition guidelines developed with the Industry Advisory Group and the associated benefits of mutual recognition.



Pathway to a Code of Practice

The national guidelines are intended as an initial step towards the establishment of a mutual recognition scheme. As per the diagram, it is proposed that the national guidelines for mutual recognition would eventually be codified in the form a Code of Practice. The Code of Practice would provide safeguards and protections not set out in law to ensure that industry participants can have confidence in training and assessment outcomes. These safeguards would be achieved by setting an industry benchmark (minimum standards) for mutual recognition and assessment of new entrants.

Over time the Code of Practice could be updated to transition from mutual recognition of generic entry-level rail skills to mutual recognition of other generic rail skills and competencies.



National guidelines and sub-guidelines for mutual recognition

1. Scope of mutual recognition of entry-level rail competencies

- 1.1 Mutual recognition of assessment outcomes should only be applied to Common Competencies assessed by an RTO through the TLI Transport and Logistics Training Package.
- 1.2 Mutual recognition applies to defined entry-level rail AQF Units of Competency.

2. Training and assessment of Local Competencies

- 2.1 Training and assessment of Local Competencies associated with specific products and domains are additional to those Common Competencies delivered through defined AQF entry-level rail Units of Competency.
- 2.2 RIMs and Operators are responsible for the delivery and assessment of competencies associated with Local domain and product requirements.

3. Development and delivery of training and assessment for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

- 3.1 Training development and delivery is industry relevant, structured and engages learners to attain defined entry-level rail skills and knowledge consistent with the training product and its defined competency outcomes.
 - 3.1.1 The volume of teaching is sufficient to attain entry-level rail competencies.
 - 3.1.2 Training in entry-level rail competencies should be based on standardised courseware (when available).
- 3.2 Engage with industry stakeholders to inform and support the development, delivery and assessment of skills and competencies.
- 3.3 Training and assessment practices comply with requirements described in the Unit of Competency and regulatory frameworks and are responsive to industry needs.
- 3.4 Assessment quality should be assured through good practice validation and moderation processes relevant to industry practice.
- 3.5 Individuals should be offered skills recognition of prior skills, knowledge and/or competencies through recognition of prior learning or credit transfer.
- 3.6 Learning resources and facilities meet regulatory requirements and industry needs.

National guidelines for mutual recognition

4. Information and support for learners

4.1 Learners and potential learners are provided with relevant information regarding the suitability of training products relevant to their skills and competencies.

4.2 Educational and support services meet the needs of the learner cohort/s undertaking training and assessment.

4.3 Information relating to an individual's rail competencies is captured in electronic competency management systems and should be consistent and accessible across networks.

5. Trainers and assessors of defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

5.1 The development and delivery of training and assessment should be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced trainers and assessors with industry currency.

6. Continuous improvement of entry-level rail skills programs

6.1 Systematic monitoring and evaluation outcomes inform the continuous improvement of training and assessment strategies.

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Additional performance indicators and guidance

The 2025 Standards for RTOs

The 2025 Standards for RTOs are the mandatory requirements set by ASQA. We have mapped the National Guidelines and sub-guidelines for mutual recognition to the 2025 standards.

This diagram shows the structure of the 2025 Standards for RTOs. Addendums in red show how the additional performance indicators/guidance provided within the companion volume that align to the new standards. Additional performance indicators and additional guidance to support mutual recognition of skills across all Australian rail networks has been developed in consultation with industry stakeholders.

3 Policy documents of revised standards for RTOs



4 Quality areas with sub-quality areas in Outcomes Standards

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Clauses and performance indicators for each sub-quality area

Assessment

Standards 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 relate to the focus area of assessment.

Standard 1.3

The assessment system is fit-for-purpose and consistent with the training product.

The RTO demonstrates:

- (a) assessment is consistent with the requirements of the training product
- (b) assessment tools are reviewed prior to use to ensure assessment can be conducted consistent with the principles of assessment and rules of evidence
- (c) the outcomes of review inform any necessary changes to assessment tools.

Guidance in Outcomes Policy Guidance

Draft Revised Standards for RTOs: Outcome Standards

Policy Guidance 2024

Intent of Standard 1.3

Training products include performance criteria to reflect industry needs. These are specified in units of competency, and all requirements of the unit must be demonstrated to be considered competent. While RTOs may deliver training and build student competency in a variety of ways, it is important that students can demonstrate competency in a consistent, reliable and verifiable way.

RTOs are responsible for certifying the competence of individuals – ensuring that certification is only issued to a student whom the RTO has assessed as meeting the requirements of the training product (as specified in the relevant training package or accredited course). Competence may have been achieved through training delivered by the RTO or skills acquired elsewhere.

RTOs must have fit-for-purpose assessment systems (consistent with the requirements of the training product) to enable valid judgements regarding a student's competency. It's important for RTOs to review assessment tools, prior to their use by VET Students, to ensure they enable valid, consistent and reliable assessment of student competency, without affecting VET Student outcomes.

