

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the Matrix Training's (MT's) practice to identify and assist Vocational Education and Training (VET) students that have language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy issues and to ensure that training and assessment strategies are designed to meet individual needs.

This policy also ensures that the staff and applicants make informed decisions about the suitability and relevance of the course the applicant is undertaking with MT and ensures adequate support services are available to those in need.

SCOPE

- All perspective students of MT
- All Students of MT
- All Staff of MT
- All Admissions and Student Services Staff of MT

DEFINITIONS

ASQA - Australian Skills Quality Authority

Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) is a tool which assists both specialist and non-specialist English language, literacy and numeracy practitioners describe an individual's performance in the five core skills of learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy.

Credit Transfer is one of a number of processes for establishing credit. It provides a means for students to gain credit in an AQF qualification on the basis of completed components of another AQF qualification or other formal learning.

LLND - language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.

Language - In its broadest sense, language involves the words, verbal structures and gestures we use to convey meaning. In using language, we generally use a combination of communication forms such as speaking, listening, reading, writing and visual communication.

Literacy - Literacy is the ability to read and use written information as well as to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening, and critical thinking with reading and writing. Literacy skills enable us to interact with one another to achieve particular purposes: to explain, debate, retrieve and provide information, explore issues, entertain and create.

Numeracy - Numeracy involves the practical application of mathematical skills to absorb, use and critically evaluate information in numerical or graphical form. Depending on the context this can include basic number skills, spatial and graphical concepts, the use of measurement and problem solving. Numeracy may also involve literacy, for example when extracting mathematical information from written text.

Personal Information means information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database), whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) involves the assessment of previously unrecognised skills, and knowledge that an individual has achieved outside a formal education and training system. RPL assesses this unrecognised learning against the required learning outcomes of a subject taught and/or assessed by the RTO.

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, NUMERACY & DIGITAL LITERACY LEVELS

LLND levels are reference numbers given to a student’s performance and/or a Training Package in each of the 5 core skills; learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy along with digital literacy. These levels have been developed by the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) and Digital Literacy Core Skills Framework (DLSF). The reference numbers describe the degree of LLND skills performed by a student or what the student needs to demonstrate as per a Training Package’s requirements. The reference numbers range from 1 (lowest performance level) to 5 (highest performance level) and only reflect skills at that point of time. Each level describes the amount of support used by the person to complete the task; how familiar they are with a task; how difficult text is within the task; and how complex the task is itself.

MT adopts the ACSF and DLSF levels in its practices to ensure that MT is in alignment with nationally recognised LLND matters. In essence, the policy seeks to remove barriers within learning and assessment processes and practices which place individuals with specific needs in LLND at a disadvantage. Clients with special needs in the areas of LLND will have access to assistance and support to fulfil their training needs.

DESCRIBING PERFORMANCE

The ACSF levels of performance are described using:

- Indicators, which are statements that provide an overview of exit performance at each level
- Focus Areas, which are the strands within each Indicator against which Performance Features are organised
- Performance Features, which are detailed descriptors of what an individual is able to do at each level
- Sample Activities, which are specific examples of what a person may be able to do at a particular level of performance within each of the Domains of Communication

Learners are assessed against the following criteria:

	Level	Support	Context	text complexity	Task complexity
Five levels of performance	1	Works alongside an expert / mentor where prompting and advice can be provided	Highly familiar contexts Concrete and immediate Very restricted range of contexts	Short and simple Highly explicit purpose Limited, highly familiar vocabulary	Concrete tasks of 1 or 2 steps Processes include locating, recognising
	2	May work with an expert / mentor where support is available if requested	Familiar and predictable contexts Limited range of contexts	Simple familiar texts with clear purpose Familiar vocabulary	Explicit tasks involving a limited number of familiar steps Processes include identifying, simple interpreting, simple sequencing
	3	Works independently and uses own familiar support resources	Range of familiar contexts Some less familiar contexts Some specialisation in familiar / known contexts	Routine texts May include some unfamiliar elements, embedded information and abstraction Includes some specialised vocabulary	Tasks involving a number of steps Processes include sequencing, integrating, interpreting, simple extrapolating, simple inferencing, simple abstracting
	4	Works independently and initiates and uses support from a range of established resources	Works independently and initiates and uses support from a range of established resources	Works independently and initiates and uses support from a range of established resources	Complex task organisation and analysis involving application of a number of steps Processes include extracting, extrapolating, inferencing, reflecting, abstracting

Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy

5	Autonomous learner who accesses and evaluates support from a broad range of sources	Broad range of contexts Adaptability within and across contexts Specialisation in one or more contexts	Highly complex texts Highly embedded information Includes highly specialized language and symbolism	Sophisticated task conceptualisation, organisation and analysis Processes include synthesising, critically reflecting, evaluating, recommending
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As with the ACSF, a key feature of the DLSF is the recognition of four factors that may influence performance at any point in time:

- The nature and degree of support
- Familiarity of context
- Complexity of text
- Complexity of task

Learners are assessed against the following criteria:

	Level	Support	Context	text complexity	Task complexity
Six levels of performance	PL1 A&B	Works with an expert/mentor where highly structured support and modelling is provided, initiated by the expert/mentor	Extremely familiar contexts Extremely concrete and immediate Extremely restricted range of contexts	Extremely simple, short texts Extremely explicit purpose Extremely limited and personally relevant vocabulary	Concrete tasks of a single step Processes include copying, naming, matching, limited ordering, simple recognising
	1	Works alongside an expert/mentor where prompting and advice can be provided	Highly familiar contexts Concrete and immediate Very restricted range of contexts	Short and simple Highly explicit purpose Limited, highly familiar vocabulary	Concrete tasks of 1 or 2 steps Processes include locating, recognising
	2	May work with an expert/mentor where support is available if requested	Familiar and predictable contexts Limited range of contexts	Simple familiar texts with clear purpose Familiar vocabulary	Explicit tasks involving a limited number of familiar steps Processes include identifying, simple interpreting, simple sequencing
	3	Works independently and uses own familiar support resources	Range of familiar contexts Some less familiar contexts Some specialisation in familiar/known contexts	Routine texts May include some unfamiliar elements, embedded information and abstraction Includes some specialised vocabulary	Tasks involving a number of steps Processes include sequencing, integrating, interpreting, simple extrapolating, simple inferencing, simple abstracting
	4	Works independently and initiates and uses support from a range of established resources	Range of contexts, including some that are unfamiliar and/or unpredictable Some specialisation in less familiar/known contexts	Complex texts Embedded information Includes specialised vocabulary Includes abstraction and symbolism	Complex task organisation and analysis involving application of a number of steps Processes include extracting, extrapolating, inferencing, reflecting, abstracting
	5	Autonomous learner who accesses and evaluates support from a broad range of sources	Broad range of contexts Adaptability within and across contexts Specialisation in one or more contexts	Highly complex texts Highly embedded information Includes highly specialised language and symbolism	Sophisticated task conceptualisation, organisation and analysis Processes include synthesising, critically reflecting, evaluating, recommending

POLICY

MT recognises the importance of ensuring that students are assisted to identify the most suitable course for their needs and that many potential students require assistance with the development of their English language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy (LLND) skills prior to or in conjunction with their enrolment.

Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy

As stated, it is essential that MT students have the LLND skills sufficient to successfully participate in training and assessment in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. It is also essential that students have sufficient LLND skills at the completion of their training and assessment to work successfully in the chosen vocation.

MT staff needs to be aware of the LLND skills of a student; the LLND requirements of a Training Package; and the industry's expectation of LLND skills of its workforce in order to develop appropriate delivery and assessment materials. Therefore, as a responsible Registered Training Organisation (RTO), MT needs to identify each student's LLND levels; provide information to students about their LLND levels and inform students how their levels compare to the LLND levels required by a course offered by MT.

