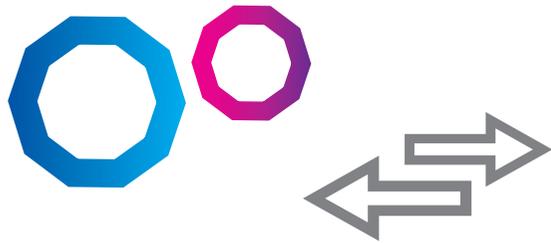




# Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment Toolkit

for HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing  
(Enrolled-Division 2 nursing)

## Assessor Guide



Australian  
Nursing &  
Midwifery  
Federation



Community Services & Health  
Industry Skills Council



Australian Government  
Department of Industry

This document Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment Toolkit for HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled-Division 2 nursing), referred to as the RPL Toolkit, was funded by the Commonwealth Government, Department of Industry, as part of the Aged Care Innovation Project.

The RPL Toolkit is provided in the following five sections:

[Assessor Guide](#)

[Student Guide](#)

[Workplace Guide](#)

[Forms and Templates](#)

[Unit Mapping](#)

This document is the [Assessor Guide](#), providing Assessors with information to assist in conducting student focused RPL assessments for the HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled-Division 2 nursing).

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# Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment Toolkit

## for HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled-Division 2 nursing) Assessor Guide

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# Introduction

This resource has been developed to assist Assessors to conduct Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for students enrolled in the *HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled-Division 2 nursing)*.

The *RPL Toolkit* was developed with funding from the Commonwealth Government, Department of Industry, Aged Care Innovation Project. Part of this project was to establish more effective pathways for career progression within the nursing pathway from workforce entry levels at Certificate III to Diploma of Nursing (the entry level qualification for practice as an Enrolled Nurse) to the Bachelor of Nursing (entry level qualification for practice as a Registered Nurse).

Clear and definitive career pathways will assist individuals and enterprises in accessing appropriate qualifications, knowledge and skill sets to care for consumers. Recognising students' attained skills and knowledge is integral to ensuring pathways to careers in nursing and aged care are unencumbered.

## What is the RPL toolkit?

The *RPL Toolkit* provides assessment tools, for the HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled-Division 2 nursing). These tools have been developed to assist in ensuring requirements of the training package are met and evidence provided is sufficient, valid, authentic and current. The toolkit also assists in providing a structured approach for the applicant whilst preserving the appropriate level of assessment rigour. The HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled-Division 2 nursing) units of competency have been clustered from the qualification into the following nine knowledge and skill sets:

1. Communication oral and written
2. Health care systems
3. Trans-cultural approaches to nursing
4. Anatomy and physiology/patho-physiology/health terminology
5. Infection control principles
6. Support the planning and delivery of health care
7. Legal and ethical frameworks for nursing practice
8. Nursing interventions and management of client care
9. Management of health care needs across the lifespan

## Outline of the RPL toolkit

The *RPL Toolkit*, provides resources to assist Assessors, students and industry to participate in the RPL process. The *RPL Toolkit*, is applicable to students with a previous Diploma of Nursing, Certificate IV in Nursing, Enrolled Nurse Certificate, Certificate III qualifications, other qualifications and/or students with no qualifications.

The RPL process involves a series of steps where the Assessor gathers information on a student's competence across unit clusters.

- **Step 1** Student is provided with all information and requirements involved in the RPL process. The student then completes an *Application for RPL Form* indicating the units they wish to apply for RPL.
- **Step 2** Student collects relevant documentary evidence to support their claim for RPL and forwards to the designated Assessor.
- **Step 3** The application is assessed by the Assessor. Where an interview between the Assessor and student may be arranged to further discuss the evidence provided by the student.
- **Step 4** If required, a workplace assessment may be conducted by the Assessor, or delegate, of the student's skills and knowledge, in order to demonstrate the required unit of competency.
- **Step 5** The student will be notified of the outcome of the RPL application including providing feedback and options where unsuccessful in their application.

**Please note:** As the *RPL Toolkit's* target group are people who are working in aged care, acute or community workplaces, workplace observation and assessment by the Assessor is possible and may be required if specified in the unit of competency.

## Is the RPL Toolkit able to be adapted for the individual RTO's use?

Yes, you may adapt the *RPL Toolkit* to suit the needs of Assessors, students, employers or industry and the RTO procedures. **However, co-badging with an RTO's logo is not allowed.**

Assessors must ensure their RPL assessments meet the required Standards under which the RTO is registered, current Training Package requirements, and any RTO or regulatory requirements such as the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia requirements. Therefore, Assessors are advised to validate relevant components before use, or after any adaption is made—for example, by considering the assessment tools in the RTO's scheduled assessment validation processes.

## What is in each section of the RPL Toolkit?

The *RPL Toolkit* is in five sections, which provide comprehensive advice and resources for Assessors, students and workplaces. The five sections are described as follows:

- **Assessor Guide:** The *Assessor Guide* contains introductory information, good practice RPL approaches, and detailed information on the RPL process. Assessors should read this section carefully to ensure they understand the process, and how the various components are used. The appendix lists resources which could be useful.
- **Student Guide:** The *Student Guide* is a resource for the student, to be provided before the RPL process begins. This resource provides information on RPL assessment processes and expectations. Students may have further questions, and are directed to the Assessor to provide them with additional information and support.
- **Workplace Guide:** The *Workplace Guide* is for the student's workplace where applicable. It provides information on RPL and the role of the workplace representative in verifying the student's demonstrated skills and knowledge in facilitating workplace visits and activities for RPL assessments as required. The RTO or Assessor should provide the *Workplace Guide* to the workplace, preferably before the RPL assessment commences.
- **Forms and Templates:** The *Forms and Templates* resource is for the Assessor. This resource contains assessment instruments and tools for student self-evaluation, Competency Conversations, workplace assessment tasks, and Assessor and student instructions. It also includes a student information form, an RPL assessment plan template, a sign-off form for workplace representatives, a third party report template, and a form for recording assessment outcomes. The use of each template or form is summarised in the Introduction. Assessors should provide the required forms to the student or workplace, and use the assessment tools in conducting RPL.

