



Centre for Training
in Social Housing

nsw Federation of
Housing Associations inc

Participant's Information Handbook

Resourcing the **Sector**

CONTENTS

About the NSW Federation of Housing Associations (NSWFHA) and the Centre for Training in Social Housing (CTSH)	2
Aims of the Organisation	2
Training at NSWFHA – Good Practice Unit (GPU)	2
Registered Training Organisation – Our Training Scope	2
Training Code of Practice: Our commitment to you	3
What if you are unhappy with our service, or you want to give us feedback?.....	4
Participant Cancellations and Refunds	5
Course Registration and Cancellations.....	5
Timeframe for Completing the Qualification.....	5
Course Attendance.....	6
Learning Materials.....	7
Referencing and Plagiarism	7
Assessment	
Assessment Tasks	8
Assessment Outcomes.....	8
Notification of Assessment details.....	9
Completing and Submitting Assessment Tasks.....	9
Guidelines for Joint Assessment Tasks	10
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	11
Appeal of Assessment or Recognition of Prior Learning Results.....	11
Recognition of Qualifications Issued by other RTOs.....	12
Participant Support.....	12
Confidentiality and Your Records	13
Flexible Learning.....	13
Certification for Accredited Training.....	13
Our Commitment to Quality Assurance	14
Contact Details.....	15

About the NSW Federation of Housing Associations (NSWFHA) and the Centre for Training in Social Housing (CTSH)

The Centre for Training in Social Housing is a business unit of NSWFHA providing nationally recognised training for workers in social housing. NSWFHA is the peak body representing community housing associations in NSW. NSWFHA has a membership of over 100 organisations and includes housing associations, housing co-operatives, Aboriginal housing organisations, church based housing organisations and supported accommodation services. The principals of access and equity direct all planning and service provision associated with NSWFHA.

Aims of the Organisation

NSWFHA supports community based housing associations to deliver high quality, professional housing services to the community, tenants and applicants. We believe that clients and local communities are the priority of community housing associations.

Through our membership, the NSW Federation of Housing Associations aims to:

- *assist people to solve their housing difficulties by providing quality, low cost and affordable housing solutions;*
- *be responsive to local needs;*
- *encourage tenant involvement;*
- *achieve the highest standards for accountability, efficiency and community service.*

The NSWFHA carries out its operational goals and strategies within three areas: the Good Practice Unit (GPU), the Policy Team, and the Office Services

Training at NSWFHA - Good Practice Unit (GPU)

The NSWFHA is accredited as a Registered Training Organisation. All training services provided are regulated by the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Act 2005.

The Good Practice Unit provides vocational training in social housing across all sectors of social housing. This includes both the NSW community housing sector and Housing NSW. We have also provided vocational training services for social; housing workers in the ACT and Tasmanian government and community housing sectors. We also provide training services for Housing NSW.

The GPU provides high quality training based on the principles of adult learning, drawing on participants' skills and backgrounds, and relating training to their experience within a workplace or organisation.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO) - Our Training Scope

The NSW Federation of Housing Associations has been accredited as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) since 14 September 2000.

We can award nationally recognised qualifications and statements of attainment. Our registration with the NSW Vocational Education Training and Accreditation Board (VETAB) means that we are able to offer the following:

- [Certificate IV in Social Housing CHC40908 \(full qualification\)](#)
- [Diploma of Social Housing CHC50808 \(partial delivery\)](#)

In order to gain a qualification, participants need to meet national competency standards from the Community Services Training Package for each of the units of competency which make up a qualification. A Statement of Attainment is awarded for each unit successfully completed, and a certificate is awarded for the completion of the full qualification.

Competency standards describe the required application of knowledge, skills and personal attributes needed in a specific area of work. The emphasis is on the practical competence needed by workers and how they can apply what they know to the challenges that arise in their day to day work. The training component of traineeships in social housing can be completed through the Centre for Training in Social Housing.



