

**Assessment Guidelines for
National Occupational Health and
Safety Certification Standard for Users
and Operators of Industrial Equipment**

March 1994

| Contents | Page |
|---|-------------|
| Preface | v |
| Acknowledgements | vii |
| Introduction | ix |
| 1 Purpose of the assessment guidelines | 1 |
| 2 Links between National OHS Certification Standard and national competency standards | 2 |
| 3 Competency-based assessment | 6 |
| 4 Assessor requirements | 11 |
| 5 Application and assessment approaches | 12 |
| 6 Guidelines for assessment | 17 |
| 7 Processes? guidance for assessors and applicants | 21 |
| 8 References | 28 |
| Appendices | |
| A Regulatory basis: Assessment requirements of the OHS Certification Standard | |
| B Glossary of terms | |
| C Items to be included in the Record of Training | |
| D Principles of assessment | |
| E Membership of Steering and Expert Working Groups | |

F Addresses of OHS Authorities

Preface

The National Occupational Health and Safety Certification Standard for users and operators of industrial equipment [NOHSC: 1006(1992)] specifies certification classes and competency standards for:

- ✍ Scaffolding and Rigging
- ✍ Crane and Hoist Operation
- ✍ Pressure Equipment Operation

The standard will apply to all workplaces throughout Australia covered by OHS legislation.

State, Territory and Commonwealth occupational health and safety authorities require users and operators of potentially hazardous equipment and types of work to hold certificates as a means of ensuring that the equipment is used and operated safely, or work is carried out safely.

These assessment guidelines form the basis for assessments for attainment of OHS certificates of competence covered by the National OHS Certification Standard.

Previous certification requirements differed across Australia in terms of the classes of equipment requiring certification, and the knowledge, skills and experience required of the certificated users and operators. These requirements were not consistent with moves to establish national competency standards as the basis for effective performance in employment.

The Special Premiers' and Heads of Government Conference in November 1991 agreed to achieve by December 1993, nationally uniform occupational health and safety standards for goods, occupations and dangerous goods. The standard is a key element of the strategy to achieve national OHS uniformity and is the culmination of years of effort to achieve uniformity in the area of certification of users and operators of industrial equipment.

The Standard provides basic minimum nationally uniform standards as a means of reducing accidents and injuries associated with industrial equipment. The Standard was agreed to by the National Commission in November 1992 and will be implemented by the State, Territory and Commonwealth OHS authorities by 1 July 1994.

The certificates will be recognised nationally; existing certificates will either continue to be recognised nationally, or will be translated into the new certificate system.

The Standard is consistent with:

- ✍ Initiatives to enhance industry and enterprise productivity and flexibility.
- ✍ The National Training Reform Agenda.
- ✍ The Premiers and Heads of Government decision to achieve national recognition of qualifications.

The National Occupational Health and Safety Commission has endorsed the competency standards defined in the *National Guidelines for Occupational Health and Safety Standards for the operation of loadshifting and other types of specified equipment* [NOHSC: 7019(1992)] as essential for incorporation into industry and enterprise competency standards.

The National Occupational Health and Safety Commission has agreed that:

- (a) those jurisdictions who wish to continue certification on any type of loadshifting equipment do so on the basis of the Guidelines Document and these Assessment Guidelines
- (b) that those jurisdictions who wish to discontinue certification of any type of loadshifting equipment, or those jurisdictions who wish not to introduce certification for loadshifting equipment initiate arrangements towards achieving assessment processes carried out in accordance with the Assessment Guidelines for Loadshifting competencies by:
 - ✍ requiring over a period of time the registration of assessors by the OHS Authority, or
 - ✍ facilitating the registration of assessors/training providers by the State or Territory Training Recognition Bodies.
- (c) that the impact of these arrangements on safety be evaluated as part of the evaluation of the National OHS Certification Standard.

Assessments to assess competence for the award of a certificate class specified in the National OHS Certification Standard will be conducted by assessors registered by certifying authorities, usually a State or Territory OHS authority.

Assessments to assess competence in safe operation of loadshifting equipment will be conducted either by assessors registered by OHS authorities or by assessors registered or accredited as training providers by State/Territory vocational education and training recognition bodies.

Assessors registered for OHS certificates will be advised of the assessment arrangements applying to Loadshifting OHS competencies in particular OHS jurisdictions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (Worksafe Australia) wishes to acknowledge the contribution of many organisations and individuals in the development of the assessment guidelines and assessment instruments for the National Occupational Health and Safety Certification Standard for users and operators of industrial equipment and for certificates for Loadshifting equipment. Appendix E lists the individuals and organisations involved.

The Standard and the assessment package were developed under the guidance of a tripartite Steering Group, with representation from the ACTU, the ACCI, all OHS jurisdictions, the National Building and Construction Industry Training Council, the Department of Employment, Education and Training and the Department of Industrial Relations. The National Training Board provided expert guidance on competency standards.

A tripartite Assessment Expert Working Group and four technical Expert Work Groups including users and operators of industrial equipment, managers and trainers of operators and OHS inspectors provided guidance on the occupational health and safety and competency-based training principles to be followed and on the technical integrity and user friendliness of the assessment guidelines and instruments. Advice was sought from relevant Competency Standards Bodies including Building and Construction, Waterfront, Metals and Engineering and Road Transport.

Mr Peter Thomson of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd and Mr David Foreman of D. J. Foreman and Associates managed the project. They prepared the Assessment guidelines document and provided assistance to the OHS jurisdictions in the preparation, trialling and review of the assessment instruments.

All OHS jurisdictions contributed to the development of the assessment package. OHS inspectors wrote the assessment instruments and organised their trialling in industry. The following jurisdictions were responsible for the assessment instruments:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Scaffolding and Rigging | Victoria |
| Cranes and Hoists | New South Wales |
| Pressure Equipment | South Australia |
| Loadshifting | Queensland |
| | Tasmania |

The Department of Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare of Western Australia developed a computer program for the assessment instruments.

The National Occupational Health and Safety Commission provided a grant of \$77,300 to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd to provide expert guidance in competency based assessment and to manage the assessment project. Worksafe Australia co-ordinated the assessment project as part of national arrangements for implementation of the National OHS Certification Standard.

1 Purpose of the assessment guidelines

This document applies primarily to assessments of applicants for National OHS certificates issued by OHS certifying authorities in accordance with the National OHS Certification Standard for users and operators of industrial equipment.

Assessors assessing the OHS competence of applicants for these certificates must be registered by a certifying authority, usually an OHS authority, and conduct the assessment in accordance with the principles and processes outlined in these guidelines and in accordance with the assessment instruments for the relevant certificate class.

The *Assessment Guidelines* are also designed to assist assessors who are assessing the OHS competence of operators of loadshifting equipment covered by the National Guidelines for OHS Standards for the operation of loadshifting and other types of specified equipment. In these cases assessors may be assessing the OHS competence of intending operators of loadshifting equipment. This can be for the purpose of issuing certificates required by a particular OHS authority (Appendix F), or for conducting an assessment as part of requirements for a vocational education and training qualification issued in accordance with requirements of a State or Territory training recognition body.

In such cases, the assessment principles and assessment instruments for loadshifting equipment operation will apply, but not the guidelines for processing assessments relating to applications for certificates under the National OHS Certification Standard ie Sections 4, 5 & 7.

Assessors undertaking assessments both for OHS certificates issued in accordance with the National OHS Certification Standard and for vocational education and training qualifications may be the same person as long as the assessor meets the registration requirements for Assessors for OHS certificates of the certifying authorities. See Section 4.

Assessments for OHS certification may be conducted in conjunction with assessments for vocational education and training qualifications.

The information provided will also be useful to other organisations and persons associated with assessment, eg industry training bodies, training providers, enterprises employing certificated persons as well as the applicants themselves.

2 Links between National OHS Certification Standard and national competency standards

Vocational education and training in Australia is moving towards the adoption of competency-based methods. Industries are developing competency standards which describe the competencies required in employment. These are being submitted to the National Training Board for endorsement, and may be used for reference in industry awards and enterprise agreements as appropriate.

Parallel to this process is the development of curriculum documents and assessment procedures consistent with the competency standards as well as government requirements for the accreditation of training providers and courses. These requirements will be consistent across Australia under an agreement by the nine State, Territory and Commonwealth Governments for the recognition of training (*National Framework for the Recognition of Training, 1991*).

The OHS competency standards in the National OHS Certification Standard and in the OHS Guidelines are consistent with the National Training Board's requirements, and are being incorporated into industry competency standards in accordance with arrangements between the National OHS Commission, the National Training Board and relevant industries.

The National OHS Certification Standard has been designed to integrate with Australia's new competency-based system of vocational education and training so that standards for the safe use and operation of industrial equipment are recognised as an essential element of work performance standards, training assessment and qualification arrangements. Integration of this Standard and its associated arrangements with vocational education and training arrangements occurs at several key points.

2.1 Competency standards

The National OHS Certification Standard specifies OHS competencies which need to be demonstrated for each certificate class. The OHS competencies described are the generic standards for safe use and operation of the equipment in any industry.

These OHS competencies are intended to be incorporated into national industry and enterprise competency standards considered and endorsed by the National Training Board. It is expected that each industry and enterprise will tailor the OHS competency standards in accordance with its own requirements.