MT through the application of its Initial Skills Assessment (Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy) Policy will:

- accurately describe each qualification and its potential vocational outcomes
- provide prospective students with guidance on the recommended or required prior educational levels and the resources or work environment required for the course
- determine and publish minimum language, literacy, language and digital literacy requirements for various qualification levels using plain English descriptors
- determine and publish minimum LLND requirements that apply for specific qualifications and delivery methods e.g. correspondence learning
- implement effective procedures which allow for the identification of individual student language, literacy, numeracy or digital literacy needs so that students are provided with advice and support services
- train staff in language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills gap identification as required within their roles

NEEDS IDENTIFICATION

Identification of training needs is to be based on the English language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy competencies, which are needed to participate effectively in MT's training programs. MT must identify LLND needs before commencement of the course although the participant's individual needs may not be identified until after the course has commenced.

MT endeavors to equip the participant to write sufficiently to undertake the tasks of the profession. MT's Support Staff will consult with the Trainers / Assessors to analyse necessary requirements to meet the participant's individual needs.

Where support needs to go beyond what can be met with reasonable adjustment during the training and assessment process, and additional support is required, MT will direct participants to an external literacy specialist.

Note: Learners who are identified as requiring language, literacy, numeracy or digital literacy support after the LLNSD test will be counselled on their needs and how MT can assist them to improve their skills and support them in achieving the course outcomes.

LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND NUMERACY ASSESSMENT

LLND assessment will be implemented by the MT for all the perspective students. Assessment of courses will identify the learning, reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy and digital literacy skills required for successful study and the relevant industry requirements. The levels identified in the Training Package will be used by MT to develop suitable training and assessment materials. It will also be used as one of the MT's benchmarks to identify students at risk.

Student assessment for LLND will determine a student's performance levels in learning, reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy and digital literacy. To ensure accuracy, the assessment tool LLND Robot (Appendix 1), an online system that combines ACSF testing and automatically covers DLSF level 3 by using the online portal, Course profiling and LLN Support into one easy to use package.

The assessment will be used as a tool to identify students' language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills strengths and weakness and compare their results with the Training Package LLND requirements. This evaluation aims to increase student engagement and ownership of their learning throughout the student lifecycle at MT.

Students will not be separately charged a fee to sit the assessment.

If a student is undertaking LLND assessment to meet entry requirements, the levels for the individual course should be achieved. The courses information (marketing material, website) will display the specific LLND (and other) entry requirements for each course.

Learners at all AQF levels should possess the following Digital Learning Skills:

- Open and use a computer application (such as your Web Browser)
- Navigate a website by following instructions and follow website "links"
- Type and edit text e.g. for short answer assessment questions
- Select the appropriate answers in a multiple-choice list (select the correct option(s))
- Download, save, edit and upload documents or files
- Write, edit, send, receive and save emails
- Open and use a word processing application (such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs)
- Open and use a spreadsheet program (such as Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets) depending on units in course(s)

ONLINE PROCESS

- Student will receive the LLND test link via email.
- Student will click on "Link to Quiz" link and it will redirect him/her to the LLN Robot page.
- Before the test begins LLN Robot will confirm student details with the student such as learner ID, student name and email address.
- There will be a tutorial before the test begins about how LLN Robot works.
- Student will be provided with a calculator and a note book for any rough work.
- There are two online quizzes to choose from based on the requirements of the course of study.
 - ACSF 3. This quiz assesses all 5 core skills up to ACSF level 3. This quiz is significantly shorter and is useful for learners who are engaging in low certificate levels that do not utilise higher ACSF core skills.
 - ACSF 4. This quiz assesses all 5 core skills up to ACSF level 4. All assessments are based on the community domain of communication, using examples from everyday life to avoid bias relating to specific training or working environments and experience. This approach keeps the assessments fair, valid and accessible to all learners.
- At the end of the quiz a profile is generated based on the learner's responses. This profile scores the core skills from levels 0-4 (or a pass/fail in regards to the VSL-LLN Quiz). These results are stored in a secure database and accessed by the trainer/assessor or LLN representative of the training organisation. The score given for Oral Communication relates specifically to the listening component of the core skill. Spoken oral communication must be evaluated separately by speaking with the learner. The profile can then be reviewed and adjusted based on this interaction and any other evidence (e.g. completing enrolment forms and questionnaires or interviews), or any other issues that are identified that may create a learning barrier for the student based on their current language, literacy or numeracy skills.