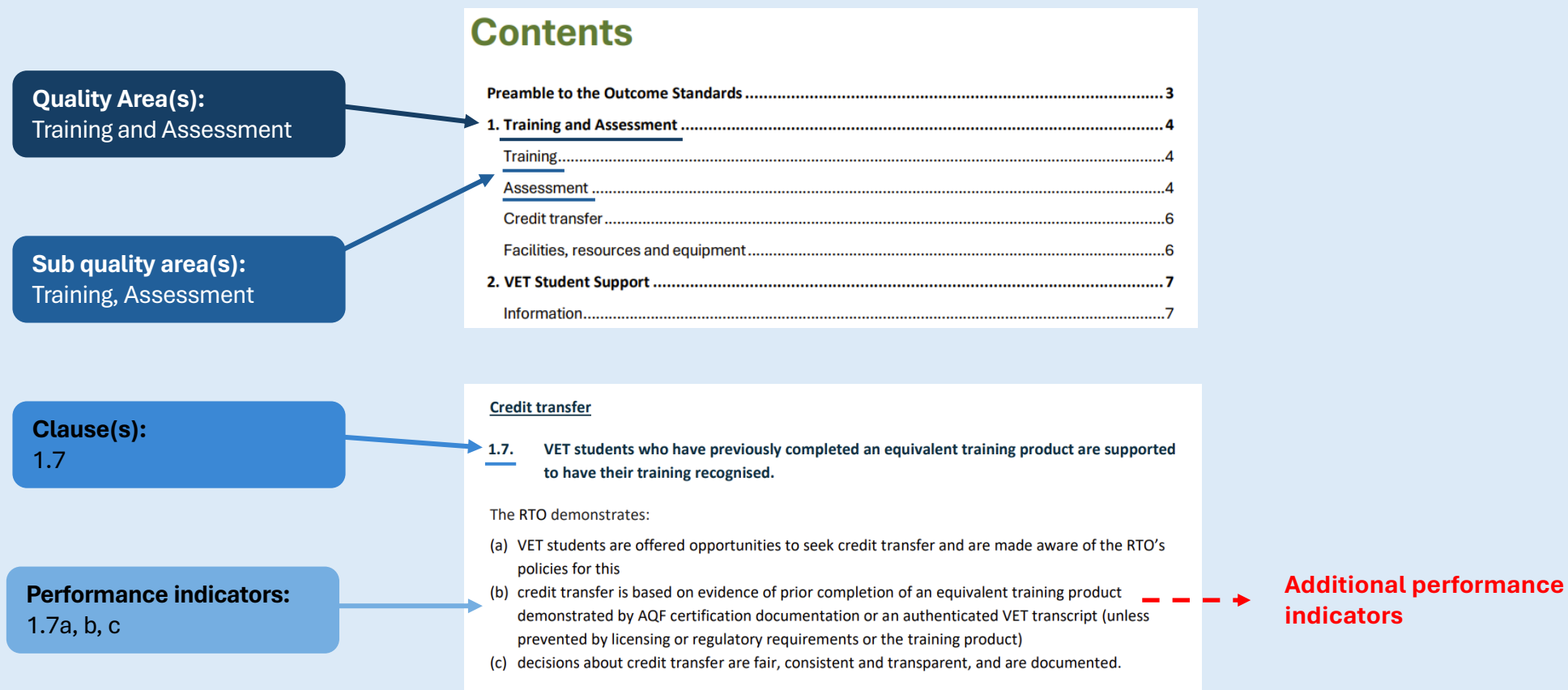
Additional performance indicators

Additional guidance

Gap analysis

The structure of the 2025 Standards for RTOs

The Outcome Standards is comprised of four quality areas. Each quality area has a sub-quality areas comprised of clauses and performance indicators.



Guideline 1. Scope of mutual recognition of entry-level rail competencies

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training, Assessment

Clause(s):
1.1, 1.2, 1.7

Performance indicators:
1.1a, b, 1.2c, 1.7a, b, c

Sub guideline 1.1 Mutual recognition of assessment outcomes should only be applied to Common Competencies assessed by an RTO through the TLI Transport and Logistics Training Package.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- That training and assessment of the defined entry-level rail AQF Units of Competency delivers skills and knowledge that applies and will be mutually recognised across all Australian rail networks.

Additional guidance:

- Next page....

Guideline 1. Scope of mutual recognition of entry-level rail competencies

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training, Assessment

Clause(s):
1.1, 1.2, 1.7

Performance indicators:
1.1a, b, 1.2c, 1.7a, b, c

Sub guideline 1.1 Mutual recognition of assessment outcomes should only be applied to Common Competencies assessed by an RTO through the TLI Transport and Logistics Training Package.