The National OHS Commission and the National Training Board have agreed that the OHS competency outcomes will be incorporated into each relevant industry and enterprise competency standard.

It is the responsibility of each industry to decide how the OHS competencies are to be incorporated into its industry standard, bearing in mind they are not

intended to cover the full range of competencies.

2.2 Assessors

Assessors for OHS certificates are registered by certifying authorities (usually OHS authorities) to carry out assessments of applicants for certificates covered by the National OHS Certification Standard for users and operators of industrial equipment.

In many industries, industry assessors may be accredited by industry training advisory bodies to carry out assessments based on industry competency standards. In those industries which have industry assessors, these assessors may also be registered by the certifying authorities where they meet the selection criteria for OHS certificate assessors.

The National Training Board has endorsed the *Assessors' Competency Standards* developed by the Competency Standards Body for Assessors and Workplace Trainers.

The role, selection and competencies for assessors for OHS certificates are based on the competency standards for industry assessors. Specific competencies required of assessors in assessing OHS certification of users and operators of industrial equipment are listed in the *Information for Intending Assessors for Classes of OHS Certificates in the National OHS Certification Standard for Users and Operators of Industrial Equipment*.

2.3 Assessment

Assessment arrangements for OHS certificates for users and operators of industrial equipment are also consistent with assessment arrangements for industry competency standards. OHS certificates may be issued on the basis of:

- ☞ assessed competence
- ☞ recognition of equivalent qualifications
- ☞ recognition of prior learning.

The methods of assessment to be used are also consistent with competency-based assessment methods in that they are based primarily on direct observation of achievement of the OHS competencies under workplace conditions. However, the purpose of assessment for OHS certification is narrower than for assessment of industry competency standards.

These *Assessment Guidelines* take into account industry assessment principles and processes so that OHS certificate assessment can be carried out as part of the assessment for industry competency standards.

2.4 Relationship between OHS certificates and vocational education and training qualifications

OHS certificates of competency covered by the National OHS Certification Standard, are issued by the certifying authority and are national certificates. They are required under OHS legislation in each State, or Territory and Commonwealth jurisdiction as the authorisation to use or operate the industrial equipment specified in the National Standard.

The certificates enable a certificate holder to work Australia wide, without the need for further assessment or registration on that particular type of work.

Vocational education and training qualifications will be issued on the basis of achievement of industry competency standards. The Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training are working on the establishment of national arrangements for such qualifications.

OHS competencies, as demonstrated by the certificates, are integral to demonstrated industry competencies.

For example, in the building and construction industry, those performing dogging work will need to obtain a Certificate of Competence and may also wish to be assessed for industry qualifications. Ideally, the assessments should be done by the one assessor at the one time. However, provision is made in the National OHS Certification Standard for the assessments to occur separately where simultaneous assessment is not possible, and for the results of the first assessment to be recognised in the second assessment.

The above principles can be applied to many industries where OHS Certificates of Competence are issued by an OHS certifying authority and qualifications are issued by an industry.

The linkages described above are summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1

| AREA OF COMPARISON | INDUSTRY COMPETENCY STANDARDS | NATIONAL OHS CERTIFICATION STANDARD |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Competency Standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ to NTB Policy & Guidelines ∞ endorsed by NTB ∞ incorporate OHS Certification competencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ to NTB Policy & Guidelines ∞ declared by National OHS Commission ∞ part only of industry standards |
| Assessment | To assessment procedures established by industry training providers | To assessment procedures and documentation provided by certifying authority |
| Assessors | Assessment is by people meeting industry requirements, normally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ relevant industry experience ∞ competency to industry assessor standard | Assessment is by people meeting requirements of Certification Standard, normally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ relevant industry experience ∞ relevant certificate ∞ OHS experience ∞ training/experience to industry assessor standards (scope for assessment to be done by industry assessor) |
| Assessors registration | generally by industry training body | OHS certifying authority |
| Qualifications | Industry qualifications (may incorporate OHS competencies) | OHS certificate issued by certifying authority (may also be recognised by industry as meeting some industry competencies) |

Further information on these processes may be obtained by reading the National Training Board's *Policy and Guidelines (1992)*, the Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee document *National Framework for the Recognition of Training (1991)*, and the *National Occupational Health and Safety Certification Standard for Users and Operators of Industrial Equipment (1992)*.

3 Competency-based assessment

Government, unions and employers recognised some years ago that Australia needed a highly skilled, flexible workforce to enable the nation, industries and firms to remain internationally competitive. The adoption of competency-based training was one element of the strategy to improve the skills of the Australian workforce. Competency based training and assessment approaches require the employee or trainee to meet competency standards defined for the work they are to perform. These approaches can be contrasted with traditional learning methods as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

| PROCESS | TRADITIONAL METHODS | COMPETENCY-BASED METHODS |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Training/ learning | <p>Trainee works at the course or group pace.</p> <p>Everyone covers the same course, so trainees might cover material they already know.</p> <p>Tend to focus on classroom training.</p> <p>Courses often do not directly meet the needs of industry.</p> | <p>Trainee largely works at own pace.</p> <p>Trainees mainly cover what they need to learn to achieve competence required.</p> <p>Allow for both on-the-job and off-the-job training.</p> <p>Training can more directly meet industry and enterprise needs.</p> |
| Assessment/ exams/testing | <p>Trainee must establish they 'know' something.</p> <p>Credit not often given for what has been formally or informally learned before.</p> <p>Qualification tells the employer what has been studied.</p> <p>Assessment is mainly done away from the workplace.</p> | <p>Trainee must establish they know and can 'do' things relevant to the workplace.</p> <p>Prior learning is recognised if it is relevant to the competence.</p> <p>Qualification tells employer what employee is competent at.</p> <p>Assessment can be done at work.</p> |

Assessment processes for determining the skills and knowledge of applicants for certificates issued by occupational health and safety authorities have been in place for many years. These assessments have previously been conducted by trainers and government personnel, usually after the applicant has completed a specified number of hours of training and/or practical experience.

The decision to move to a competency-based approach to training and assessment in occupational health and safety requires changes to be made to these procedures.

Assessment is now based on OHS competency standards which are statements of outcomes required in the workplace. These statements specify the skills and knowledge to be applied to meet the performance standard and outcomes required in employment. Performance is the primary assessment goal, with knowledge being tested as part of the performance, or as an extension of the performance observed in the assessment.

For example, in operating mobile equipment such as a mobile crane, the driver must be able to identify hazards. The practical steps taken to eliminate the risks associated with those hazards can be observed as part of a practical test, but the knowledge of the applicant may need to be explored further to ensure he/she could identify other hazards not at the current work site.

Therefore the assessor may proceed in the following way:

- 1 The applicant is asked to identify hazards at the work site and explain approaches for controlling the risks (part of practical).*
- 2 During the subsequent assessment exercise on the operation of the crane, hazard identification and risk control is observed (part of practical).*
- 3 Either during or at the end of the practical assessment, the assessor may ask additional questions about hazards not at the work site (exploring supporting knowledge).*

Assessment of competence relates directly to the competency standard being assessed. There is no comparison with other applicants undertaking the same assessment.

Assessment in the workplace is the preferred method of competency assessment. Therefore, the National OHS Certification Standard allows for the registration of persons already operating in the workplace (eg leading hands, supervisors, on-job trainers/personnel) as assessors by the OHS authorities. Assessors must meet a number of prerequisite requirements in order to be registered (see section 4).

Assessors are provided with a package of materials to use in the assessment.

The package contains nationally uniform guidelines covering:

- ? assessment methods
- ? assessor requirements
- ? assessment issues
- ? assessment processes
- ? assessment instruments for each certificate class and competency standard.

The instruments comprise the following:

- ✍ A bank of exercises for each class of certificate from which a sample can be drawn.
- ✍ Sets of instructions to the assessors and to the applicants which allow assessment to be conducted in a manner that is consistent across Australia.
 - ? These instructions will cover items such as material and equipment required for the assessment, steps in the assessment, recording requirements, and advice on overcoming possible difficulties.
- ✍ Model answers and checklists to guide the assessor.

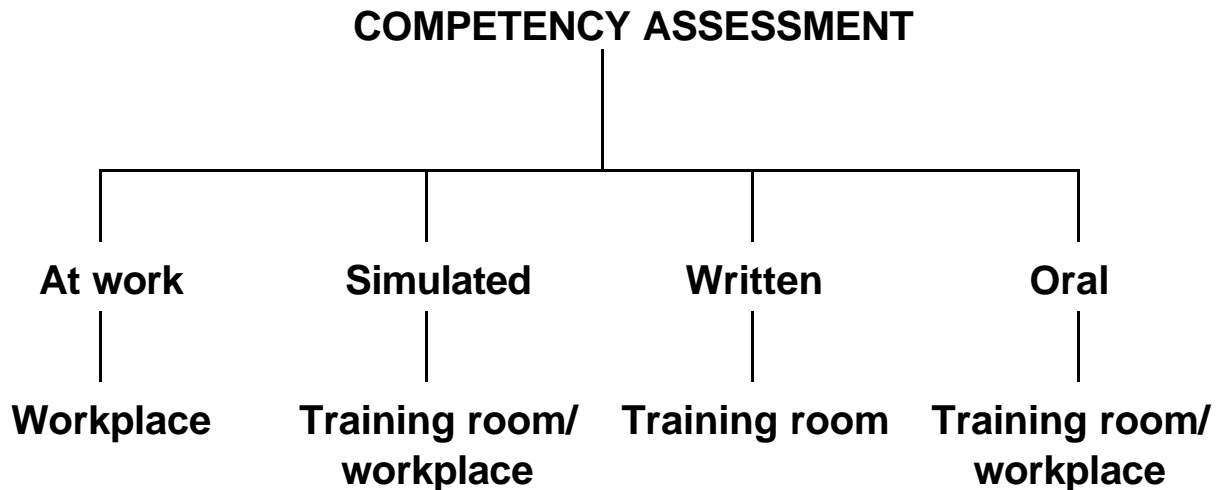
The information that follows should be used by assessors to conduct the assessments in a consistent manner. In some cases, as allowed by the OHS authorities, the assessors may be given discretion to substitute alternative assessment approaches for those selected by the computer sampling method, eg where the nominated equipment is not available.