A qualification can be gained in the following ways:

- By completing a structured training program via face to face or E-learning delivery - training programs are integrally linked to assessment against competencies.
- By completing a qualification by distance. Study materials are sent to participants who work at their own pace to complete the units. There is no requirement to attend structured training sessions. You are assigned an assessor with each distance pack who is available for you to contact for advice and support as required. A Distance Information Pack is available on our website for further information.
- By being assessed for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Participants gather, organise and present a complete portfolio of evidence to demonstrate their skills and knowledge gained through previous work and life experience. Each RPL candidate has an assessor who makes an assessment of competence based on the evidence provided. Participants may complete structured learning to cover any gaps in knowledge and skills, and work with an assigned assessor.
- Through recognition of relevant qualifications issued by other RTO's.
- A mixture of the above.

Training Code of Practice: Our commitment to you

The NSWFA has a Training Code of Practice, which is a public document outlining the way we manage the delivery of training. The Code provides the framework for good and ethical practice for the operation, administration, financing, marketing, training and assessment services.

Our Code of Practice encompasses the following principles:

- We are committed to access and equity
- We promote the highest level of ethical practice in all our services
- We view ourselves as a highly professional training organisation
- We employ trainers who aim for excellence
- We are committed to ethical, accurate and professional marketing
- We promote accessible and equitable learning opportunities
- Confidentiality is a high priority for us
- We support our training participants
- We act fairly and equitably in dealing with grievances and appeals
- We ensure fair practice in our dealings with fees

A full copy of the NSW Federation of Housing Associations' Training Code of Practice is available on our website.

What if you are unhappy with our service, or you want to give us feedback?

Feedback

Your feedback is an important aspect of program development and we consider your feedback as constructive advice. Please help us by completing an evaluation form at the end of every training session. We collate the feedback provided to help us monitor our performance.

Complaint

We are committed to a fair and equitable process for dealing with participant complaints with the aim of dealing with the grievances internally. Any complaints will be handled with strictest confidence.

If you have a complaint about any of our training services, first talk to one of the Good Practice Unit team to try to address the problem. If it cannot be resolved at this stage, you need to make a written complaint to the Manager of the Good Practice Unit to take the complaint to the next step. We will respond to a written complaint within 2 weeks and will aim to resolve the complaint within 3 months. You can use an advocate to assist you in making a complaint. You will have the option of talking to the person you are making the complaint against if you wish. If this does not resolve the issue, the Manager of the GPU or a person delegated by the manager will mediate the dispute. If there is still no resolution, the Executive Director can be asked to assist in resolving the issue. If after these steps you wish to pursue a formal investigation, a panel of two board members and an impartial independent person will be convened to investigate. The grievance committee will make a decision about what action should be taken. If you are not happy with this outcome you can seek assistance from an external body, such as the Community Justice Centres (CJC's), or the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) to assist in resolving your complaint.

Appeal

If you wish to appeal an assessment decision made by NSWFHA or a partner RTO, you will need to lodge a written "I want to Appeal" form with the manager of the Good Practice Unit. Procedures for an Appeal are included on page 8 under Assessment.

Participant Cancellations and Refunds

NSWFHA require at least 5 days notice if you cannot attend a course which you have registered for. If you give less than 5 days notice you will not be eligible for any refunds. If you wish to appeal this on compassionate grounds, we will review each case on its merits. A reason for cancellation will be required in writing if you want to appeal the policy decision.

Course Registration and Cancellations

An official registration form is required to be completed for each course and sent to the training administration co ordinator. Your enrolment will not be confirmed unless a formal registration is received.

If minimum numbers are not met, a training session may be cancelled by the CTSH at their discretion depending on the number of registrations received. The Manager of the Good Practice Unit will make the decision to cancel a course at least 5 days before the delivery date. Every enrolled participant will be informed and will be fully refunded.

Where there are more participants seeking places than there are places available CTSH will register people in strict order of receipt of fully completed registration forms. The CTSH will give priority to registrants who missed out on a place at any subsequent delivery of the same course.

Timeframe for completing the Certificate IV qualification

We recommend that you complete the Certificate IV in Social Housing CHC40908 within a maximum of 3 years from your commencement date to ensure your qualification is current. However, it is up to you to set your study timeframe. In our experience, most people comfortably complete the qualification within a 1-2 year period. This will obviously vary depending on individual circumstances. Our training co-ordinator can help you to set out a timeframe that best suits you and advise you on where to start.