Additional guidance:

- Industry has recognised that a significant proportion of rail training has become highly tailored to Local domain and product competencies meaning the applicability of national Units of Competency is no longer possible.
- Training products that have been identified as delivering entry-level rail skills will be supported by standardised courseware that delivers Common Competencies that are applicable across Australian networks. The use of this courseware including assessment tools (when available) will be mandatory for the delivery of these Units of Competency.
- Local Competencies are the responsibility of the RIM/Rail Operator and will be trained and assessed over and above the requirements within the Units of Competency before an individual is deemed competent to work.
- Defined AQF entry-level Units of Competency are intended to deliver generic rail competencies that will be recognised across all Australian rail networks. This is to support individuals' ability to enter and to transfer across networks.
- Local domain and product competencies such as network's Safeworking rules and route knowledge and product knowledge are the responsibility of individual RIMs and Rail Operators and will be trained and assessed Locally to ensure an individual's competency to work in a specific rail network. These Local Competencies must be delivered through separate additional training and assessment.

Guideline 1. Scope of mutual recognition of entry-level rail competencies

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):

N/A

Sub quality area(s):

N/A

Clause(s):

N/A

Performance indicators:

N/A

Sub guideline 1.2 Mutual recognition applies to defined entry-level rail AQF Units of Competency.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- That training and assessment of the defined entry-level rail AQF Units of Competency delivers skills and knowledge that applies and will be mutually recognised across all Australian rail networks.

Additional guidance:

- Entry-level rail AQF Units of Competency were identified through ongoing stakeholder consultation as part of the National Rail Action Plan and through ongoing consultation with industry stakeholders. Periodic reviews will ensure the relevance of these Units of Competency or any addition of Units of Competency.

Guideline 2. Training and assessment of Local Competencies

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training

Clause(s):
1.1

Performance indicators:
1.1e

Sub guideline 2.1 Training and assessment of Local Competencies associated with specific products and domains are additional to those Common Competencies delivered through defined AQF entry-level rail Units of Competency.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- Where Local Competencies are required by specific networks, this must be trained and assessed separately and in addition to Common Competencies from defined entry-level Units of Competency.

Additional guidance:

- Local Competencies must be delivered through separate additional training and assessment. Separate training and assessment of Local Competencies ensures the mutual recognition and transferability of Common Competencies whilst acknowledging the need to develop skills and knowledge for Local Competencies.
- RIMs and Operators should make Local arrangements to train and assess Local Competencies specific to their network or products.

Guideline 2. Training and assessment of Local Competencies

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training

Clause(s):
1.1

Performance indicators:
1.1a

Sub guideline 2.2 RIMs and Operators are responsible for the delivery and assessment of competencies associated with Local domain and product requirements.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- That where training and assessment is completed for Local Competencies it is separate, and additional to that delivered for Common Competencies within the defined entry-level rail Units of Competency and is based on the advice and guidance of the relevant RIM or operator.

Additional guidance:

- Local domain and product competencies such as network's Safeworking rules and route knowledge and product knowledge are the responsibility of individual RIMs and Rail Operators and will be trained and assessed Locally to ensure an individual's competency to work in a specific rail network.
- RIMs and Operators should make Local arrangement to train and assess Local Competencies specific to their network or products. These cannot be assessed through defined entry-level rail AQF Units of Competency.
- RIMs and Operators are free to make arrangements with other RIMs or Operators for mutual recognition of Local Competencies where they occur across more than one network. However, these Local Competencies would not be transferable beyond network that hold a Local Competency Mutual Recognition Agreement.

Case study: Separation of Common and Local Competencies

Background

PPE, equipment, procedures, roles and infrastructure can differ significantly between sites and networks. As a result, rail skills training and assessment content is often highly contextualised to a specific network. However, it is important that the integrity, robustness and consistency of nationally accredited training is maintained.

Approach

Like many RTOs, Training Ahead Australia works with clients to contextualise their training resources for learners to suit the client organisation's needs. However, training and assessment practices and delivery methods are consistent irrespective of what content is being trained and assessed. Further, Local contextualised training is built around common core competencies.

Common and local training materials are clearly differentiated to maximise the transferability of learners' training and assessment outcomes between networks. Visual markers are placed on the learning resources to indicate if a practice or method is site-specific.

A key challenge relates to differences in terminology. Therefore, Training Ahead Australia begins training by reviewing a glossary which outlines differences between locations (and the relevant term is for the local environment). This also helps to link localised training to the terminology used in the National UoC.



Case study: Separation of Common and Local Competencies

Outcomes

A Statement of Attainment is issued when a rail worker has been deemed 'competent' by an RTO with respect to the Unit of Competency performance evidence, knowledge evidence and assessment conditions..

Rail workers may also be required to attain local knowledge and skills to work safely at specific sites or locations across the Australian rail network. 'Certificates of Currency' (CoCs) or 'Certificates of Achievement' (CoAs) are issued to learners that have completed a training program that is mapped to one or more nationally accredited Units of Competency and also covers local content.*

This documentation differentiation (Statement of Attainments versus CoCs and CoAs) allows the rail industry to track who has completed Common competencies and Local competencies.

Tracking Common and Local competencies means that collectively, industry would understand that a Statement of Attainment means the individual is 'work ready', and just needs to cover local materials. This gives industry assurance that learners who hold a nationally accredited Unit of Competency have been trained and assessed to a standard that enables them to be ready in a rail environment which reduces the training burden on learners and allows for greater mobility and portability of the workforce.