The types of assessment instrument that may be part of any assessment include:

- ✍ records of training and practical experience.
- ✍ practical exercises, including simulation and role play
- ✍ project work, assignments and case studies
- ✍ multiple choice response
- ✍ oral questions/answers
- ✍ short answers
- ✍ extended answers (essays)

These instruments may be used either on- or off-the-job as shown below:

Figure 3



An example of the Standard and the evidence requirement for a particular unit of competence from the Cranes and Hoists schedule is:

✍ **EQUIPMENT**

Vehicle Loading crane

✍ **COMPETENCY STANDARD**

? **Unit of Competence**

1 Assess and secure equipment and work area

? **Element of Competence**

1.2 Plan work

? **Performance Criteria**

1.2.1 A workplace operations plan is developed in consultation with the relevant workplace personnel. The plan takes into account job requirements, priorities, workplace rules and procedures, identified hazards and hazard control measures.

? **Range of Variables**

The performance criteria for this unit of competence will apply to all configurations of the following cranes:

- vehicle loading cranes

Evidence of competency is to encompass the satisfactory application of:

- current State/Territory OHS legislation, standards and codes of practice; and
- the hierarchy of hazard control measures with elimination, substitution, isolation and engineering control measures being selected before safe work practices and personal protective equipment.

The instructions below are taken from the assessment materials.

☞ **ASSESSMENT APPROACHES**

The assessment for this section is through oral or written questioning.

? **Assessment Questions**

- 1 What procedures should you follow in preparing an **Error! Switch argument not specified** operational plan for cranes?

Job requirements, priorities, workplace rules, procedures, identified hazards and hazard control measures

- 2 What types of hazards would you consider for **Error! Switch argument not specified** incorporation into your work plan?

| | | |
|----|--------------------------|---|
| ?? | Powerlines | ? |
| ?? | Trees | ? |
| ?? | Overhead service lines | ? |
| ?? | Bridges | ? |
| ?? | Surrounding structures | ? |
| ?? | Obstructions | ? |
| ?? | Facilities | ? |
| ?? | Other equipment | ? |
| ?? | Dangerous materials | ? |
| ?? | Underground services | ? |
| ?? | Recently filled trenches | ? |

- 3 What hazard control strategies would need to be included in the plan for the crane procedures?

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
| ?? | Task being performed | ? |
| ?? | Any site hazard | ? |
| ?? | PPE required by crane personnel | ? |
| ?? | Warning signs | ? |
| ?? | Barriers | ? |
| ?? | Traffic control | ? |
| ?? | Lighting | ? |
| ?? | Dangerous/hazardous material | ? Error! Switch argument not specified. |

Key: ? = Critical

The above questions are samples from an item bank, which also includes model answers. Actual questions used for any assessment are selected manually or by computer.

The assessment is conducted by the assessor taking account of the information given in the Units of Competence and the assessment instruments, as well as other information provided as follows:

- ✍ these guidelines
- ✍ any instructions for assessors for an equipment schedule or class.

4 Assessor requirements

An applicant for registration as an assessor with the certifying authorities must meet all of the following criteria:

- ✍ Normally hold a relevant OHS certificate in the use and operation of the type of equipment for which the registration as certificate assessor is sought.
- ✍ Have achieved Assessor Competency Standards or their equivalent.
- ✍ Have appropriate industry experience in the use and operation of the relevant equipment.
- ✍ Demonstrate familiarity with OHS legislation and relevant equipment-specific regulations, standards and codes of practice.

Applicants for registration as OHS certificate assessors must present to a certifying authority, original documents and/or certified statements declaring that he/she has the above qualifications and experience.

Further information on the requirements associated arrangements for assessors for OHS certificates is included in the *Information for Intending Assessors for Classes of OHS Certificates in the National OHS Certification Standard for Users and Operators of Industrial Equipment*.

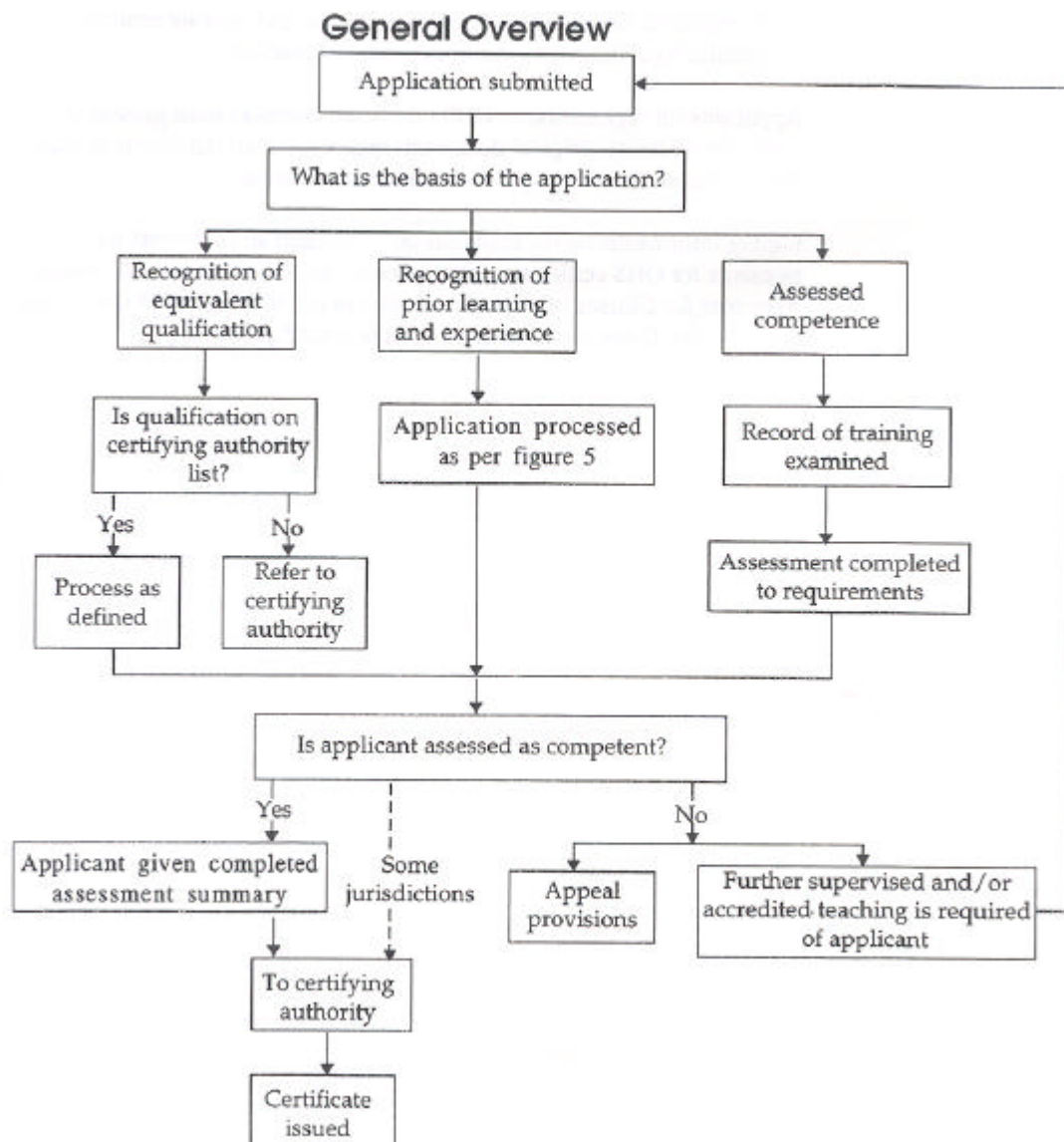
5 Application and assessment approaches

The National OHS Certification Standard provides for OHS certificates to be issued on the basis of:

- ☒ recognition of equivalent qualifications
- ☒ recognition of prior learning and experience
- ☒ assessed competence.

These are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4



5.1 Recognition of equivalent qualifications

Applicants may submit qualifications already held as evidence of competency in the use or operation of a class of industrial equipment.

Assessors will be issued with a list of qualifications which are accepted as equivalent to particular National Standard Certificate Classes by the certifying authorities. For example, this list will contain qualifications and internal certificates issued by:

- ✍ Australian Defence Forces
- ✍ Departments of Mines, Transport
- ✍ Telecom Australia
- ✍ various railway authorities
- ✍ marine services
- ✍ some overseas authorities from New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States of America and other countries

The list will be updated from time to time.

