

Fact Sheet 20 – Identification and Development of Skill Sets

What are skill sets?

Increasingly, individuals are finding that it is a job requirement to possess specific sets of skills to meet industry standards or regulatory and legislative requirements. The national training system now has processes in place to identify specific skill sets within training packages and allow for formal recognition of those skills. Skill sets appear in all industries and across all levels of work. They provide a clearly defined statement of the skills and knowledge required by an individual to meet either industry needs or a licensing or regulatory requirement. The Training Package Development Handbook defines skill sets as ‘those single units (of competency) or combinations of units which link to a licence or regulatory requirement, or defined industry need’. From 2007, nationally endorsed skill sets are being identified and developed within training packages, and complement full qualifications within the Australian Qualifications Framework. Skill sets are formally recognised on a statement of attainment.

Background to skill sets

The High Level Review of Training Packages identified that there are many individuals and enterprises looking not for full qualifications, but rather for flexible skill sets made up of individual units of competency. Before 2007, individuals received no formal recognition when completing a particular combination of units within a qualification to meet a required industry or job need. They received either a statement of attainment or a full qualification. In most cases the statement of attainment made reference to partial completion of a qualification rather than acknowledging that the completed units constituted a skill set. This situation created difficulties for individuals because they did not receive formal recognition for the skills they had developed, and for employers in trying to identify the skills obtained by their employees. In 2006 the Council of Australian Governments acknowledged that this was a problem which was inhibiting economic growth and productivity. It made the recognition of skills, including skill sets, a priority for the national training system. It recommended:

- the identification of skill clusters or skill sets within national training qualifications where there is industry demand
- the development of a new-look, nationally portable statement of attainment by December 2006 to set out consistently and clearly for employers the competencies and skills a person has achieved.

How do skill sets work?

Skill sets are identified and developed during the development, redevelopment or continuous improvement of nationally endorsed training packages by industry skills councils in consultation with industry and regulatory and/or licensing authorities.

The units of competency that form a skill set can be drawn from one or more training packages. Skill sets need to be identified within the training packages and need to have industry support before they can be nationally endorsed by the National Quality Council and listed separately in training packages. Where registered training organisations provide a statement of attainment for a group of competencies that make up a skill set, they are able to specifically note that the skill set has been provided for a specific purpose.

How do skill sets link to industry and regulatory and/or licensing requirements?

Skill sets are developed and included in training packages for one of two reasons:

- when a group of units of competency meets a clearly defined industry requirement (for example mine site induction)
- when a group of units is identified as meeting the requirements of a national licensing and/or regulatory body (for example, when one or more units are combined to meet the competency component for registration as a marriage celebrant, or when a group of units is linked to requirements for a restricted electrical licence).

Developing skill sets in a training package

The Training Package Development Handbook includes a section on skill sets. It outlines advice on how to identify and develop skill sets. There are three possibilities in relation to the identification of skill sets in training packages. The developer determines on the basis of industry consultation that:

- there are no national skill sets identified
- one or more skill sets can be identified within a training package
- there is the potential for skill sets to be formed by combining units from two or more training packages.

In addition, a skill set may be defined at the local level by a registered training organisation (locally developed skill sets which focus on the needs of a particular enterprise and/or individual).

Identification of Government Skills Australia Skill Sets

A number of Skill Sets have already been identified across the GSA industries. GSA is validating these Skill Sets with stakeholders and identifying any new Skill Sets that would meet an industry need. Here is an **example** of a skill set for recovery coordination. The key attributes for this position include ongoing planning and exercise/simulations as part of the overall recovery operations (when such operations are needed). Therefore, a potential skill set may include:

- ***Manage recovery functions/service(s) (new unit to be developed)***
- ***Undertake emergency planning (PUAEMA010A)***
- ***Design and manage activities which exercise elements of emergency management (PUAEMR005A).***

Using the above as an **example**, a participant who successfully fulfils the requirements for the three units of competency would be awarded a **Statement of Attainment** for the **Recovery Coordination Skill Set**. The **Statement of Attainment** may include the following sentence:

“ These units from the Public Safety Training Package (PUAXX) meet industry requirements for recovery coordination in the emergency management sector.”

Other examples of skill sets identified to-date include; ***working in confined space, dog handling, procurement, survival skills.***

You are encouraged to contact GSA and have a say on skill sets in the following Training Packages: Public Sector, Public Safety, Local Government, Water and Corrections. The preferred method of contact is to register to join our on-line community on the home page of our website: www.governmentskills.com.au. (This will ensure that your details are registered on our database and you will receive updates on this and other GSA projects). Once registered, you can take part in our GSA forums which provide for feedback and issues on a number of topics including skill sets. **Alternatively you can contact: John Nibbs - Industry Advisory Officer Defence: (07) 3332 7756**
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