* In some instances, CoCs or CoAs may not be required for certain job roles, and an SoA alone is sufficient to confirm an individual's competency or 'work readiness.'



Guideline 3. Development and delivery of training and assessment for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training

Clause(s):
1.1

Performance indicators:
1.1a, b, c, d, e

Sub guideline 3.1 Training development and delivery is industry relevant, structured and engages learners to attain defined entry-level rail skills and knowledge consistent with the training product and its defined competency outcomes.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- The development and delivery of training and assessment for defined entry-level Units of Competency is informed by industry practice and periodically reviewed to ensure its alignment and currency.

Additional guidance:

- The development and delivery of high-quality training and assessment which has been informed by industry, for Common Competencies within defined entry-level rail Units of Competency, means that learners are well prepared to achieve the training product outcomes and equipped to enter or transfer employment, or to progress to further study.
- An industry led approach will also ensure employers have confidence in the relevance and quality of teaching, learning and assessment, supporting mutual recognition across networks.

Guideline 3. Development and delivery of training and assessment for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training

Clause(s):
1.1

Performance indicators:
1.1c

Sub guideline 3.1.1 The volume of teaching is sufficient to attain entry-level rail competencies.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- That it complies with minimum volume of teaching determined for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency.

Additional guidance:

- The minimum volume of teaching for entry-level rail skills has not been consistently applied and therefore the standardised courseware will clearly define the minimum volume of teaching for these Units of Competency.
- The duration of programs delivering defined entry-level rail Units of Competency, meet the minimum volume of teaching to ensure that a typical student with no prior entry-level rail skills and knowledge would need to gain the required competency outcomes.

Guideline 3. Development and delivery of training and assessment for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training

Clause(s):
1.1

Performance indicators:
1.1a

Sub guideline 3.1.2 Training in entry-level rail competencies should be based on standardised courseware (when available).

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- Training and assessment of Common Competencies within defined entry-level Units of Competency is based on standardised courseware and assessment tools (when available) provided through **(arrangements to be defined in Phase 2 of project)**.

Additional guidance:

- Training and assessment will be delivered through the provision of standardised courseware and assessment tools.
- The materials provide a baseline of content and mutually agreed assessment tools and practices to support learners to meet the Common Competency requirements of each Unit of Competency. This is to ensure the individual is able to attain common rail skills and knowledge consistent with the training product that is applicable and will be mutually recognised across all Australian networks.
- Standardised courseware and assessment tools will ensure the portability of Common Competencies and allow individuals to complete an accelerated onboarding process that recognises prior learning. Local competency training and assessment will be delivered through onboarding, or alternative localised approaches.

Guideline 3. Development and delivery of training and assessment for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training

Clause(s):
1.2

Performance indicators:
1.2a, b, c

Sub guideline 3.2 Engage with industry stakeholders to inform and support the development, delivery and assessment of skills and competencies.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- Governance arrangements associated with the development, training and assessment of entry-level rail competencies will include rail industry engagement and consultation, to ensure the relevance and application of Common Competencies across national networks (**governance arrangements to be defined in Phase 2 of project**).

Additional guidance:

- The rail industry proactively works with their nominated RTOs to inform the design, delivery and assessment of training. However, there are examples of training and assessment that have been highly contextualised to meet local network needs and therefore is no longer transferable outside that network.
- The development, delivery and assessment of entry-level rail competencies will be informed by industry, to ensure the currency, relevance and application of Common Competencies across national networks.
- This would include but not limited to the development of standardised courseware and assessment tools, modes of delivery and assessment conditions.

Guideline 3. Development and delivery of training and assessment for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training

Clause(s):
1.2, 1.3

Performance indicators:
1.2a, b, c, 1.3a, b, c

Sub guideline 3.3 Training and assessment practices comply with requirements described in the Unit of Competency and regulatory frameworks and are responsive to industry needs.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- Compliance with minimum requirements, including those determined by the rail industry that have been prescribed for the training and assessment of defined entry-level rail Units of Competency.

Additional guidance:

- Rail specific requirements provide industry context and optimise the learner experience through an agreed and consistent approach to competency training and assessment. For example, the use and design of simulated environments for training and assessment are informed by consultation with industry and prescribed as part of standardised courseware.

Guideline 3. Development and delivery of training and assessment for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training

Clause(s):
1.3, 1.4, 1.5

Performance indicators:
1.3a, b, c, 1.4a, b, 1.5a, b, c, d, f, g

Sub guideline 3.4 Assessment quality should be assured through good practice validation and moderation processes relevant to industry practice.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- Utilisation of provided standardised tools and other resources provided to support the assessment, moderation and validation of defined entry-level rail Units of Competency.
- That validation for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency occurs regularly and at least every **three years**, as a response to risks to training outcomes, changes to the training product, and feedback from VET students, trainers and assessors, and industry.

Additional guidance:

- Next page...