Assessors may adapt, add to or substitute forms or templates, for example, where the RTO's policies and procedures require this, or where a student chooses electives other than those provided in the RPL Toolkit.

- **Unit Mapping:** The *Unit Mapping* resource is for the Assessor, and may also be of interest to personnel responsible for the RTO's quality assurance and compliance. This resource provides detailed mapping of the clustered essential knowledge and skills to the core units of competency. Assessors may need to consider this mapping in determining assessment methods for each unit cluster, or in validation processes.

In addition, if a student already holds one or more units in a cluster, Assessors may consult the mapping to determine assessment methods for single units. The Assessor could also use the mapping as a marking reference during assessment, as it contains unit content, thus indicating responses to be addressed by the student in assessment.

Given the critical role of Assessors, they should be aware of all five of the *RPL Toolkit* sections. Each Assessor must be capable of making sound professional judgement and must be registered and hold a qualification higher than that for which the students they are assessing are studying.

# RPL good practice

Assessors should consider the following general RPL good practice aims and tips:

- **Contemporary RPL processes:** The *RPL Toolkit* promotes student-friendly and industry responsive approaches. Students should not be required to independently determine what is valid evidence, or to navigate what can be complex units of competency: that is the role of the Assessor.

*Tip: When dealing with students, use workplace language and job roles, rather than the language of Training Packages and units of competency. Assist students to identify appropriate evidence as required—Assessors can also do this in a natural setting when conducting RPL assessment processes in the workplace.*

- **Student focus:** The individual student should be the focus of the RPL assessment

*Tip: Use plain English when communicating with students, guide and support them through the process. Seek student information, and consider individual circumstances and needs.*

- **Enterprise and industry business needs:** RPL should contribute to workforce development, enterprise productivity and a skilled workforce.

*Tip: Take steps to ensure your industry knowledge is current so you can engage effectively with workplaces.*

- **Assessor capacity:** Skilled Assessors who, confidently make sound RPL professional judgements are critical to the RPL process. They should support and encourage the student, assisting them to find workplace evidence of competence where possible.

*Tip: Embrace opportunities for professional development and access Assessor networks or other support mechanisms.*

- **RPL provision:** Students should have a smooth provision of RPL services from first contact to RPL outcome. This includes providing students with the information they need, ensuring the RTO responds appropriately to enquiries, providing RPL leadership in RTOs, and embedding RPL in RTO processes.

*Tip: You may wish to consider how RPL information and support is provided in your RTO, and whether this can be improved.*

## Industry drivers

RPL Assessors working with the nursing profession and aged care sector should also be aware of current industry drivers for quality assessment such as in the following overview.

**New challenges:** The shortage of nurses and aged care workers will be significant in the future (AIHW 2013). There is a need to attract people into the health and community sectors as these sectors will be competing with other sectors for staff in the future.

Most aged care providers require Personal Care Assistants (PCA) to attain a Certificate III in Aged Care as a minimum qualification to work in the sector. There are more PCAs employed in the acute care sector than previously and the qualifications required to practice as a PCA are diverse.

Pathways for nursing roles are presently fractured between the higher education sector and VET sector and the Health and Community Training Packages. There is a pressing need to develop explicit and effective systems for development of pathways for workers to acquire knowledge and skills and for employers to develop a workforce that meets the needs of consumers of their service.

**Indigenous Health workforce:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders make up 1.6% percent of persons employed in health related occupations in Australia (ABS 2012). The individual needs and circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students must be considered. Like other people in the Health and Community workforce, they may have had negative prior educational experiences, impacting on their confidence to participate.

**Rural workforce:** Rural health workers may be more isolated from information and training services and may not have access to high-speed Internet services and other technology, although this cannot be assumed for all rural students. Approaches must be guided by local knowledge and the experience of the RTO in provision for this target group. Depending on the student and workplace, this should include workplace site visits, and could also include online information provision, online mentoring, and submission of evidence in e-portfolios.

**Students from CALD backgrounds:** Health and community workers from cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds may face particular challenges depending on individual circumstances. These may include language and literacy issues, and difficulties in obtaining authenticated evidence of prior experience, particularly if they have been refugees. Without support, given prior educational experiences or possible inaccurate assumptions about RPL, some people from CALD backgrounds may not have the confidence or language skills to participate in RPL.

**Students with Language Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) needs:** Some health and community workers, particularly those in contact roles, may have lower level AQF qualifications or no post-school qualifications—factors that can be associated with language, LLN inadequacies. LLN issues may impact on both the uptake and success of RPL, and must be considered when providing RPL. LLN support may be required before or during the RPL process.

**Remote Indigenous community context:** RPL for the remote Indigenous health and community workforce must be carefully considered to ensure it is culturally appropriate and acknowledges Indigenous cultural competencies and contexts. Good practice RPL in remote contexts should be guided by the RTO's experience with the target group.

Implementation challenges may include remote locations, and barriers such as lack of access to technology, lack of skills in using technology, language considerations including the need for local languages and literacy issues. Social factors such as family obligations, and broader issues such as the seasons and weather may also need to be considered in implementation.

RPL Assessors working with remote Indigenous students must be experienced with the target group and capable of tailoring their approaches and assessment tools for remote contexts and the individuals concerned. This could include on-line approaches for those communities where this can be managed. Implementation should tap into existing networks and State or Territory support agencies where these exist.

**Professional Regulation:** The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) regulate Enrolled and Registered Nurses and courses provided that lead to registration as a nurse, in order to protect the public. Therefore specific requirements must be met such as language requirements and fitness to practice. It is important to consult the NMBA requirements for courses leading to registration as an Enrolled or Registered Nurse see <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Accreditation.aspx>.