Applications submitting other qualifications and internal certificates must be referred to the appropriate certifying authority, which will follow procedures similar to those specified for recognition of prior learning in considering such applications.

The assessor must use procedures and the list issued by the appropriate certifying authority which will issue the certificate.

In some cases, prior qualifications may be accepted as evidence of some of the competencies required for a certificate to be issued. The other competencies may be demonstrated by prior learning or by assessment.

5.2 Recognition of prior learning and experience

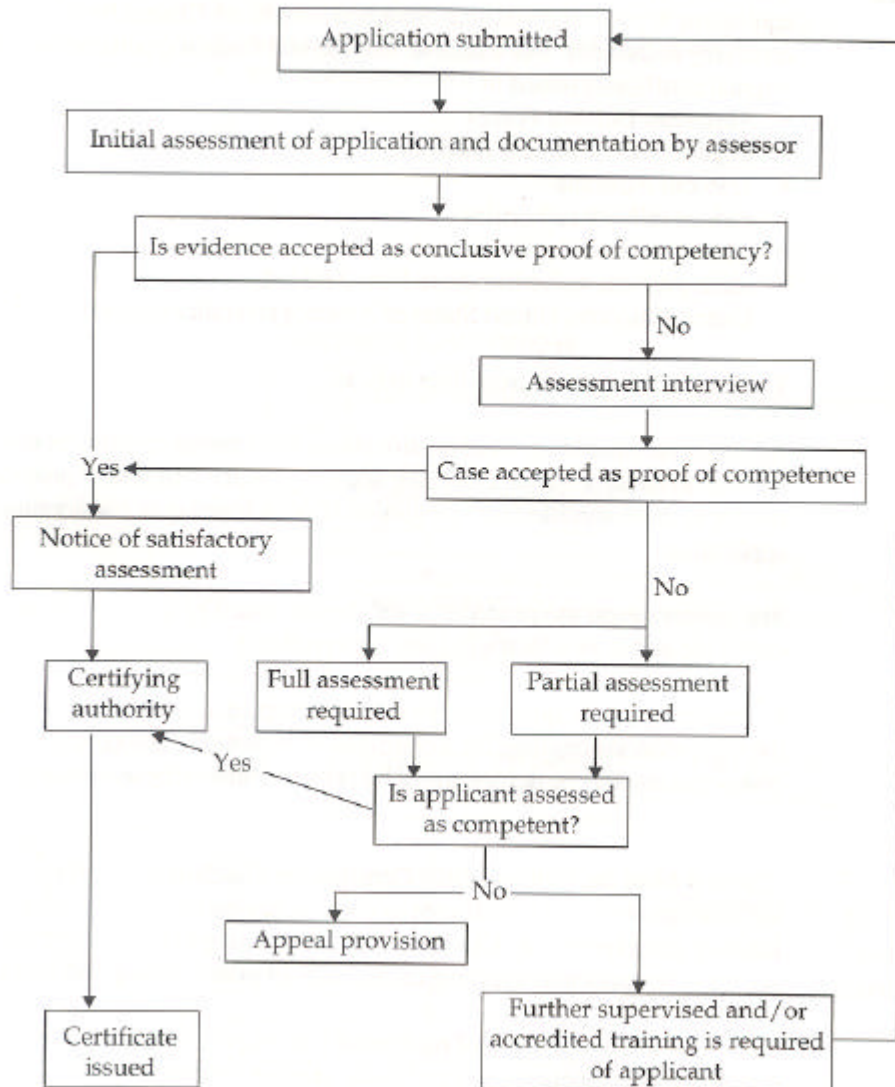
Clause 5.14 of the National OHS Certification Standard allows for any applicant to apply for a certificate of competency on the basis of prior learning and experience. Clauses 5.9 to 5.12 relating to direct supervision do not apply to applicants applying on the basis of prior learning and experience.

Where the use or operation of equipment has not previously required a certificate of competency in a particular State or Territory, special arrangements for the recognition of prior learning and experience have been established (see Clause 5.30 of the Standard).

Figure 5 below is a flow chart showing the processes associated with prior learning and experience.

Figure 5

Recognition of prior learning process



5.2.1 Application Process

An applicant seeking certification based on prior learning and experience under the National OHS Certification Standard must:

- (a) make an application to a jurisdiction or a registered assessor,
- (b) pay an application fee, and
- (c) provide details verifying the applicant's claim that he/she has previously gained some or all of the required competencies. The assessor should request the applicant to provide copies of relevant documentation which would assist in determining the applicant's competencies. This may include documentation relating to:

- ☞ relevant work history. The assessor should examine the documentation of the applicant's work history, such as log books and work references, with a view to finding evidence that the applicant has been exercising some or all of the required competencies. Assessors are also responsible for ensuring evidence of competence presented in this way is authentic. In some circumstances it may be necessary to contact an employer or provider of a reference for confirmation or clarification.
- ☞ structured on or off-the-job training. The assessor should examine training documentation provided by the applicant to determine whether the competencies gained through the structured training correspond to some or all of the competencies required for the certificate. Such documentation might include certificates of course completion, statement of units of training successfully completed or references from persons overseeing training. Assessors are also responsible for ensuring evidence of competence presented in this way is authentic. In some circumstances it may be necessary to contact an employer, training body, trainer or other appropriate person for confirmation or clarification.
- ☞ on-the-job informal training and experience. The assessor should examine documentation such as log books and statements by persons overseeing training to determine whether the competencies gained through the informal training correspond to some or all of the competencies required for the certificate. Assessors are also responsible for ensuring evidence of competence presented in this way is authentic. It may be necessary to contact an employer, training body, trainer or other appropriate person for confirmation or clarification.
- ☞ occupational health and safety training. The assessor should examine documentation to determine whether the competencies gained through the training correspond to some or all of the competencies required for the certificate. Some examples of training by which applicants may gain relevant competencies are:
 - ☞ induction training
 - ☞ on-the-job instruction
 - ☞ supervisor training
 - ☞ OHS representative training
 - ☞ school or college courses.

Assessors are also responsible for ensuring evidence of competence presented in this way is authentic. In some cases it may be necessary to contact an employer, employer association, union, training body, person overseeing training or other appropriate person for confirmation or clarification.

Evidence of training using a computer-based simulator or similar should be considered under one of the categories above.

5.2.2 Assessment Process associated with Recognition of Prior Learning

It is anticipated that the majority of applicants will undergo a full or partial assessment to assess their competency levels for certification purposes. The process is as follows:

- (a) application provides evidence as to how their prior learning or experience relates to the equipment covered by the competency units of the particular certificate they wish to obtain.
- (b) the assessor reviews the application and may contact reference sources from documentation provided by the applicant to:
 - ☒ confirm the source of the documentation
 - ☒ gain additional information from an employer or other relevant person, and
 - ☒ verify the experience and skills level of the applicant that the referee is prepared to attest to.
- (c) the assessor interviews the applicant to ascertain the following:
 - ☒ applicant's operating skills and knowledge
 - ☒ applicant's particular knowledge level in regard to the relevant units, elements and range of equipment for that certificate type, and
 - ☒ further information of documentation if necessary.
- (d) after the interview, the assessor may do one or more of the following:
 - ☒ require a partial assessment of the applicant (eg operating the equipment)
 - ☒ require the applicant to undergo a complete assessment of competency
 - ☒ request further information or clarification if necessary
 - ☒ provide to the applicant and the certifying authority, notice of a satisfactory assessment and the necessary paperwork for issue of a certificate
 - ☒ indicate to the applicant that he/she has not been assessed as demonstrating the required competencies for certification at the time
 - ☒ counsel the applicant in relation to training to upgrade his/her operating skills and knowledge.

5.2.3 Certifying Authority's Role

Assessor decisions for certification based on the recognition of prior learning and experience will be accepted and processed by the certifying authorities, and certificates issued to successful applicants on payment of the prescribed fees. All documentation will be subject to an audit process by the certifying authority.

5.3 Assessed competency

Where the basis of the application is wholly or partially on the basis of supervised and accredited training, the assessment processes described in Sections 6 and 7 apply.

6 Guidelines for assessment

6.1 Industry context

The assessment will be completed within an industry and enterprise context or any place where appropriate facilities and equipment are available, including skill centres and TAFE colleges. It is important that the assessor resolves the following points:

- ✍ The relationship between the OHS certificate assessment and any industry assessment.
- ✍ Identification of relevant industry and enterprise expectations regarding the assessment, equipment suitable for use in the assessment, work practices and OHS procedures to be observed.
- ✍ Consideration of any Record of Training and other relevant documents as part of the assessment process. In many instances, the Record of Training provides the basis for a shorter assessment. The contents of the Record of Training are specified in Appendix C.

6.2 Basic principles

It is important that the assessor conducts the assessment so that the correct decisions are made.

There are several principles that should be followed in any good assessment. Important amongst these are;

- ✍ Validity
ie the instrument assesses the performance required in the competency standards that it sets out to assess.
- ✍ Reliability
ie the same judgement would be made by another assessor or by the same assessor on another occasion.
- ✍ Flexibility
ie the assessment caters for different methods of learning/training and for different assessment/working conditions.
- ✍ Fairness
ie the assessment is equitable to all applicants, and made against known criteria.