Guideline 3. Development and delivery of training and assessment for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training

Clause(s):
1.3, 1.4, 1.5

Performance indicators:
1.3a, b, c, 1.4a, b, 1.5a, b, c, d, f, g

Sub guideline 3.4 Assessment quality should be assured through good practice validation and moderation processes relevant to industry practice.

Additional guidance:

- Standardised assessment tools are to be developed and provided to support delivery of defined entry-level rail training and assessment. This will ensure a consistent approach across programs and provide assurance to employers on assessment judgements.
- Moderation of assessments is an important component to ensure the consistency of assessment judgements. It provides a secondary check to validate primary assessments. Moderation practices usually include cross-moderation (i.e. two or more assessors reviewing the same evidence collected for a sample of competency assessments and making their own assessments) and collaborative discussions (i.e. assessors and moderators convene to finalise the competency assessments by discussing any perceived borderline cases, consideration of any systematic biases, particularly if assessors are coming to different assessment judgements or any issues or opportunities for enhancement to the assessment design and assessment).
- It is not necessary to review all assessments performed for defined entry-level rail programs as part of the validation process. However, to ensure that the outcomes of the validation process are generalisable across the training package, it is important to ensure that the sample is random and sufficiently large. The sample should include a range of learning outcomes including borderline cases through targeted random selection.
- The frequency of validation could be increased during early delivery of new entry-level rail programs, for example every **three years**.

See also Trainer / Assessor / Moderator competency requirements under the *VET Workforce Quality Area*.

Guideline 3. Development and delivery of training and assessment for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Training

Clause(s):
1.6, 1.7

Performance indicators:
1.6a, b, c, 1.7a, b, c

Sub guideline 3.5 Individuals should be offered skills recognition of prior skills, knowledge and/or competencies through recognition of prior learning or credit transfer.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- That credit transfer is provided to students who have a current assessment of competence for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency through the 'Entry level rail mutual recognition scheme'.
- That VET students' competencies are documented in rail competency management systems that can be accessed by other authorised parties.

Additional guidance:

- Students who gain qualifications via recognition of prior learning (RPL), yet lack the required competency or knowledge, compromise the confidence that industry employers have in mutual recognition of defined entry-level rail Units of Competency. This has the potential to allow insufficiently competent individuals into safety critical roles, which poses a risk to themselves and others in the workplace.
- An 'assessment only' pathway for RPL is beneficial as students are then required to undertake a full assessment against the Units of Competency to prove their knowledge and skills. Providers should ensure there is sufficient evidence for authenticity and completeness and currency against each defined Unit of Competency.
- A credit transfer is when a Unit of Competency or equivalent unit is nationally recognised and a student is directly transferred, even if it is a superseded and equivalent Unit of Competency.
- Additional training can be provided to reflect Local Competencies including domain or product knowledge and skills.

Guideline 3. Development and delivery of training and assessment for defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment

Sub quality area(s):
Facilities, equipment, and resources

Clause(s):
1.8

Performance indicators:
1.8a, b i, ii, c

Sub guideline 3.6 Learning resources and facilities meet regulatory requirements and industry needs.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- That learning resources and facilities for training and assessment of defined entry-level rail Units of Competency meet industry minimum requirements determined through [governance arrangements to be defined in phase 2].

Additional guidance:

- Minimum requirements for learning resources and facilities are prescribed through standardised courseware and tools. These requirements have been determined through consultation with industry and may include (but are not limited to) standardised training materials, assessment tools and the design and utilisation of simulated environments for training and assessment.

Case study: Simulation in aviation

Background

Flight Simulation Training Devices (FSTDs) are training tools used in pilot training that replicate real aircraft environments and systems. The fidelity of these simulators is critical to ensuring transferability of skills to real-world settings.

Approach

In Australia, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) is responsible for overseeing the use of FSTDs. CASA mandates that FSTDs used for pilot training comply with the Manual of Standards, part 60. FSTDs are categorised into levels that reflect the simulation's fidelity to a real scenario, their complexity, the systems used and what type of training it will be used for.

RTOs or simulation centers intending to use a FSTD for pilot training must submit information on the simulator's aircraft's specifications to CASA, such as the type of aircraft, the visual system, motion system, and flight management system fit. CASA then grants approval for the use of the FSTD. CASA also recognises Flight Simulator Qualification Certificates from certain foreign aviation authorities, which allows the use of international flight simulators if they comply with Australian regulations.

Outcomes

The use of FSTDs enhances pilot's confidence as it allows them to practice risky scenarios or unexpected events in a safe environment, without compromising their safety and the safety of their passengers. High fidelity FSTDs replicate real-world conditions such as system behaviors, terrain and weather which helps pilots to gain experience navigating in such situations. Lastly, model-specific FSTDs also enable pilots to practice using the specific systems in specific aircrafts.