## Qualification requirements and units in this resource

### Training Package

The *HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled-Division 2 nursing)* is part of the Health Training Package. Assessors must be very familiar with and follow the requirements of the Training Package, and requirements set out in the relevant units of competency. The latest version of the Training Package may be downloaded from [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au).

### How many units are required for the qualification?

Students must be assessed as competent in **26 units of competency** (21 core units and 5 elective units) to be awarded the *HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled-Division 2 nursing)*.

## What units are in this resource?

This *RPL Toolkit* supports RPL for **26 units of competency** from the *HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled-Division 2 nursing)*.

### **The 21 core units in this *RPL Toolkit* are:**

HLTAP401B	Confirm physical health status
HLTAP501C	Analyse health information
HLTEN401B	Work in the nursing profession
HLTEN502B	Apply effective communication skills in nursing practice
HLTEN503B	Contribute to client assessment and developing nursing care plans
HLTEN504C	Implement and evaluate a plan of nursing care
HLTEN505C	Contribute to the complex nursing care of clients
HLTEN506B	Apply principles of wound management in the clinical environment
HLTEN507C	Administer and monitor medications in the work environment
HLTEN508B	Apply reflective practice, critical thinking and analysis in health
HLTEN509B	Apply legal and ethical parameters to nursing practice
HLTEN510B	Implement and monitor nursing care for consumers with mental health conditions
HLTEN512B	Implement and monitor nursing care for clients with acute health problems
HLTEN513B	Implement and monitor nursing care for clients with chronic health problems
HLTEN515B	Implement and monitor nursing care for older clients
HLTEN516B	Apply understanding of the Australian health care system
HLTAID003	Provide first aid
HLTHIR403C	Work effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers
HLTHIR404D	Work effectively with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
HLTIN301C	Comply with infection control policies and procedures
HLTWHS300A	Contribute to WHS processes

**The 21 elective units in this RPL Toolkit are:**

- BSBWOR402A Promote team effectiveness
- CHCCS427B Facilitate adult learning and development
- CHCLLN403A Identify clients with language, literacy and numeracy needs and respond effectively
- CHCOHC401A Inform and encourage clients and groups to understand and achieve good oral health
- CHCOHC402A Support clients and groups to learn practical aspects of oral health care
- CHCOHC404A Recognise and respond to signs and symptoms that may indicate oral health issues
- CHCOHC406A Provide or assist with oral hygiene
- CHCOHC407B Apply and manage use of basic oral health products
- CHCORG405E Maintain an effective work environment
- CHCORG506E Coordinate the work environment
- CHCORG627B Provide mentoring support to colleagues
- HLTEN511B Provide nursing care for clients requiring palliative care
- HLTEN514B Apply research skills within a contemporary health environment
- HLTEN519C Administer and monitor intravenous medication in the nursing environment
- HLTEN520B Contribute to the care of mothers and babies
- HLTEN608B Practise in the domiciliary health care environment
- HLTAID006 Provide advanced first aid
- HLTIN403C Implement and monitor infection control policy and procedures
- HLTWHS401A Maintain workplace WHS processes
- HLTRAH302C Undertake home visits
- TAEDEL401A Plan, organise and deliver group-based learning

## What if other electives are chosen?

Assessors should not be limited by the electives in this resource, and should assist students to carefully select suitable electives that meet the packaging rules and also maximise the student's opportunity to gain RPL for the qualification. Assessors should consult the Training Package and suggest elective units that relate directly to the student's work roles.

Where an elective selected by a student, is not in the RPL Toolkit, Assessors should source or develop assessment tools in line with the RTO's policies and procedures, and adapt the RPL Toolkit assessment tools if an elective is deleted or added. Assessors could also use their networks to share any assessment tools they develop for any electives not covered in the RPL Toolkit.

## Unit clusters

To promote holistic assessment, the units of competency in this RPL Toolkit are combined into the following nine clusters of related units.

### *Which clusters and pathways apply to which students?*

Student pathways into the HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled-Division 2 nursing) will vary depending on any relevant units of competency the student already holds. Therefore, although there are nine clusters of units in this RPL Toolkit, all clusters will not be required for all students.

Examples of different pathways in which students may have already obtained some units of competency from the HLT51612 Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled-Division 2 nursing) include (at least) the following:

CHC30212	Certificate III in Aged Care
CHC30312	Certificate III in Home and Community Care
CHC30408	Certificate III in Disability
HLT30113	Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care
HLT32512	Certificate III in Health Services Assistant
HLT33112	Certificate III in Basic Health Care
HLT40213	Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice
HLT43407	Certificate IV in Nursing (Enrolled/Division 2 nursing)

**Note:** that there may also be students who hold relevant individual units of competency that should be considered.

### Cluster 1 - Communication oral and written

HLTEN502B	Apply effective communication skills in nursing practice (core unit)
HLTEN510B	Implement and monitor nursing care for consumers with mental health conditions (core unit)

### Cluster 2 - Health care systems

HLTEN516B	Apply understanding of the Australian health care system (core unit)
HLTEN401B	Work in the nursing profession (core unit)
HLTEN514B	Apply research skills within a contemporary health environment (elective unit)
BSBWOR402A	Promote team effectiveness (elective unit)
CHCCS427B	Facilitate adult learning and development (elective unit)
CHCORG405E	Maintain an effective work environment (elective unit)
CHCORG506E	Coordinate the work environment (elective unit)
CHCORG627B	Provide mentoring support to colleagues (elective unit)
TAEDEL401A	Plan, organise and deliver group-based learning (elective unit)

### Cluster 3 - Trans-cultural approaches to nursing

HLTHIR404D	Work effectively with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (core unit)
HLTHIR403C	Work effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers (core unit)
CHCLLN403A	Identify clients with language, literacy and numeracy needs and respond effectively (elective unit)