Further information on assessment principles is included in Appendix D.

The assessment instruments provided for each category and class in the National OHS Certification Standard have been prepared by experienced personnel under the guidance of expert working groups. They have been judged as being valid, providing the basis for a reliable, flexible and fair assessment.

The assessment instruments that have been prepared concentrate on critical and frequently used competencies to help ensure that assessment is valid, reliable and cost effective.

Therefore it is important that assessors use the instruments as they were intended to be used. Variations should only be made in unusual circumstances, which are documented, are approved by the certifying authority in appropriate circumstances, and can be justified on the grounds of the assessment principles.

6.3 Selection of assessment items

For example, if a crane being used by the applicant has a particular drive arrangement which is not covered by the assessment package, the assessment should be modified to assess competence for that particular drive where appropriate. Notes should be made of the changes for later reference.

Assessment items should be selected randomly from the bank of alternatives wherever possible. Computer software already loaded with the assessment instruments has been provided for this purpose.

In some cases the work environment, or restrictions on resources will mean only a limited number of items can be used. In these cases, the assessor will need to make a manual selection, which may need to be justified should an applicant appeal against the assessment.

For example, in the scaffolding classes, mast climbers are not generally available in Northern Territory and Tasmania. In this case alternative competencies demonstrated on related equipment will be acceptable, e.g barrow hoists.

6.4 Assessment should not unduly interfere with production

Assessment in the workplace will often interfere with production by requiring the use of particular equipment. Therefore, the time for the assessment needs to be arranged with the enterprise and workplace personnel so that production interruptions are minimised.

This can be done by:

- ☞ observing productive work done by the applicant where this is consistent with one or more of the assessment items
- ☞ arranging for the use of the equipment in non-productive/low use periods.

For example, a trainee crane driver may be observed at work transferring loads. The work can be assessed as part of the unit of competence 'Secure and transfer loads.' Other assessments related to the unit of competence 'Assess and secure equipment and work area' could be completed at the end of the working day. This is more practical if the assessor is at the workplace or nearby.

Any questions covering supporting or underpinning knowledge should be asked at natural breaks in the operation or use of equipment or separately.

6.5 Integrated (holistic) assessment

The practical assessment frequently covers more than one performance criteria and sometimes more than one element of competence. Coverage of multiple performance criteria is intended to give the assessor a more complete view of the applicant's competence under working conditions. Such methods overcome a frequent criticism of competency-based assessment that claims it is too atomistic (i.e. broken down into many very small tasks) and does not relate to what is actually done in the workplace.

For example, it could be expected that competence in scaffolding units, such as 'Plan and Prepare work' is primarily assessed by means of a single assignment covering all of the unit.

The guidelines below describe how the assessment should be approached and principles that should be followed in resolving any difficulties.

6.6 Control of assessment costs

In most circumstances the assessor will be expected to control the costs of assessment, especially in the use of expensive equipment and/or where the assessor is being paid by the employer. The time and cost of assessment have been considered by the expert working groups overseeing the development of the instruments.

The assessor can assist in controlling time spent and costs by:

- ✍ careful planning of the assessment arrangements beforehand and avoiding delays in order to minimise the time that equipment is used
- ✍ using integrated assessment items (see above)
- ✍ making use of evidence of prior learning accumulated through records of training, log books etc.

6.7 Applicant language difficulties

Applicant language difficulties can take two forms:

- ✍ limited spoken English

In this case, the applicant is required to be able to speak English at a level appropriate to the particular class of equipment (see clause 5.8 of the National OHS Certification Standard). The assessor should provide additional explanation, without compromising the assessment, at a level appropriate to the work and equipment.

Failure to understand after the additional explanation, may be grounds for recording 'not achieved.' The applicant should be counselled to seek assistance where language is a problem.

- ✍ limited English literacy skills

The assessor may give the assessment items orally instead of requiring written work, provided that this does not compromise the assessment. In this case the assessor should record all answers.

In some certificate classes, specific literacy skills are required to meet the competencies; for example, estimation or calculation of loads, plan reading or reading of a load chart. In these cases, oral assistance must not be given.

Where the applicant displays significant language difficulty and therefore requires additional training, the assessor should where possible provide advice in the following areas:

- ✍ interpreter services
- ✍ availability of English language courses and bridging courses
- ✍ information on the occupation in Australia relevant to the assessment
- ✍ details of assessment processes.

6.8 Use of technical

Historically, various technical terms have been used across Australia to describe the same piece of equipment, task or process. The assessor is not

terms

to penalise an applicant for using acceptable alternative terms.

For example, certain scaffolding components are known by different terms around Australia. What is known as an outrigger is a cantilevered suspension beam to some, and a base frame to others.

An Australian Standard is available which has a glossary of preferred and alternative terms. However, it is desirable that the assessor uses the terms known to the applicant when explaining any question, without, of course, providing clues to the answer.

The applicant should be counselled to use the Australian Standard terms, but should not be penalised for failing to do so.

Assessors themselves should maintain up-to-date knowledge of relevant Australian Standards.

7 Processes? guidance for assessors and applicants

7.1 Assessment arrangements- assessors

Assessment arrangements will vary significantly between industries and within industries. In some industries, eg building and construction, the assessment arrangements, including the selection of assessor, will be undertaken with advice from the worksite or enterprise consultative committee. Where consultative committees do not exist, less formal arrangements will apply.

For the purposes of assessment for OHS certificates, the assessor responsible for a particular assessment must be registered by an OHS certifying authority.

In cases where the assessor is from outside the worksite, the worksite and/or enterprise protocols will need to be followed. These may include:

- ✍ Making preliminary contacts and/or preliminary visits
- ✍ Ascertaining and complying with enterprise/worksite visitor and safety procedures throughout visits and assessments
- ✍ Explaining the requirements for the assessment to individuals and groups such as:
 - ✍ management
 - ✍ supervisors
 - ✍ worksite/enterprise consultative committee
 - ✍ fellow employees
 - ✍ applicant(s)
- ✍ Determining the enterprise/worksite safety procedures and ensuring these are observed throughout the visit and assessment.

Good personnel relations practice should be followed during the assessment.

The assessor is also responsible for the forward planning which will enable the assessment to proceed smoothly. This includes:

- ✍ Ensuring a suitable work area or worksite is available.
- ✍ Making arrangements for required equipment and materials.
- ✍ Obtaining the cooperation of other people and instructing them in what is required of them.

7.2 Assessment arrangements- applicants

Applicants are required to meet the requirements of the Standard for the particular certificate class. Key provisions of the Standard relating to the assessment are described in Appendix A.

Assessment takes into account material the applicant can provide including:

- ✍ Records of training including any formative assessments made by the person overseeing the training.
- ✍ Evidence of experience and qualifications obtained through formal or informal training such as TAFE programs, correspondence courses, enterprise-specific internal training, or private study. The qualifications may be Australian or overseas.
- ✍ Where applicable, the name and address of the applicant's employer and

7.3 Processing of applications

the person oversighting the training.

Two alternative methods are available by which applications for assessment may be processed in accordance with the National OHS Certification Standard:

- ✍ By the certifying authority before it is handed to the assessor to complete the assessment.
- ✍ By the assessor, who completes the application processes on behalf of the certifying authority before completing the assessment.

Procedures for receiving and processing the fee will be laid down by the local certifying authority. Documentation required by the authority will be:

- ✍ a completed application form
- ✍ a declaration indicating whether the applicant has had any certificate of competency for any type of industrial equipment suspended or cancelled by any certifying authority in the past five years.

The application is to be processed according to the local certifying authority's requirements.

7.4 Explanations to the applicant

Before commencing the assessment, the assessor must ensure that the applicant fully understands the assessment procedure to be followed. This includes explaining:

- ✍ The portability aspects of the national OHS certification system.
- ✍ The common and different aspects of certificate and industry assessments.
- ✍ The requirements for the applicant and the assessor to stop an assessment at any stage and in an emergency.
- ✍ The exercise that is to be completed, including:
 - ✍ any instruction provided with the exercise
 - ✍ materials and equipment to be used
 - ✍ reference materials allowed
 - ✍ role of the assessor.

In addition, the assessor should:

- ✍ Seek feedback that the applicant understands what is required.
- ✍ Specifying the time allowed for the exercise where such time is specified in the instrument.
- ✍ Clearly define the outcomes required in the exercise, such as required standard of work, amount of material to be moved, number of loads to be shifted, etc.

Assessment should be seen as a joint partnership between the assessor and the applicant. Each step in the process should be discussed and the applicant kept fully informed at all times. The task is to discover what the applicant knows and can do.

In cases where the applicant has not understood the instructions, the assessor is to provide additional explanation consistent with local technical and industrial terms. Where the applicant is unable to understand these further instructions, the assessor should seek additional information from the applicant's employer or training supervisor to determine what local terms are

used and the extent of the applicant's experience/training, before determining an assessment result.

The applicant is entitled to a full explanation of the results at the completion of the assessment. Where the applicant is dissatisfied, he/she should be advised of the avenues for appeal.

Where the applicant is aggrieved, the appeals processes applying in the State or Territory and administered by the certifying authority shall apply.