OVERVIEW OF THE ONLINE LLN QUIZ

The digital literacy of DLSF level 3 is automatically covered when a perspective student access the Online LLN Quiz portal using the link provided in the email from MT.

The Online LLN Quiz is a quiz developed by The Learning Resources Group (formerly known as Safe Work Resources) to provide an indication of a person's Learning, Reading, Writing, Oral Communication and Numeracy Skills.

The series of questions are aligned to ACSF Level 1 to 4 across the 5 core skills and the automatic marking results provide a spiky profile of the learner's ability from 1 to 4 ACSF depending on the quiz completed.

The ACSF Level 3 quiz tests from Level 1 through to Level 3 inclusive and the ACSF Level 4 quiz tests from Level 1 through to Level 4 inclusive.

Questions range from match items, re-order items, point & click, multiple choice and text entry.

The quiz responds dynamically to the learner's answers and gets easier or more difficult based on their performance. For example, the quiz brings learners in at Level 2 for each of the skill groups (Learning, Reading, Writing, Oral Communication and Numeracy Skills). If the learner answers the questions for that skill at Level 2 correctly they can then attempt Level 3 questions. If they answer these wrong, they will then attempt Level 1 questions.

Each question is randomly selected from a bank of questions relevant to the core skill and level. This means learners will face a different set of questions each time the quiz is taken.

The LLN Quiz can take up to an hour to complete if the learner reaches the highest level questions (Level 4). If a learner is not correctly answering the questions the quiz will show them easier level questions.

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, NUMERACY & DIGITAL LITERACY STRATEGIES

MT acknowledges its responsibility to support students identified as 'at risk' within the scale and scope of its operations. The LLND strategy to provide this support is to recommend individual and/or a group to assistance to improve the language, literacy and numeracy skills.

If a learner has been assessed as not suitable to commence in the course of study then the following educational and learning support services will be available to learners, based on the individual needs of the student, but not limited to:

- Bilingual staff support;
- Training and Assessment planning;
- Referral to study support and study skills programs;
- Language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) programs or referrals to these programs;
- Equipment, resources and/or programs to increase access for learners with disabilities and other learners in accordance with access and equity;
- Mediation services or referrals to these services;
- Counselling services or referrals to these services;
- Information and communications technology (ICT) support;
- Provision of concurrent assistance;
- Provision of Student Support Officer as study buddy, mentor, coach;
- Modifying learning materials where appropriate that do not compromise the integrity of the assessment, e.g. in large font;
- Providing flexibility in learning and assessments delivery modes, scheduling and access to support services;

- Access to appropriate workshops;
- One-on-one tutoring if appropriate;
- Any other services that MT considers necessary to support learners to achieve competency.

EQUAL ACCESS

Access to MT's training programs is equal for all participants. MT does not discriminate against the participants whose needs are identified under the standards of LLND with regard to enrolment in any current or future training programs.

RECOMMENDED EXTERNAL AGENCIES AND RESOURCES

MT may also support the student by recommending external agencies and resources that may assist the student such as:

- **The Reading Writing Hotline**

The Reading Writing Hotline (the Hotline) provides a national service for adults seeking English language, literacy and numeracy information, advice and support.

The Hotline provides information on:

- Adult reading, writing and numeracy classes held locally across Australia or via correspondence.
- Becoming a literacy volunteer.
- Adult LLN teaching and learning resources.
- Commonwealth-funded programs for Centrelink clients.
- Commonwealth-funded English as an additional language programs for migrants.
- Literacy and numeracy in the workplace for employers.

Further information is available at the Reading Writing Hotline website:

<https://www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au/> or phone 1300 6 555 06.