### Cluster 4 - Anatomy and physiology/patho-physiology/health terminology

HLTAP501C	Analyse health information (core unit)
HLTAP401B	Confirm physical health status (core unit)

### Cluster 5 - Infection control principles

HLTIN301C	Comply with infection control policies and procedures (core unit)
HLTEN506B	Apply principles of wound management in the clinical environment (core unit)
HLTIN403C	Implement and monitor infection control policy and procedures (elective unit)

### Cluster 6 - Support the planning and delivery of health care

HLTEN512B	Implement and monitor nursing care for clients with acute health problems (core unit)
HLTEN513B	Implement and monitor nursing care for clients with chronic health problems (core unit)
CHCOHC401A	Inform and encourage clients and groups to understand and achieve good oral health (elective unit)
CHCOHC402A	Support clients and groups to learn practical aspects of oral health care (elective unit)
CHCOHC404A	Recognise and respond to signs and symptoms that may indicate oral health issues (elective unit)
CHCOHC406A	Provide or assist with oral hygiene (elective unit)
CHCOHC407B	Apply and manage use of basic oral health products (elective unit)
HLTEN511B	Provide nursing care for clients requiring palliative care (elective unit)
HLTEN608B	Practise in the domiciliary health care environment (elective unit)

### Cluster 7 - Legal and ethical frameworks for nursing practice

HLTEN509B	Apply legal and ethical parameters to nursing practice (core unit)
HLTWHS300A	Contribute to WHS processes (core unit)
HLTWHS401A	Maintain workplace WHS processes (elective unit)

### Cluster 8 - Nursing interventions and management of client care

HLTEN505C	Contribute to the complex nursing care of clients (core unit)
HLTEN508B	Apply reflective practice, critical thinking and analysis in health (core unit)
HLTEN507C	Administer and monitor medications in the work environment (core unit)
HLTEN515B	Implement and monitor nursing care for older clients (core unit)
HLTEN519C	Administer and monitor intravenous medication in the nursing environment (elective unit)

### Cluster 9 - Management of health care needs across the lifespan

HLTEN503B	Contribute to client assessment and developing nursing care plans (core unit)
HLTEN504C	Implement and evaluate a plan of nursing care (core unit)
HLTAID003	Provide first aid (core unit)
HLTAID006	Provide advanced first aid (elective unit)
HLTRAH302C	Undertake home visits (elective unit)
HLTEN520B	Contribute to the care of mothers and babies (elective unit)

## Unit versions and current policy, legislative and regulatory requirements

This *RPL Toolkit* is based on Release 5.1 of the Health Training Package. This qualification covers the application of nursing skills and knowledge required to be eligible for registration as an Enrolled Nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia in line with some State/Territory nursing and midwifery regulatory authorities.

## Summary of RPL - related processes

The tables in this section summarise RPL-related processes—from first enquiry through to RPL assessment and certification.

### Enquiry and RPL application

RTOs should facilitate a seamless transition from first enquiry to contact with an appropriate person—perhaps the RPL coordinator, department head, or Assessor—and RPL provision. The first contact would usually involve an enquiry to the RTO from a potential student, or perhaps from their workplace supervisor. How this contact occurs, and how it is handled, will depend on the individuals involved and the RTO's processes. However, to ensure potential students are not deterred, RTO staff members who respond to client enquiries should be informed about RPL and the RTO's processes so they can provide accurate initial information.

Enquiry and application	RTO's responsibilities	Students responsibilities	Workplace responsibilities
<p>Prospective RPL student makes an enquiry and applies to participate in RPL.</p> <p>If accepted, the student completes a <i>Student Information Form</i> to assist in Step 1 of the RPL process.</p>	<p>Provide person enquiring with information about RPL.</p> <p>If they wish to apply, provide the <i>Student Information Form</i>, <i>Student Guide</i> and any other RTO-required forms.</p> <p>Follow the RTO's procedures such as processing application, advising applicant, and providing the RTO's qualified RPL Assessor with the student information.</p>	<p>Read RTO-provided information and complete any RTO-required application forms or processes.</p> <p>Complete the <i>Student Information Form</i> and attach CV and any other workplace information as suggested on the form, and return it the RTO.</p> <p>Go through the <i>Student Guide</i> to prepare for Step 1 of the process—the initial interview.</p>	<p>Workplace representatives could support employees in their application to participate in RPL, such as assisting them to make the first contact with an RTO, and assisting them to complete application forms.</p>

## Table summarising the five RPL process steps

The RPL process, as promoted in the *RPL Toolkit*, is summarised below. More detail on how to conduct each step is provided in the next section of this resource. In order to come to a professional judgement, Assessors need to take the following steps for each student until they have evidence of that student's competence for all required units of competency. The process is cumulative, therefore evidence is progressively gathered, however some steps may not be needed for some unit clusters and students. For example, an Assessor might decide the rules of evidence are met for a unit at the end of Step 2, the 'Competency Conversation', especially if this also includes workplace observations (that is, the Assessor may find at that point the evidence is **valid, sufficient, current** and **authentic**). If so, they may not need to include further assessment for that particular unit.

**Important note:** Assessor or delegate observation of the student demonstrating skills in the workplace *is required* and for most students all of the following steps will be required.