Image placeholder

Guideline 4. Information and support for learners

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
VET Student Support

Sub quality area(s):
Information

Clause(s):
2.1, 2.2

Performance indicators:
2.1a, b, c, i, ii, iii, iv, d, e,
2.2a, b

Sub guideline 4.1 Learners and potential learners are provided with relevant information regarding the suitability of training products relevant to their skills and competencies.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- That they have engaged with industry to confirm any potential impairments or conditions (for example, visible or invisible disabilities) that may impact the ability of an individual to gain employment in rail or would require additional support in the workplace.
- That they have communicated to learners any potential impairments or conditions (for example, visible or invisible disabilities) that may impact the ability of an individual to gain employment in rail or would require additional support in the workplace.

Additional guidance:

- Potential learners are advised, prior to enrolment, about the suitability of the training product for them, taking into account their skills, competencies and industry specific requirements. This may include visible or invisible disabilities that may impact their ability to gain employment into the sector or would require adjustments or additional support in the workplace.

Guideline 4. Information and support for learners

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
VET Student Support

Sub quality area(s):
Training support,
Diversity and Inclusion

Clause(s):
2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6

Performance indicators:
2.3a, b, c, d, 2.4a, b, c,
2.5a, b, 2.6a, b

Sub guideline 4.2 Educational and support services meet the needs of the learner cohort/s undertaking training and assessment.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- Minimum educational and support services for learners undertaking rail entry-level training and assessment will be defined by industry and education providers.

Additional guidance:

- Guidance will be provided to RTOs regarding minimum educational and support services required to support learners undertaking rail entry-level Units of Competency. This would include but is not limited to: Digital resources, language, literacy and digital literacy support, cultural awareness and support adjustments and alternative or additional learning materials.
- This guidance will be provided as part of the standardised courseware and tools that are to be developed for defined rail entry-level training and assessment.

Guideline 4. Information and support for learners

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
N/A

Sub quality area(s):
N/A

Clause(s):
10

Performance indicators:
10a, b, c

Mapped to Compliance Policy, which does not have a Quality area or Sub quality area.

Sub guideline 4.3 Information relating to an individual's rail competencies is captured in electronic competency management systems and should be consistent and accessible across networks.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- That they meet requirements of the Student Identifier scheme to enable learners to provide competency outcomes for inclusion in electronic rail competency management systems.

Additional guidance:

- Training recipients should have direct digital access to training and assessment outcomes. As a minimum, this information of an individuals' competencies is accessible to individuals through a Unique Student Identifier provided through the VET system.
- In addition, open access to competency outcomes regardless of the CMS system in use, enables RIMs and Operators to validate an individual's competencies. Information captured by rail industry employers in electronic competency management systems should be consistent and accessible across networks.

Guideline 5. Trainers and assessors of defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment,
VET Workforce

Sub quality area(s):
Assessment, VET
Workforce Management,
Trainer and assessor
competencies

Clause(s):
1.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

Performance indicators:
1.5d i, ii, iii, iv, 3.1a, b,
3.2a, b, c, 3.3a i, ii, b i, ii, iii

Sub guideline 5.1 The development and delivery of training and assessment should be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced trainers and assessors with industry currency.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- Occupational Competence of Trainers and Assessors: Trainers and Assessors hold and maintain the relevant Unit of Competency for the training / assessments they will deliver.
- New trainers and assessors also have a minimum of **three** years of occupational experience and currency within the last **three** years.
- Any new trainer or assessor is required to be observed in delivery by the RTO training quality lead (**or equivalent**) prior to securing approval as a Trainer/Assessor of entry-level rail competencies.
- Individuals that assess Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) must meet the same requirements for trainers and assessors and have a minimum of **three** years of experience as an assessor.
- Lead moderators must meet the same requirements for trainers and assessors and have a minimum of **three** years of experience as an assessor.
- Industry SMEs that support training and assessment have a minimum of **three** years of experience and industry currency within the last **three** years.

Guideline 5. Trainers and assessors of defined entry-level rail Units of Competency

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Training and Assessment,
VET Workforce

Sub quality area(s):
Assessment, VET
Workforce Management,
Trainer and assessor
competencies

Clause(s):
1.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

Performance indicators:
1.5d i, ii, iii, iv, 3.1a, b,
3.2a, b, c, 3.3a i, ii, b i, ii, iii

Sub guideline 5.1 The development and delivery of training and assessment should be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced trainers and assessors with industry currency.

Additional guidance:

VET workforce managers should ensure that:

- trainers and assessors hold the required credentials described in the Credentials Policy of the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations or, while requisite credentials are being completed, are appropriately supervised
- hold vocational occupational competencies at least to the level **[one level above]** being delivered and assessed
- meet any additional competency requirements determined by relevant rail governance or regulatory body
- have current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment they are delivering
- have current knowledge and skills in vocational education and training that informs their training and assessment practices
- systematically undertake relevant professional development
- are offered targeted professional development to maintain competency and industry currency through internal and approved external activities
- review and update individual trainer/assessor **[Skills and Industry Currency Records]** at least once every twelve months to reflect the training and assessment they are delivering

Where new trainers and assessors are unable to meet occupation minimum requirements, a process is in place to support the development of occupational competence. This process will include supervised training and assessment activities with a suitably competent trainer, assessor and/or industry SMEs. For example, this may apply where there are critical skill shortages in the VET workforce in specific occupational areas.