- **Commonwealth**

The Australian government provides a wide variety of assistance programs to adults in literacy and numeracy which may include:

- Free English lessons.
- Programs to improve basic speaking, reading, writing and math skills.
- Practitioner scholarships.

Further information is available at their website:

<https://info.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/education-and-training/literacy-and-numeracy>

- **The Australian Federation of SPELD Associations**

The Australian Federation of SPELD Associations (AUSPELD) provides support to people with specific learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, and those who care for, teach and work with them. They assist people through the dissemination of information, advocacy, research and support. Further information is available at the AUSPELD website (<http://auspeld.org.au/>) or phone (08) 9217 2500.

- **Specific Learning Difficulties Association of Victoria (SPELD) Inc.**

494 Brunswick Street
North Fitzroy, Victoria 3068
(03) 9489 4344
spelduic@bigpond.com.au

MT may also support the student by recommending external agencies and resources to assist staff with LLND issues, such as:

- The Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)
- Australian Government

Appendix 1 – LLN Robot

The LLN Robot system is used to manage the assessment and support of learners regarding their language, literacy and numeracy needs. The LLN Robot System consists of two main parts:

- Online LLN Assessment.
- Generating training profiles and training support programs.

The LLN Robot Online LLN Quiz has been designed to give an indication of a learner's abilities across the 5 core skills of the ACSF. These are Learning, Reading, Writing, Oral Communication and Numeracy. The outcome of the online assessment is the first step in considering the support needs of the learner.

The online assessment reacts dynamically to the answers of the learner and gets progressively easier or more difficult based on how the person is doing. This prevents learners from being asked questions that are either too easy or too difficult to save on assessment time and reduce negative assessment experiences. There are four online quizzes to choose from based on the requirements of the course of study:

- **ACSF 3.** This quiz assesses all 5 core skills up to ACSF level 3. This quiz is significantly shorter and is useful for learners who are engaging in low certificate levels that do not utilise higher ACSF core skills.
- **ACSF 4.** This quiz assesses all 5 core skills up to ACSF level 4.
- **VSL-LLN.** This quiz assesses Reading and Numeracy Exit Level 3. This quiz is not dynamic in nature due to the specific requirements of the VET Student Loan legislation.
- **ACSF 3 Short Course.** This quiz assesses the Reading, Writing and Numeracy core skills up to ACSF level 3. This quiz is significantly shorter and is useful for learners who are involved in single unit training or short courses that do not utilise higher ACSF core skills.

All assessments are based on the community domain of communication, using examples from everyday life to avoid bias relating to specific training or working environments and experience. This approach keeps the assessments fair, valid and accessible to all learners.

At the end of the quiz a profile is generated based on the learner's responses. This profile scores the core skills from levels 0-4 (or a pass/fail in regards to the VSL-LLN Quiz). These results are stored in a secure database and accessed by the trainer/assessor or LLN representative of the training organisation. The score given for Oral Communication relates specifically to the listening component of the core skill. Spoken oral communication must be evaluated separately by speaking with the learner. The profile can then be reviewed and adjusted based on this interaction and any other evidence (e.g. completing enrolment forms and questionnaires or interviews), or any other issues that are identified that may create a learning barrier for the student based on their current language, literacy or numeracy skills. This profile can then be compared to the profile of the course of study, generating a support program designed for each individual learner to meet their specific needs.

LLN Robot uses a purpose built a diagnostic tool to determine the required ACSF/core skill levels of a unit of competency. The system uses a series of language analysis algorithms to scan the content of a unit of competency to identify trigger words and phrases and their associated values based on the training package, ACSF performance indicators and the AQF (certificate) level of the unit. This data is used to generate a training profile that reflects the core skills required to understand and perform the criteria outlined in the unit.

As learner profiles and training profiles are compared by the system, a detailed report and training support program are generated to outline the mechanisms that can be used to support the learner's development, as well as a series of self-paced activities in the form of training supplements to be completed in conjunction with, or prior to the formal training program.