Deferment of your course is allowed for a maximum of 1 year. You must apply in writing to the Training Co-ordinator stating the period for which you wish to defer your registration. The Manager of the Good Practice Unit will approve or decline your deferment.

Traineeships:

Traineeships are for a 2 year period. Trainees are expected to complete their training qualification within this period. This may vary for part time employees.

A full training plan is required and should be developed in consultation with the trainee, employer and CTSH so everyone is clear about expectations and responsibilities.

Course Attendance for Certificate IV and Diploma units

Face to face training participants

Participants are required to attend all face to face training sessions.

According to CTSH training policies and procedures:

- participants can miss only two days training altogether
- if for any reason a participant is unable to attend the training, a certificate from a recognised health practitioner, or letter from your organisation indicating why you are unable to attend is required
- participants who miss a training day will be expected to arrange to obtain a copy of the participant notes, worksheets, handouts and the assessment tasks for the missed units
- participants will need to complete and submit the assessments and worksheets independently

Should you have to miss any more than two days of the training there are three options:

- attend the equivalent training in the following training calendar year or at the next scheduled session
- complete the unit(s) via distance learning
- negotiate recognition assessment (or RPL) to complete the missed units to achieve your qualification. Any RPL process will incur the additional charge per unit for recognition

Participants are also expected to attend each training day in full to be eligible for achieving your qualification or statement of attainment. Non-metropolitan participants are able to negotiate a slightly early finish to catch flights if necessary – please negotiate this with the trainer prior to the day of the training session. However it is not acceptable to turn up for half a day, or arrive late to the training sessions, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

On line participants

It is expected that participants will participate in the scheduled interactive sessions and will complete all training components within the stipulated timeframe.

General

Any of the above conditions may be waived and alternate arrangements made with a participant on an individual basis at the discretion of the Federation.

Learning Materials

Face to face training

Learning materials for face to face training will be available on the day of the training. Training materials will generally include:

- An agenda
- A Learner's Pack (this includes reading materials, website references, self check activities where appropriate, and further resources listings)
- Participant Workbook (consisting of worksheets and assessment tasks)
- Copy of the powerpoint presentation

Assessment tasks are also available electronically on a request basis. The trainer will prompt participants on the day of the training to nominate whether they would like an electronic version of an assessment task emailed to them.

RPL

Course materials for RPL candidates will be emailed or posted. RPL materials include an RPL workbook with all compulsory units of competencies and nominated electives with learning outcomes and performance criteria.

Distance training

Distance delivery materials will be posted out according to the dates negotiated with the training administration co ordinator for each unit. A unit should be completed and submitted prior to being sent another set of distance materials

On line learning

All materials and assessments are available on the Federation's on line learning portal. Access to this will be by user name and password issued after successful registration.

REFERENCING AND PLAGIARISM

All work **must** be referenced. This includes:

- Written work
- Assessments
- Forum postings
- Any other material being presented as work by the participant

Referencing should also include a bibliography indicating all materials used such as websites, books, journals and other media. The Federation uses the Harvard system for referencing.

See <http://www.unisa.edu.au/ltu/students/study/referencing/harvard.pdf> for information on the Harvard system and how to use it.

Please note: all work that is submitted for assessment is expected to be your own effort. Any work that is not all your own could be plagiarism, whether it was intentional or unintentional, if you haven't referenced the source of the information you are using. Plagiarism is often a form of cheating. Additionally, if you give your

work, such as an assessment, to other participants you will be treated in exactly the same way as the cheating participant.

Related terms of reference

Academic misconduct: Any actions undertaken by a participant that unfairly advances his or her progress in a unit and/or training program. Academic misconduct will include plagiarism and cheating.

Cheating: Those actions by a participant that attempt to give the participant or another participant an unfair or dishonest advantage in an assessment task, or unfairly or dishonestly disadvantage other participants in an assessment task.

Plagiarism: Those actions by a participant that use the ideas, words or work of another person without acknowledging the sources of the ideas, words or work.