### Step 1: Initial interview, followed by self-evaluation

RPL assessment step	Assessors responsibilities	Students responsibilities	Workplace responsibilities
<p>a. Assessor and student participate in an initial interview, planning and initial document review session.</p> <p>b. Student completes and returns <i>Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills</i> after the interview (with workplace verification).</p> <p>c. Assessor considers evidence from initial interview and verified self-evaluation, and advises student.</p>	<p>Before the interview, review <i>Student Information Form</i> and any attached documents.</p> <p>During the interview, go over the <i>Student Guide</i> and discuss broad work roles. Develop the <i>RPL Assessment Plan</i>. Give student the <i>Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills</i> and <i>Workplace Representative Form</i>, showing them how to complete these.</p> <p>After they are returned, evaluate evidence on completed <i>Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills</i> forms record findings on tools, and advise student of the next steps.</p>	<p><b>Before the interview</b>, reflect on experience and roles, and current skills and knowledge.</p> <p><b>During the interview</b>, discuss broad details of relevant experience with Assessor, select electives, and participate in planning the RPL processes.</p> <p><b>After the interview</b>, complete the <i>Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills</i>; ask the workplace representative to sign <i>Workplace Representative Form</i> and verify the self-evaluation; copy forms and return to Assessor on the date in the <i>RPL Assessment Plan</i> with any agreed documentary evidence.</p>	<p><b>Before the interview</b>, workplaces could support employees to participate in initial interview processes, such as providing them with leave to attend it, or allowing the interview to take place in the workplace.</p> <p><b>After the student has completed their self-evaluation</b>, the workplace representative signs the <i>Workplace Representative Form</i>, then verifies student performance and provides examples by completing relevant sections of the <i>Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills</i>.</p>

## Step 2: Competency Conversations

RPL assessment step	Assessors responsibilities	Students responsibilities	Workplace responsibilities
<p>a. Assessor and student participate in Competency Conversation interviews, using the <i>Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills</i> for each unit cluster.</p> <p>b. Assessor discusses student responses and considers evidence from the Conversation.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The Competency Conversations may be in the workplace, and for most students the process would involve more than one session. These sessions could also be used to observe the student in the workplace.</p>	<p>Before the Competency Conversation, collate the <i>Competency Conversation Recording Tools</i> for the cluster or clusters that will be covered (print or save files depending on recording method).</p> <p>During the Competency Conversation, use the questions the student has responded to and record responses in the <i>Competency Conversation section of the Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills for each unit cluster</i>.</p> <p>After the Competency Conversation, consider evidence gathered, record findings, update <i>RPL Assessment Plan</i> if needed, give student feedback.</p>	<p><b>Before the Competency Conversation,</b> complete <i>Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills</i> for each unit cluster.</p> <p><b>During the Competency Conversation,</b> respond to the questions and scenarios provided by the Assessor, discussing work roles, skills and knowledge. Provide the Assessor with direct evidence from the workplace where relevant.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The student's responses must include the principles that underpin workplace tasks, not just a description of tasks they undertake.</p>	<p><b>Before the Competency Conversation,</b> prepare a suitable workplace area in which the student and Assessor can comfortably discuss the student's work roles and skills and knowledge.</p> <p><b>During the Competency Conversation,</b> if requested, assist the student to locate any evidence in the workplace.</p>

## Step 3: Workplace assessment tasks

RPL assessment step	Assessors responsibilities	Students responsibilities	Workplace responsibilities
<p>a. Student demonstrates workplace assessment task or tasks, observed by the Assessor or delegate.</p> <p>b. Assessor considers evidence.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Could involve more than one workplace visit and may involve an assessment task devised by the Assessor.</p>	<p>Before the demonstration, provide the student with the relevant cluster of <i>Essential Knowledge and Skills</i> so they are clear on the required assessment task or tasks.</p> <p>During the demonstration, record observations the on cluster of <i>Essential Knowledge and Skills</i> after the demonstration in the Competency Conversation and provide student with feedback and outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Before the demonstration,</b> read workplace assessment task requirements provided by the Assessor, and make any workplace or other preparations.</p> <p><b>During the demonstration,</b> conduct the workplace assessment task in line with the instructions provided, and as agreed with the Assessor in the <i>RPL Assessment Plan</i>.</p>	<p><b>Before the demonstration,</b> assist in preparations if required.</p> <p><b>During the demonstration,</b> ensure the student can complete the tasks, for example by ensuring privacy and appropriate workplace conditions.</p>

### Step 4: Third party reporting

RPL assessment step	Assessors responsibilities	Students responsibilities	Workplace responsibilities
<p>If required:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workplace representative completes <i>Third Party Report</i>.</li> <li>Assessor considers evidence.</li> </ol> <p><b>Note:</b> Could involve current or previous workplace.</p>	<p>Determine if any evidence requires further validation by the workplace, and prepare <i>Third Party Report</i> from template.</p> <p>Consider completed <i>Third Party Report</i> and any other evidence from workplace.</p> <p>Record findings, and advise student if required.</p>	<p>May be asked to provide the <i>Third Party Report</i> to workplace representative or another person from the workplace.</p>	<p>Workplace representative, or other suitable person, completes <i>Third Party Report</i>, attaches any appropriate workplace evidence if requested, and returns to Assessor.</p>

### Step 5: RPL document finalisation

RPL assessment step	Assessors responsibilities	Students responsibilities	Workplace responsibilities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessor finalises RPL assessment decision, RPL documentation.</li> <li>Assessor gives student feedback on outcomes and options.</li> <li>Assessor completes RTO required documentation for certification.</li> </ol>	<p>Complete all evidence recording for the student and the <i>RPL Assessment Outcomes Form</i>, providing a 'Competent' or 'Not Yet Competent' outcome for each unit assessed, depending on the RTO's procedures.</p> <p>Give student feedback on outcomes and options.</p> <p>Finalise RPL records and files according to the RTO's procedures, and complete RTO internal reporting processes.</p>	<p>Sign the <i>RPL Assessment Outcomes Form</i> or other RTO-required forms or documentation.</p> <p>Consider feedback on options where provided.</p>	

## Recording and certification

Students who are assessed 'Competent' in specific units of competency will be provided with a Statement of Attainment listing the units they have attained. Those students who do not meet the requirements for the qualification will be required to undertake training and assessment for outstanding units of competency.