7.5 Assessment process

The assessment process normally proceeds as follows:

- (a) The applicant makes a request to the authority or the assessor to be assessed. The application must be on the basis of one or more of the following:
 - ☒ supervised/accredited training
 - ☒ equivalent qualifications
 - ☒ prior learning and experience
 - ☒ some combination of the aboveIn addition, the likely requirement for a full or partial assessment should be determined by the assessor (see Section 5.2 on Recognition of prior learning and experience).
- (b) The assessor reviews the information provided by the applicant particularly the Record of Training and determines whether all or part of the assessment is completed according to guidelines provided by the certifying authority.
- (c) The assessor discusses the applicant's readiness for assessment and both then agree to a time and place where the assessment will be held.
- (d) Assessment documentation including model answers is generated from the computer system, or suitable assessment items are selected at random from the item bank where a computer system is not available.
- (e) The assessment is conducted in accordance with the Standard, the certifying authority instructions, and any instructions accompanying the assessment documentation (including this document).
- (f) The applicant is assessed on performance. If the applicant operates equipment or works unsafely, the assessment for that unit of competence is halted. The assessment is also stopped for that unit if a critical question or result is not achieved. At the discretion of the assessor and with the applicant's agreement, after counselling and notification that the applicant had not achieved the standard, the applicant's competence for the remainder of the assessment may be informally reviewed to provide feedback on the applicant's competence in other areas.
- (g) The assessment is completed, the assessor provides an assessment summary and counsels the applicant, providing information on competencies achieved, and/or areas requiring further assessment plus advice on how to improve performance, as applicable.
- (h) The results of the assessment are recorded with comments in the record of training (see Appendix C).
- (i) The assessor arranges for the assessment documents to be filed for further reference including advice to the Certifying Authority and in case of a query or appeal.
- (j) The assessor provides the applicant with the original and duplicate of the Assessment Summary.

(k) The applicant provides the original to the Certifying Authority. The triplicate is retained by the Assessor.

7.6 Assessment conditions

The assessor must ensure that all assessment conditions comply with the guidelines which accompany the assessment instruments. Furthermore, it is important that there are no interruptions to the assessment from fellow workers, that the equipment operating conditions comply, and the noise level does not prevent free communication between the assessor and the applicant.

Where the conditions are unsatisfactory, the assessment should be halted without penalty to the applicant and the conditions rectified. If it is not possible to rectify the conditions, the assessor needs to take this into consideration when making a judgement about the applicant.

The assessor should ensure that adequate materials are available, including references where required, and that the equipment is suitable for use in the assessment.

If for any reason the exercise is unsuitable for the environment in which the candidate works, or because relevant equipment and materials are unavailable, an equivalent exercise should be selected manually. This manual selection should be noted on the assessment documentation.

7.7 Time allowed

If there is no time limit given in the assessment instruments, the assessor should allow a reasonable time for the applicant to complete the exercises. The assessor should take into account factors which may affect the time allowed, such as:

- ✍ the applicant's level of confidence
- ✍ the applicant's familiarity with the worksite and operating conditions, especially if it is not the applicant's normal workplace
- ✍ interruptions to the assessment and/or applicant's concentration
- ✍ requirements for the assessor to give the applicant additional explanations and instructions.

One exception to this would be where an emergency situation must be dealt with during the assessment (either simulated or real). Here the applicant should demonstrate normal response times.

7.8 Use of checklists and model answers

The assessment instruments are made up of performance items and knowledge questions. Some items and questions are critically important and failure to achieve any of these means the applicant is not yet competent.

- ✍ Only a limited number of NA (not applicable) indications may be allowed in the assessment. If the number exceeds that allowed in the assessor instructions, the assessment must be continued with additional exercises until the required number of results are observed.
- ✍ Where the sequence of steps taken by the applicant is important, it will be noted in the model answers. In these cases, the assessment should be marked not only for results achieved but also for the sequence achieved. Following the specified sequence may be compulsory, ie equivalent to

critical.

- ✎ The assessor instructions will indicate the number of results that must be achieved in order to record 'competency achieved'. This number may be for each performance criteria and/or overall for the assessment.

In all cases the assessor instructions are to be followed when recording the results of the assessment.

7.9 Use of oral questioning

Oral questioning can be used in a variety of circumstances, for example:

- ✎ Where it is indicated in the assessment items, particularly to supplement observed performance.
- ✎ To explain an incomplete written answer, especially where there is an indication that the applicant may know more than he/she has written.
- ✎ To obtain an understanding of what the applicant is doing, where this is unclear. If the applicants are willing, it may be helpful for them to provide a brief on-going commentary of the process they are following in performing a task.
- ✎ Where the applicant indicates a preference, especially where there is a reading/writing difficulty.

However, a request for oral questioning may not be acceptable in circumstances:

- 1 Where reading competencies are required to operate or use equipment safely, *eg where the applicant is required to read and interpret a crane load chart or to read and interpret the equipment instruments/manufacture's data plate or to read plans and drawings for a scaffold.*
- 2 Where oral communication would compromise the assessment instrument, *eg several items in different equipment classes require the applicant to interpret a diagram.*

7.10 Repeated assessments

The National OHS Certification Standard states that an assessment shall not be repeated until the applicant has received further supervised and accredited training and reassessment shall take place no sooner than three weeks after the initial assessment.

Those elements not completed satisfactorily in the original assessment must be reassessed. The applicant may be reassessed in all or part of the assessment.

The assessor should accept the results of previous assessments where the applicant has been assessed as achieving some of the competencies, unless specific concerns exist. Judgement should be exercised when considering prior results.

When recording the results of a repeated assessment, competencies previously achieved should be marked as such and referred to the previous assessment.

7.11 Record of training

The requirements for a record of training are described in the OHS certification standard. Information to be included in the record of training is detailed in Appendix C.

Where supervised/accredited training is the basis of the application, the assessor is to examine the record of training provided by the applicant to determine:

- ☞ Whether the applicant has completed satisfactory training.
- ☞ If some consideration should be given to the applicant under the provisions of prior learning and experience.
- ☞ To determine what areas of assessment should be conducted in line with specific instructions for a class of equipment.

For example, in scaffolding, dogging and rigging, the specific instructions to the assessor allow for a reduction in the length and scope of assessment where adequate records of training are documented.

The record of training is to be signed and verified by a person overseeing the training.

- ☞ The National OHS Certification Standard requires that a user or operator in training shall (except under specified conditions) be directly supervised. The decision concerning the level of supervision required shall be made by the person overseeing the training. (Refer to glossary definitions for Accredited Training and Direct Supervision.)
- ☞ A person competent to oversee the training means a person who has acquired through training, qualification, or experience, or a combination of these, the knowledge and skills enabling that person to perform the direct supervision task. Normally the person overseeing the training will hold a relevant certificate of competency and have undertaken appropriate accredited training.
- ☞ In geographically remote locations where this is not possible, employers may receive authorisation from the State/Territory certifying authority for a person to train without a certificated person overseeing the training. This permission will be based on the employer giving evidence that appropriate training of certificate operators is not available due to this factor and the certifying authority will set an appropriate time limit to this exemption on a case-by-case basis.

It is the assessor's responsibility to ensure that the evidence in the record of training is authentic.

7.12 Assessment documentation

It is important that the assessment documentation is completed fully and accurately for future reference and also as a safeguard for the assessor. Where there are unusual points these should be noted in the space provided for comments. It is especially important for assessors to provide comments in cases where competency has not been achieved.

This documentation may be required for:

- ☞ an applicant's appeal

☞ auditing by the certifying authority.

7.13 Auditing of assessments

The certifying authorities are responsible for ensuring that the processes under the OHS Certification Standard are followed and the required outcomes are achieved.

The authorities will use auditing processes to ensure consistency of assessments throughout Australia. These audits will involve reviewing assessment results and assessors' records on a regular basis.

Assessors will be required to advise the appropriate certifying authority of assessment results and maintain adequate records in a safe location for four years.

Auditing of the assessment results of each registered certificate assessor will be carried out approximately every eighteen months.

Audits will involve auditors both:

- ☞ assessing a number of applicants at the same time as the assessor for OHS certificates, and later comparing their assessments and discussing any points of difference, and
- ☞ auditing the record-keeping and notification documentation generated by the assessment process.

The documentation which an certificate assessor must make available to an auditor, on request, includes the following:

- ☞ any checklists or guidelines used by the assessor in conducting assessment (to verify that the assessments have been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the certifying authorities)
- ☞ records verifying the assessor's statistical return to the certifying authority of the number of applicants recommended for certificates, the number rejected for certificates, the number re-assessed, and so on
- ☞ records verifying that the assessor has only assessed applicants eligible to be assessed, and
- ☞ copies of information, guidance, application forms etc that are given to applicants.

For further information regarding the audit process, contact the local certifying authority.

7.14 Contacting the certifying authority

Registered assessors should contact a certifying authority at any time that they:

- ☞ want to clarify detail on any matter to do with certificate assessment
- ☞ have changed their contact details

- ✍ want to change the classes of certificates they are registered as assessors for, or
- ✍ face problems which they cannot resolve and which compromise the OHS and/or assessment process.