Each trainer/assessor is responsible for maintaining an individual trainer/assessor **[Skills and Industry Currency Record]** as a profile of currency and competency to train and assess specific Units of Competency. The trainer/assessor **[Skills and Industry Currency Records]** will describe and provide evidence of:

- formal qualifications, and evidence of industry occupational competence and currency
- formal qualifications, and evidence of vocational education and training competency and currency

Case study: Advanced RPL Credentials course

Background

Rigorous Recognition of Prior Learning is critical to ensuring workforce mobility whilst allowing operators to assure themselves that experienced individuals commencing work within location are demonstrably competent. However, training and safety regulators are concerned that if RPL practices are not rigorous, candidates may be issued qualifications via RPL without having the necessary skills and competencies.

The Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (Cert IV) prepares graduates to facilitate delivery of training and assessment. However, although elements of clustering as a technique and RPL as an assessment pathway are included, the Cert IV does not specialise in either of these areas.

Approach

In addition to only allowing experienced trainers to undertake RPL assessments, there are now opportunities for trainers to develop RPL assessment expertise through formal learning programs. An example is CatoHR's *Advanced RPL Credentials* course, which covers the core concepts and principles of advanced RPL assessment. The program provides each participant with an experienced mentor. This 1:1 guidance allows participants to address specific challenges, receive tailored feedback, and gain practical insights from seasoned professionals.

Outcomes

Direct anecdotal feedback has highlighted that the course increases trainer/assessors' confidence in assessing an RPL application. Furthermore, new RPL strategies learned in the course are being applied in RTOs' workplace practices and assessors' professional development is enhanced.



Guideline 6. Continuous improvement of entry-level rail skills programs

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Governance

Sub quality area(s):
Continuous Improvement

Clause(s):
4.4

Performance indicators:
4.4a, b, c

Sub guideline 6.1 Systematic monitoring and evaluation outcomes inform the continuous improvement of training and assessment strategies.

Additional performance indicators:

The RTO demonstrates:

- The governance framework for the development, delivery of training and assessment [to be defined in phase 2] will articulate any specific monitoring and evaluation requirements relevant to the development and delivery of training and assessment for defined rail entry-level Units of Competency.

Additional guidance:

Next page...

Guideline 6. Continuous improvement of entry-level rail skills programs

Alignment to 2025 RTO Standards

Quality Area(s):
Governance

Sub quality area(s):
Continuous Improvement

Clause(s):
4.4

Performance indicators:
4.4a, b, c

Sub guideline 6.1 Systematic monitoring and evaluation outcomes inform the continuous improvement of training and assessment strategies.

Additional guidance:

- A governance framework for the mutual recognition of rail skills is essential to ensure consistent training and assessment standards, manage co-regulation with existing regulatory bodies and enhance industry and education collaboration. The intent of the governance framework (**established through Phase 2 of the project**) is to provide a quality assurance structure for the mutual recognition of entry-level rail training and assessment across Australia. This will support the consistency, availability, and quality of training for new entrants to the rail industry and assure and validate competencies to potential employers. The framework components will include:
- Establish overarching principles and a framework for mutual recognition that will enable and steer future reform activities, with both non-regulatory and regulatory pathways available.
- Bring together key stakeholders to steward reform, while sharing knowledge to identify, share and lift practices across the sector.
- Set an industry-driven benchmark for validation and moderation, giving industry greater confidence in the consistency of outcomes delivered by the education sector.
- Help harmonise training and assessment practices to provide industry with greater confidence in the education sector.
- Provide greater opportunities for all people to participate in rail, enable greater consistency across training and assessment practices, and set a pathway towards a national curriculum.
- Provide a sustainable model with strong governance processes including ownership and embedded mechanisms to deliver and provide long term management of the QA framework.
- This has been derived from the recommendations in the NTC Reducing Red Tape report and the Blueprint for the mutual recognition of entry-level rail skills.

Case study: NSAR

Background

The National Skills Academy for Rail (NSAR) is a not-for-profit membership organisation established to support the rail industry has the skills they need now and in the future. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) is the regulator for training and education standards that all RTOs must adhere to at a minimum in the UK. Network Rail is the Rail Infrastructure Manager responsible for owning and maintaining all rail infrastructure in the UK. Network Rail has established the Rail Training and Assurance Scheme (RTAS) as an industry led framework to ensure that training and assessment of safety critical rail skills are delivered to high standards. It is complementary to and aligns with the OFSTED framework.

Approach

The RTAS scheme is comprised of Rules and Quality Assurance Framework. It includes additional requirements set by industry to ensure training aligns with industry needs and safety.

NSAR is the entity appointed by Network Rail to assess and evaluate RTOs through the Quality Assurance Framework to deliver RTAS training programs. The framework sets quality standards and procedures for rail skills training and assessment. To provide training within Network Rail, training providers must demonstrate that they meet these standards.