### *Group RPL*

Some components of RPL processes may be conducted with groups of students—group RPL may be useful in informing students about the RPL processes and in assisting students to identify similar evidence. Group RPL may also provide peer support, especially where work roles or employment experiences have commonality. However, group RPL processes must be conducted in a manner and venue that is culturally appropriate and welcoming to students, and may require more than one Assessor.

RTO's must provide an effective and rigorous RPL process for each individual student and meet the principles of assessment. RPL process decisions, including whether group RPL is suitable at a given point in the process should be made on that basis.

### *Gaining workplace support*

In the early stages of the RPL process, Assessors and students will need to seek the support of the workplace in verifying evidence and facilitating workplace activities and Assessor visits.

The Assessor should provide the **Workplace Guide** to the workplace representative and discuss with them and their likely roles and responsibilities in supporting the student's application for RPL. Students who are supported by their workplaces and Assessors are more likely to complete their RPL assessment process.

The *RPL Toolkit* requires workplace verification of the student's demonstrated skills and knowledge by an Assessor delegated 'workplace representative'. Such workplace representatives would typically be working with the student in a position of responsibility—perhaps their employer or supervisor—hold higher qualifications than the student, and have observed their workplace performance.

## *Student self-directed gap activities*

There could be circumstances where an Assessor, at any point in the RPL process, decides that a student has not demonstrated the required knowledge and that this gap could be addressed by self-directed student activities—that is, by independent activity by the student, but not by formal training. For example, an Assessor may find a student whose knowledge of an aspect such as the regulatory framework of the Enrolled Nurse is not adequate, yet they meet other unit requirements. The student could agree to undertake activities such as attending professional development on the regulation of nursing practice, or undertaking targeted reading, and then applying the knowledge gained in the workplace and documenting their activities.

If development activities such as this are agreed, the Assessor could add details of the gap activity and its requirements to the *RPL Assessment Plan* or another document. Once the student has completed the activity and applied the required knowledge at work, the Assessor could assess this at a subsequent workplace visit, or have the application of the required knowledge verified by the workplace representative, for example in a *Third Party Report*.

Assessors should ensure such approaches fit within their RTO policies and procedures, and any regulatory requirements in relation to RPL, including any reporting requirements and any specific assessment requirements of the units such as volume and frequency requirements.

The Appendix in this resource lists some resources and websites that could be accessed by the student to enhance their knowledge.

## Details of the steps in the RPL processes

This section provides Assessors with detailed RPL process steps. Assessors could use these step-by-step instructions as a guide when conducting RPL assessments.

### Before Step 1

The RTO should provide the prospective student with information about the RTO and the RPL processes, and should process the application in line with its policies and procedures before formal RPL assessment processes begin.

The student should be given the *Student Guide* and the *Student Information Form* (or RTO-required equivalent). The student should complete the form **before Step 1**, the initial interview, so the Assessor is able to consider the form and any initial documentary evidence at the initial interview and planning session.

## Step 1: Initial interview, followed by student self-evaluation

### *Conducting the initial interview and planning for the RPL*

The initial interview is part of the RPL assessment process. Therefore, it assumes that the student has been accepted for RPL according to the RTO's policies and procedures.

The initial interview could be conducted face-to-face, by phone or even on-line depending on individual circumstances and the RTO's processes—however, the method should be mutually agreed, and must be convenient to the student.

**This first step is critical.** It provides an opportunity for Assessors to put the student at ease, and to review some initial student information and begin gathering evidence of competence, including suggesting evidence relevant to that particular student.

A possible sequence for conducting the initial interview follows. Remember, this could be the student's first encounter with an Assessor—Assessors should be supportive and encouraging.

1. Introduce yourself and make sure the student understands the RPL processes to be undertaken.
2. Ensure the student has been provided with, and has a copy of the *Student Guide*. Go through it with them, clarifying any aspects of the RPL process if required.
3. Review the *Student Information Form*, asking the student broad questions about their expectations of the RPL process, work history, and relevant personal circumstances.
4. Discuss the core and elective units required for the qualification, using workplace terminology and examples when discussing the student's work roles that might relate to electives. Note that, while students should be able to describe workplace roles, they are not expected to understand all aspects of the units of competency—as the Assessor, that is your role.
5. Depending on the student's work history and context, outline electives that could be suitable. Where electives are suited to the student's work roles, but are not in this *RPL Toolkit*, use the RTO's assessment tools for those units (or source them).

6. Provide the student with the *Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills*. Discuss how to complete these. Advise that the completed Self-Check will be part of the evidence you will consider in determining the student's competence. Inform the student that the RPL process **is not based on documentary evidence only**—that is, while some documents can be attached to the form, they do not need to provide documents as evidence of every skill they claim they hold. Other assessment processes will also be used.
7. Based on work roles and tasks the student has undertaken, suggest workplace documents or other evidence they may be able to access—giving them suggestions and showing them how to list evidence on the *Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills*.
8. Advise the student that a workplace representative is required to verify their self-evaluation on the tools. This should be someone in a position of responsibility who knows their performance and holds higher qualifications—perhaps their employer or supervisor. The workplace representative needs to complete the *Workplace Representative Form*, confirm the student's self-evaluation of each task (where they have observed it) and provide examples and comments. Give the student the form (from the **Forms and Templates** resource).
9. Develop and seek student agreement to the *RPL Assessment Plan* (from the **Forms and Templates** resource). Include in the *RPL Assessment Plan* a date for the student to return the *Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills*, likely time-frame for the RPL, possible dates for workplace assessment visits, and any other responsibilities or expectations. The *RPL Assessment Plan* should reflect the initial agreement based on an expected number of workplace visits and RPL assessments. You should progressively monitor and update it through the RPL process.

### *After the initial interview*

The student should complete and return the *Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills* (also completed by the workplace representative) to the Assessor along with the signed *Workplace Representative Form* and any other agreed documents.