8 References

National Occupational Health and Safety Certification Standard for Users and Operators of Industrial Equipment, Worksafe Australia, December 1992, [NOHSC:1006(1992)]

National Guidelines for Occupational Health and Safety Competency Standards for the Operation of Loadshifting and Other Types of Specified Equipment, Worksafe Australia, December 1992, [NOHSC:7019(1992)]

National Competency Standards, Policy and Guidelines, National Training Board, second edition, October 1992

National Framework for the Recognition of Training, Vocational Education Employment and Training Advisory Council, November 1991

Competency Standards, Assessors, Competency Standards Body - Assessors and Workplace Trainers, 1993

Framework for the Implementation of a Competency Based Vocational Education and Training System, Vocational Education Employment and Training Advisory Committee, 1993

Australian Vocational Certificate Training System, Employment and Skills Formation Council. 1992

Information for Intending Assessors for Classes of OHS Certificates in the National OHS Certification Standard for Users and Operators of Industrial Equipment, Worksafe Australia

Regulatory basis: assessment requirements of the OHS Certification Standard

In this section, some important requirements of the National OHS Certification Standard relating to assessment are listed.

1 Eligibility for a certificate

Refer clauses 5.3, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8 of the National OHS Certification Standard

An applicant shall demonstrate competence in using or operating the particular type of equipment under workplace conditions, in accordance with the competency standards specified for the relevant certificate in Schedules A, B and C of this standard by:

(a) Demonstrating competence in completing tasks with particular type(s) of equipment, and through completion of supervised and accredited training.

OR

(b) Providing evidence of equivalent qualifications.

OR

(c) Providing evidence of equivalent prior learning and experience. [5.6 p 7]

Whenever possible, assessment should be by demonstration of competence. This involves applying skill and knowledge in the workplace to the level described in the standard. Greater emphasis on assessment of practical skills applied in the workplace or its equivalent by an assessor, rather than the testing of knowledge in classrooms, is one obvious difference between competency-based assessment and most traditional certification procedures.

However knowledge assessment is also important and this must sometimes be done away from the workplace. The knowledge that is assessed must be related to the competency standards in the Schedules: it is not assessed for its own sake. Whenever possible knowledge assessment should be combined with the practical assessment or additional to the practical assessment.

The demonstration of prior knowledge by evidence of equivalent qualifications, prior learning and experience is consistent with the national vocational education system and certification arrangements. Therefore the method of learning is not important: competence in the workplace is the primary ground for awarding the certificate.

In addition there are requirements in the areas of age, health and English literacy that the applicant is required to meet:

All users and operators of industrial equipment and users and operators in training shall have the necessary health and fitness to safely operate the relevant type of industrial equipment. [clause 5.3 p 7]

An applicant for assessment shall be from 18 years of age. Training may commence at an earlier age. Exemption for individuals from the age requirement shall be considered on application to the certifying authority as appropriate. [clause 5.7 p 8]

An applicant shall be able to use the English language at a level that is appropriate to the safe use and operation of the particular class of equipment as specified in the competency standard. [clause 5.8 p 8]

For example, in the scaffolding classes, the applicant must be able to climb ladders and move around partially completed scaffolds in order to complete the work. At the completion of the erection, a scaffolding handover certificate has to be completed. This certificate meets certain legislative requirements, and should be completed by a person over 18 years or age.

2 Certificate

Refer clauses 5.15 and 5.19 of the Standard.

In order to apply for assessment, the applicant shall submit the following documentation and fee to the certifying authority or, where delegated, to the certificate assessor:

- (a) a completed application form;*
- (b) where appropriate:
 - (i) a record of training, or*
 - (ii) evidence of qualifications, relevant prior learning, experience and training;**
- (c) where employed or in training, the name or address of their employer and/or the person overseeing the training;*
- (d) the prescribed fee; and*
- (e) a declaration as to whether they have had any certificate of competency for any type of industrial equipment suspended or cancelled by any certifying authority in the past five years.'*
[clause 5.15 p 9]

When the applicant believes they have reached the appropriate competency level, the applicant shall arrange to be assessed by a certificate assessor. [clause 5.19 p 9]

The assessment process for certification commences when the applicant submits the required documentation and fees to the authority. It provides for the applicant to complete the documentation before or after the completion of training.

This places the onus on the applicant to initiate the assessment process. It is recommended that potential applicants seek advice on their readiness for assessment from others in the workplace, eg trainers and supervisors. In addition, peer review of progress may assist the preparation for assessment.

3 Assessment

The Standard includes extensive requirements on the assessment process. The assessment processes are under the control of a certificate assessor.

The decision as to whether or not an applicant has met the competency standards for the particular certificate shall be made by a certificate assessor. [clause 5.17 p 9]

The certificate assessor is registered by the certifying authority. The processes that the assessor follows are detailed in the Standard and Section 6 of these *Guidelines*.

3.1 Applicant applying on the basis of supervised and accredited training

It is expected that there will be a large proportion of applicants applying for certification at the end of training and related supervised experience. Evidence of training and the results of training are indicated by the record of training.

The user or operator in training shall provide a record of training to the assessor. [clause 5.10 p 8]

The record of training shall be signed and verified by the person overseeing the training. [clause 5.11 p 9]

The record of training, whether it is conducted on or off the job is an important component of the assessment framework. It is an output of the training process and part of the process and output of the assessment. The information required in the record of training to assist the assessor is detailed in Appendix C.

3.2 Applicant claiming equivalent qualifications

Applicants may claim equivalent qualifications, particularly from overseas, or from training in another State or Territory.

The certifying authority or assessor shall assess the application and determine the equivalence or otherwise of the qualifications, and:

- (a) where the qualifications are not recognised as equivalent, require the applicant to undergo supervised and accredited training;*
- OR*
- (b) where appropriate, recognise the equivalent qualifications and exempt the applicant from undergoing further supervised and accredited training; and,*
- (c) when equivalence is accepted, determine whether the applicant should undergo a competency assessment,*

covering all or part of the competency standards for the particular certificate. [clause 5.13 p 8]

The Standard therefore allows a number of alternative courses of action by the certifying authority and/or the assessor. These include partial or total acceptance of qualifications for the purposes of training and/or assessment. (Information on recognition of equivalent qualifications is given in Section 5.1)

3.3 Applicant claiming prior learning or experience

This area has the potential for presenting the certifying authority or assessor with the widest range of situations in which discretion should be applied and allows for a large range of potential outcomes from the assessment process.

The certifying authority or assessor shall assess the application and determine the adequacy of equivalent prior learning or experience, and:

- (a) where appropriate, recognise prior learning and experience as equivalent and exempt the applicant from undergoing further supervised and accredited training and/or competency testing;*
- OR*
- (b) where appropriate, require the applicant to undergo further supervised and accredited training and/or competency testing. [clause 5.14 p 9]*

It should be noted that some applicants will present for assessment with a combination of prior learning from documentary evidence and experience. The processes should provide flexibility for the assessors to conduct the assessment in an equitable and valid manner.

(Information on recognition of prior learning and experience is given in Section 5.2)

3.4 Assessment methods

Certificate assessors shall assess competencies through direct observation of the applicant's use or operation of the equipment under workplace conditions. The assessor may further assess competencies by use of the following assessment methods:

- (a) indirect assessment through simulation and/or completion of checklists;*
- (b) assessment of projects and/or assignments; and/or*
- (c) oral and written assessments. [clause 6.6 p 13]*

The bank of assessment instruments should include appropriate items which cover the range of alternatives given above, and also cover situations where direct observation under workplace conditions is not

possible. The types of assessment items that may be included in the instruments are discussed in Section 3.

Glossary of terms

The definitions of these terms have been taken from the National OHS Certification Standard (1992) or from the National Framework for the Recognition of Training, VEETAC, (1991).

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Accreditation | Accreditation means official recognition or assurance of a course or training program by State or Territory vocational education and training recognition authorities. |
| Accredited Training | Accredited training means a course or training program which is recognised by the State or Territory vocational education and training recognition authorities as one in which: a) The contents and standards of a course are appropriate to the qualification that is received. b) The course and methods of delivering it fulfil the purpose for which it was introduced; and c) The curriculum and assessment are based on national competency standards, where these exist. |
| Applicant | Applicant means a person applying for a certificate. |
| Approval | Approval and approved mean approval by a certifying authority. |
| Articulation | Articulation refers to the formal linkage between different levels or different fields of study, including enterprise- and industry-based training. Articulation arrangements allow for horizontal or vertical movement between programs or between education and employment. |
| Assessment | Assessment means the process of forming a judgement about a performance or product against performance criteria in a statement of standards. |
| Category of Equipment | Category of equipment means a generic term for several types of equipment as in scaffolding, rigging, cranes, hoists, boilers and other pressure equipment. |
| Certificate | Certificate means a certificate to use or operate industrial equipment issued by a 'certifying authority'. |
| Certificate Assessor | Certificate assessor means a person registered by a certifying |

authority and authorised to assess and issue evidence of satisfactory assessment.

Certifying Authority

Certifying authority means the government authority/ authorities with the responsibility to administer procedures covered in this national standard, as decided by each State, Territory and Commonwealth government. A certifying authority will usually be an occupational health and safety organisation, labour, industry, mines or other department.

Competency

Competency means the ability to perform the activities within an occupation or function to the standard expected in employment. Competent use and operation of industrial equipment is defined in terms of core knowledge and skills and applications required for particular types of work associated with the use and operation of different classes of equipment. It covers demonstrated knowledge and skills in identifying hazards and eliminating or minimising risks arising from hazards, safe and healthy work practices and employer and employee responsibilities, as defined in general duty of care occupational health and safety legislation.