Training providers apply to NSAR to become a Network Rail assured provider. NSAR assesses training providers and if they meet requirements, they are graded a gold, silver, or bronze grading based on factors that inform the overall effectiveness of the provider. Providers are regularly audited to evaluate the ongoing training quality and to maintain their assured provider status. NSAR assures over 90 training providers.

Image placeholder

Case study: NSAR

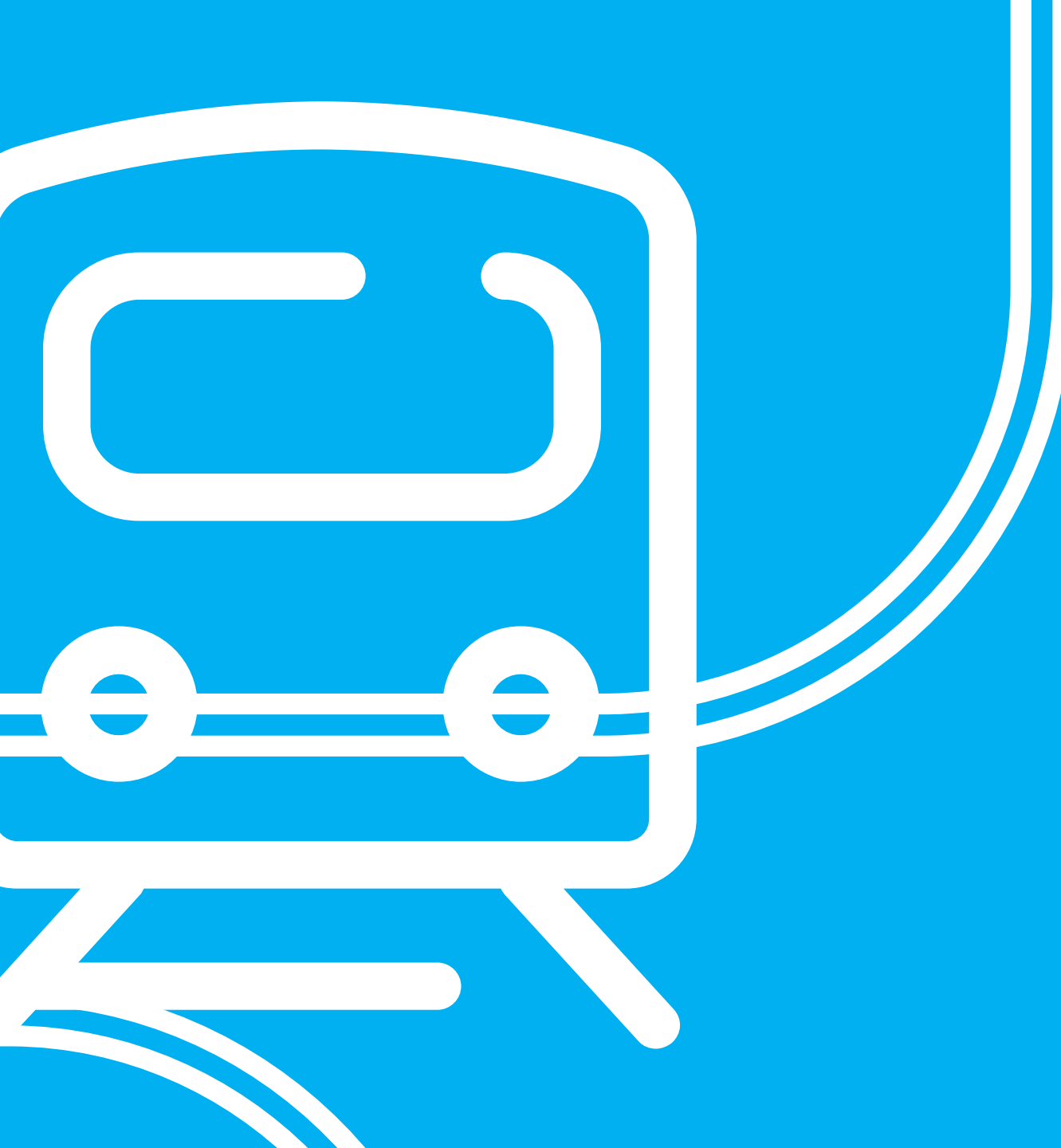
Outcomes

The Quality Assurance Framework facilitates safety in training in the UK by ensuring providers meet RTAS standards. NSAR carry out both announced and unannounced visits to all providers to confirm that the level of delivery and adherence to Rules and Network Rail Standards and materials is aligned with sector expectations. Breaches of the RTAS Rules can result in action being taken by NSAR, on Network Rail's behalf, to maintain workforce safety and compliance.

NSAR also gives practical and publicly available tools to training providers to improve training delivery and training quality and help prepare training providers for external inspections such as those by OFSTED.

Image placeholder

[Draft]



Further Information

Further Information

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How to provide further feedback

For further feedback on the Companion Volume, please contact **Louise Bull** and **Carly Grigg**

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Companion Volume for Mutual Recognition of Entry Level Rail Skills

The **survey** and **draft Companion Volume** can be accessed here: [Rail - Mutual Recognition Project](#)