### *Reviewing Step 1 documentation*

On receipt of all documentation the Assessor should consider all evidence from Step 1 processes—the initial interview notes, the student and workplace representative's responses on the *Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills*, and any documents provided.

**Important note:** Given the specificity of assessment requirements of units, such as specific requirements for volume and frequency, and requirements for workplace assessment, there will not be sufficient evidence to assess students as competent at this point. The assessment tools used in the following steps include more specific assessment requirements. Assessors should also consult the training package and associated companion volumes.

The information gathered from the student Self-Check should guide the Assessor in determining the focus of the Competency Conversations and workplace assessment tasks to be undertaken.

The Assessor should retain a copy of the completed *Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills*, as they will need to be referred to in Step 2.

### *Preparing the student for the next steps*

After recording outcomes on the *Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills*, Assessors should advise the student of the outcomes of Step 1, update the *RPL Assessment Plan*, and prepare the student for Step 2 as follows:

- Refer the student to their *Student Guide*, which provides an overview of the Competency Conversation process and a brief summary of unit requirements.
- Briefly go over the steps, ensuring the student understands the process—explain that the Competency Conversation are an important part of their assessment, that you will be asking a lot of questions, and that you are seeking information on their usual or past workplace activities, including the knowledge they apply when performing those activities.
- Advise which clusters of units will be covered and that you will also be confirming the broad information they provided in the *Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills*.

## Step 2: Competency Conversations

The Competency Conversation interviews, provide an opportunity for the student to confirm their knowledge as identified on their *Student Self-Check of Essential Knowledge and Skills*, and for the Assessor to assess the units of competency.

The *Competency Conversation Recording Tool* (at the end of the *Student Self-Check of Essential Skills and Knowledge* in the *Forms and Templates* resource) includes a space the Assessor uses to record student responses during the Competency Conversation.

## *Preparing for the Competency Conversation interview*

To prepare for the Competency Conversation interview:

1. Determine the venue with the student, and make any arrangements.
2. Prepare the correct tools for the interview, for example, by saving the files to a laptop or by printing hard copies, depending on how you will record student responses.

## *Conducting the Competency Conversation interview*

The following points should assist the Assessor, to conduct the Competency Conversation:

- Remember, this is an assessment process, but it is also a ‘Conversation’—you will elicit the best responses from a student who feels comfortable. Use a conversational style and look for any cues of discomfort.
- The questions are prompts and discussion starters, and are not necessarily ‘fixed’. You may alter the wording or ask follow-up questions in a conversational style. You could move on if the student runs out of responses to a topic, and come back to it later; short breaks might also be useful.
- Each question provides key points you should look for in the student’s responses. You may wish to use these points to formulate questions of your own, and contextualise or rephrase questions to suit a student’s particular work role. Follow-up questions, building on student responses, could be useful.
- In rephrasing, use open-ended questions and reflective questioning techniques to encourage responses and draw out the principles that guide the workplace practices being described by the student. Include questions that cannot be answered with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’; questions about what the student might do in certain situations; questions about how the student feels in certain situations; and questions that explore the values and principles that underpin work practices.

The following points should assist you to record the Conversation:

- During the Conversation, make brief notes in the Assessor comments section. Your notes could include further details about the discussion or other points and examples the student has discussed.
- While you conduct the Conversation, you could colour code, highlight or otherwise flag points you may wish to come back to—for example, if the conversation stalls on a question or further clarification is needed.

- You are likely to need some time after the Conversation to reflect on the student’s responses, and to add details to the form. If you do this, it is important to do it as soon after the Conversation as possible.

### Considering evidence from Step 2 processes

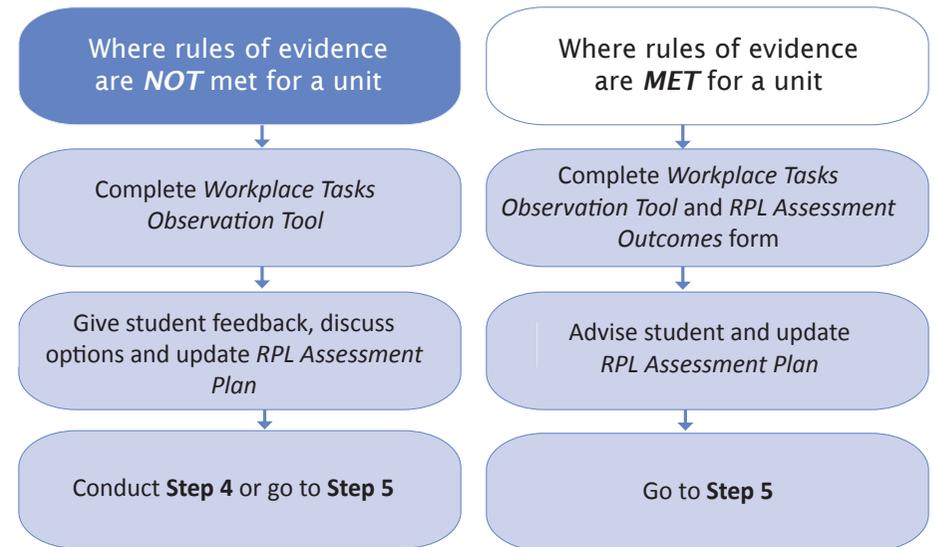
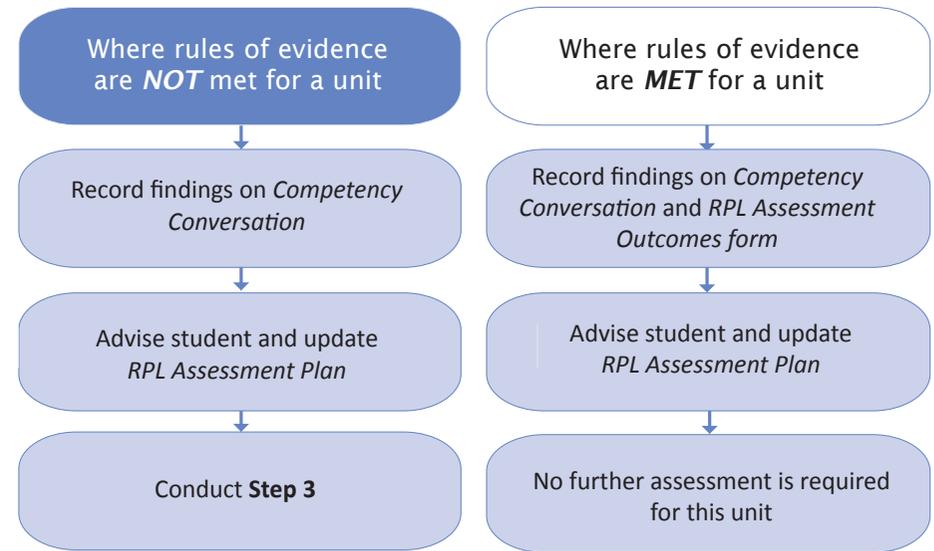
The Assessor should consider all evidence from Step 2—the notes from the Competency Conversations and any evidence gathered in the workplace—as well as evidence gathered in Step 1, and determine whether or not the rules of evidence are met.