Competency Standard

Competency standard means a standard of performance expressed in 'units of competency' applicable to a 'range of variables' (see definitions below) where:

- a) Unit means a broad component of work. Each unit comprises two parts, that is, 'elements of competency' and their associated 'performance criteria' where:
 - i) element means the task or component of work which is demonstrable and assessable, and
 - ii) performance criteria describes the outcome that needs to be achieved in order to perform the element successfully, and
- b) A 'competency standard' is applicable to a range of variables and spells out the range of contexts and conditions to which the performance criteria apply. A range of variables statement provides guidance for the assessor or developer of training programs on the boundaries of the application of performance criteria.

Competency Standards Body

Competency standards body means a recognised competency standards body which is formally accepted by the National Training Board. A competency standards body is required to:

- a) Have expertise, or have access to expertise recognised by the National Training Board, in competency standards development;
- b) Be identified and accepted within the industry as being representative of an occupation, industry or industry subsector; and
- c) Have the clear support of the industrial parties within an

occupation, industry or industry subsector.

Curriculum

Curriculum means an organised program constituted by a structured series of learning outcomes and associated learning experiences, generally organised as an integrated combination or series of courses. The successful completion of a curriculum is seen as necessary to achieve specified training/ educational goals corresponding to different levels of qualification.

Direct Supervision

Direct supervision means overseeing the work of an equipment user or operator in training with regard to directing, demonstrating, monitoring and checking the trainee's work to level appropriate to the tasks and the competence of the trainee and ensuring a capacity to respond immediately to emergency situations.

Industry Body

Industry body may be an industry association, an employer association, a trade union, a competency standards body, or an industry training centre.

Jurisdiction

OHS jurisdiction means the authority with the responsibility to administer OHS legislation in the States, Territories and Commonwealth.

Monitoring or Verification

In the context of the OHS Certification standard:

☞ means the process of quality assurance involving internal, local and external validation of the integrity of the certification system.

In the context of the national training systems:

☞ is the process of quality assurance involving internal, local and external validation of the integrity of the training system.

National Training Board

National Training Board means the national tripartite organisation established by the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments and peak employer and employee bodies to endorse competency standards for occupations and industries on a national basis

Record of Training

Record of training means a record of supervised/accredited training for particular equipment types, including relevant training modules completed on or off the job and experience with types of equipment and verified by the person overseeing the training. A record of training may include a log book.

Registration

In the context of the OHS Certification Standard:

☞ means the process by which a certifying authority registers a certificate assessor.

In the context of the national training system:

☞ refers to the formal recognition by a State/Territory training authority of a provider as a competent and ethical provider/deliverer of a particular training program.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Refers to the acknowledgment of skills and knowledge obtained through formal training, work experience and/or life experience.

Vocational Education and Training Qualification

A qualification refers to the recognition of successful gaining of a defined set of competencies which, where relevant, relate to the Australian Standards Framework. Qualifications are currently termed Certificate, Advanced Certificate, Associate Diploma, etc.

Workplace

Workplace means place of work as defined in appropriate State, Territory and Commonwealth legislation.

Items to be included in the record of training

- 1 Applicant's details**
- ✍ name and date of birth (to allow check against minimum age in Standard)
 - ✍ sex
 - ✍ address
 - ✍ job description/classification (if applicable)
- 2 Employer and trainer**
- ✍ employer's name, address and telephone number (if applicable)
 - ✍ name, address and telephone numbers of any previous employers where supervised and accredited training has been obtained
 - ✍ name, business address and telephone number of persons who supervised the training
- 3 Record of training/prior learning and experience**
- ✍ relevant work history/references
 - ✍ type of equipment used/work completed
 - ✍ details of training and prior learning and experience
 - ✍ Records should document the following:
 - ✍ training/prior learning program
 - title
 - organisation
 - date(s)
 - place(s)
 - person overseeing training including name, title and signature
 - if appropriate credential/certificate gained.
 - ✍ any progressive assessment details
 - ✍ type of training/prior learning
 - ✍ structured on/off the job
 - ✍ on-the-job informal training
 - ✍ OHS training
 - ✍ Supporting details, certificates, course outlines/syllabi, log books, diaries.
- 4 Assessment results**
- The following should be recorded for any formative assessments or assessments by a certificate assessor where the applicant was considered 'not yet competent'.
- ✍ date, time and place of assessment
 - ✍ competencies assessed, and grounds of assessment
 - ✍ results of assessment
 - ✍ name and registration number of assessor reviewing record of training

Principles of assessment

There are a number of principles on which assessment should be based in order to achieve a sound assessment. These principles have been summarised in Section 5 of these *Guidelines*. These principles are detailed in the attachments to the Competency Standards, Assessors (1993) and applied here to the context of the National OHS Certification Standard.

The assessment instruments and guidelines have been written to meet these principles. The principles should be applied by assessors when conducting assessments.

Validity

Valid assessments are those which actually assess the competencies which are being assessed, ie the assessment instruments cover all the competencies defined in the National OHS Certification Standard and do not assess other skills or knowledge which cannot be found in the Standard.

Valid assessment is generally achieved when:

- ✘ The assessor is fully aware of the competencies to be assessed.

A number of processes and safeguards have been installed in the National OHS Certification Standard and through the development of national assessment documents to help achieve validity, for example:

- ✘ Assessors are to have industry and OHS experience, generally hold certificates of the class(es) being assessed and meet assessor competency standards.
- ✘ This *Guidelines* document and specific instructions for each class of equipment are made available to assessors.
- ✘ Assessment instruments which have been trialled nationally and reviewed by Expert Working Groups as suitable for assessing the competencies in the Standard.

For example, assessors in the loadshifting area are provided with the Framework, assessment instruments and guidance material specific to the assessment instruments for the appropriate schedule and/or class.

- ✘ Assessments cover the range of competencies in the Standard.

Instruments have been provided that cover all units for the range of work defined in the Standard. In addition, the number of exercises the applicant is to perform, has been set to ensure adequate coverage of the range of work.

- ✘ The assessment process integrates the skills and knowledge in a practical application.

In the assessment instruments provided, performance in the use and operation of equipment and types of work in the actual or simulated workplace is the primary assessment, *eg operation of cranes and hoists, erection of scaffolding.*

- ✘ The assessment should be based on evidence obtained on a number of occasions in different contexts or situations.

The assessment described in the National OHS Certification Standard is a summative (or final) assessment. There is a requirement in the Standard for the assessor to review prior learning and examine any record of training or equivalent so that evidence is obtained that the applicant has performed over a sufficiently wide range of situations. The use of other evidence is intended to keep assessment costs to a reasonable level.

Reliability

Reliability, in the context of assessment, means that the same judgement would be made by another assessor or by the same assessor on another occasion.

Reliable assessment are generally made when:

- ✘ Assessment instructions for assessors are clear and in sufficient detail to ensure consistent application.

The instruments for assessment of competencies under the National OHS Certification Standard have been trialled around Australia with experts in the particular certificate class, with people who have assessment experience and with people who have the similar levels of competence to the potential applicants.

- ✘ Assessment practices must be monitored and reviewed.

The State and Territory certifying authorities are implementing auditing practices to monitor assessments across Australia. (see Section 7.11)

- ✘ Assessors should be competent.

As mentioned above, assessors are required by the Standard to be competent in the class of work, be experienced and have met the national competency standards for assessors. (see Section 4)

Flexibility

Flexible assessment practices are those which assess

competence independently of the method the competencies were learned.

Arrangements established for flexible assessment include:

- ✘ Assessment processes for people claiming equivalent qualifications and prior learning or experience, as well as those applying on the basis of supervised and accredited training.

Arrangements for these alternatives are described in Section 5 above.

- ✘ The instruments are suitable for different training situations and working conditions.
- ✘ Provision of alternatives where no workplace is available for assessment of performance.
- ✘ Recognition of previously assessed competencies for other certificate classes, where these form part of the competencies to be demonstrated in the certificate currently being applied for.

For example: Signals are used to direct cranes by a person performing dogging and rigging work. If an applicant for a crane certificate has a dogging certificate, the applicant should be assessed as having prior competence in this area.

Fairness

An assessment is fair when it does not disadvantage particular learners or applicants.

Steps taken to maintain fair assessments include:

- ✘ Review by Expert Working Groups and trials of the instruments to ensure they do not disadvantage particular groups of people.
- ✘ The instruments come with suggested information and instructions to be provided to applicants.
- ✘ The assessment instructions should be made freely available to applicants, so they can clearly understand what is required of them.
- ✘ The applicants should be involved in the assessment process and provided with feedback. This is suggested to assessors in the assessment documentation.
- ✘ Instructions are given to assist persons with limited English

language literacy skills.

- ✍ Provision is made for persons to arrange for assessment at any stage, and to be reassessed for competencies not previously achieved.

While these arrangements have been put in place by the certifying authorities, the onus for a fair assessment relies largely on the individual assessor. Authorities will be monitoring the assessment outcomes to ensure fair assessments.

National Occupational Health and Safety Certification Standard for Users and Operators of Industrial Equipment Steering Group and Expert Working Groups responsible for assessment and implementation

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