### Step 3: Workplace assessment tasks

Assessors may customise the workplace assessment tasks to meet student needs or any RTO requirements, and may also combine tasks where applicable. Assessors may also devise other appropriate workplace assessment tasks, for example for a more holistic workplace demonstration of workplace skills.

In determining whether a workplace assessment task is required for a student, Assessors should consider not only the student’s assessment requirements but also whether the workplace is able to accommodate the activity.

Assessors must provide appropriate instructions to the student before the task is undertaken, providing reasonable notice of the task. The **Forms and Templates** resource includes *Workplace Assessment Tasks: Instructions for the student* for this purpose (and the instructions include assessment criteria and conditions). Where the Assessor has devised a workplace assessment task for a student, they should add the requirements to the blank student instructions tool and provide that to the student. Assessors should also record the required activities in the student’s *RPL Assessment Plan*.



## Step 4: Third party reporting

Where an Assessor considers that additional workplace verification is required for any aspect, this can be gathered with a *Third Party Report*. This could be useful where there is a particular skill or body of knowledge on which the Assessor requires additional verification (noting that this is additional to the workplace representative's verification on the *Student Self-Evaluation Tools*.)

The blank *Third Party Report* template is in the **Forms and Templates** resource. The Assessor should develop a suitable report format from the template, setting out details of the workplace tasks, behaviours or skills and knowledge to be demonstrated, before providing it to the workplace representative. Once it is completed, the Assessor should consider the evidence provided. The workplace representative completing the *Third Party Report* should also complete a *Workplace Representative Form*.

## Step 5: Finalising the assessment decision and RPL process

The Assessor should come to a professional judgement on whether the student is competent or not yet competent in the units being assessed; provide the student with feedback on the outcome and their options where required; and complete all RPL and RTO required process documentation.

Where the student has been determined as competent in a particular unit of competency, the RTO should undertake processes to issue a Statement of Attainment listing any units attained.

Options should be canvassed with students who are not competent in any units required for the qualification, including training and assessment pathway options.

The Assessor and RTO should ensure all records of the RPL process and outcomes attained are recorded in line with the RTO's processes and any regulatory or other requirements.

# Appendix

The following references and websites could be a starting point for Assessors wishing to improve their skills and knowledge about the nursing profession and RPL.

## References

Australian Government Department of Education (2013) RPL Assessment Toolkit for CHC50113 - Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care. Accessed 17 January 2014 [https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/chc50113\\_assessor\\_aug.pdf](https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/chc50113_assessor_aug.pdf)

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2013, Nursing and Midwifery Workforce 2012, Australian Government. Accessed 14 April 2014 <http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129545314>

Training.gov.au Accessed 17 January - July 2014 <https://training.gov.au>

Conroy, J. 2012. *Compulsory Competencies RPL Assessment: Matrices of clustered essential knowledge and essential skills mapped to individual core units of competency HLT51607 (Enrolled/Division2 nursing)*, Community Services and Health program TAFE SA.

## Websites

Australian College of Nursing [www.acn.edu.au](http://www.acn.edu.au)

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation <http://anmf.org.au>

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council [www.anmac.org.au](http://www.anmac.org.au)

Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council [www.cshisc.com.au](http://www.cshisc.com.au)

Community Services and Health Industry Training Board Inc. (Vic) [www.intraining.org.au](http://www.intraining.org.au)

DEEWR 2009, Analysis of The Council of Australian Governments Recognition of Prior Learning Program Outcomes.  
[www.innovation.gov.au/Skills/SkillsAssessment/COAGRPLProject](http://www.innovation.gov.au/Skills/SkillsAssessment/COAGRPLProject)

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) [www.ncver.edu.au](http://www.ncver.edu.au)

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia [www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au)

NSW Skills Recognition website [www.skillsrecognition.nsw.gov.au](http://www.skillsrecognition.nsw.gov.au)

Productivity Commission 2014, Report of Government Services, Volume E Health, Australian Government, Canberra.  
[http://www.pc.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/132350/rogs-2014-volumee-sectore.pdf](http://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/132350/rogs-2014-volumee-sectore.pdf)

SA DFEST website [www.training.sa.gov.au](http://www.training.sa.gov.au)

Skilling Solutions Queensland [www.skillingsolutions.qld.gov.au](http://www.skillingsolutions.qld.gov.au)

Skills Tasmania [www.skills.tas.gov.au](http://www.skills.tas.gov.au)

Training.gov.au <https://training.gov.au> click on 'Links' to access a wide range of State and Territory and national websites

VETInfoNet (WA) <http://vetinfonet.dtwd.wa.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx>

*Above websites accessed April 2014*