If you are unsure about how to reference your work or have any questions about referencing, bibliographies or plagiarism please talk to any of our training and resource workers who will be able to assist you.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment Tasks

Assessment tasks have been developed to draw on workplace experience and enable participants to consolidate learning from a training session or self paced learning activities. Assessment tasks are also designed to demonstrate knowledge and skills against the performance criteria defined in the national training package qualification. Assessments combine on the job and off the job activities. Completion of assessment tasks is the key way that participants demonstrate their competency in the unit they are undertaking.

Assessment Outcomes

Certificate IV in Social Housing

Assessment outcomes in competency-based courses are either :

- **Competent (C)** – the participant has demonstrated competency in all learning outcomes.
- **Not Yet Competent (NYC)** – the participant has not yet demonstrated competency in all learning outcomes.

To demonstrate competency, you must satisfactorily complete each assessment task. An assessor will make a judgement about your skills and knowledge based on your assessment task. In some cases an assessor will contact a participant if there are gaps in knowledge and skills and you may be asked to submit further work, or provide further explanation to achieve competency.

A participant who fails to successfully demonstrate competency in an assessment task can re-attempt that assessment task once without re-enrolment in the related unit(s). See below under 'Completion and Return of Assessment Tasks' for further information regarding timeframes for completion of 'NYC' assessment tasks.

Diploma of Social Housing

Assessment work submitted for diploma level units will be awarded a result based on the evidence provided to meet the following grading criteria:

Result	Graded generic descriptors
Not yet competent	The learner demonstrates some skills but does not satisfy all the skills and knowledge required to meet the performance criteria specific to the unit.
Pass or competent	The learner demonstrates basic skills and knowledge and has satisfactorily met the performance criteria specific to the unit. This can be demonstrated in a range of situations. The learner uses known information, uses basic reflective skills with a limited reference to theory
Credit	The learner demonstrates effective skills and knowledge and is able to independently meet the performance criteria specific to the unit. This can be demonstrated in a wide range of situations . The learner applies detailed information to new situations using intermediate reflective skills that link to research and theory
Distinction	The learner demonstrates skills and knowledge and is able to consistently, effectively and independently meet the performance criteria specific to the unit. This can be demonstrated in an extensive range of situations with creativity . The learner researches and applies new information and is able to synthesise information and adapt it to new situations. The learner can clearly analyse information using high level reflective skills that link to research and theory.

Notification of Assessment details

Your course materials will contain details of all elements and performance criteria to be assessed within a unit, assessment tasks, the due date for completion of each assessment task, assessment criteria, and the method of assessment used.

Completing and submitting Assessment Tasks

The final dates for assessment tasks will be set after consideration of the work required with the unit(s) as a whole.

As professionals with daily work demands, the CTSH realises that keeping up with assessment tasks can sometimes be difficult for participants. However, the CTSH

strongly encourages participants to make a commitment to prioritise and complete assessments within the expected timeframe to maintain a consistent and manageable approach to achieving the qualification.



- Assessments should be completed within the time frame set.
- Extensions can be negotiated with the training administration co ordinator.

- If further information in addition to work you have submitted is requested by the assessor, you will be required to submit this within the negotiated time period. If you do not provide the additional information requested within this period a 'Not Yet Competent' will be recorded for the unit and the assessment task will be returned to you.
- Assessment tasks for face to face and distance delivery participants may be emailed or posted to the training co-ordinator. You are required to complete and sign the cover sheet provided with each assessment task. This cover sheet must be submitted with every assessment task.
- Assessment tasks for on line participants must be submitted as instructed.
- Completed assessments (including those where additional information has been requested) may be handed in outside the agreed period under special circumstances negotiated on an individual basis. However these assessments will incur an extra cost of approximately \$90 per hour (on average approximately 2 hours assessment time).

Failure to complete the assessment tasks will result in a non-completion result. The CTSH strongly advises that all participants keep a copy of any written work or work posted on line. For face to face and distance participants a signed cover sheet for each assessment task will be required stating that the work done is your own and not the work of any other person.

Guidelines for Joint Assessment Tasks

Participants (usually from the same workplace) may collaborate on a project to submit a joint assessment. This provides an opportunity for participants to learn from each other and develop their skills and knowledge more fully with a colleague. However, all participants need to be able to clearly demonstrate equal participation in the project and their individual achievement of the required competency.

The following guidelines apply to joint assessments:

- joint assessments should be robust and reflect a more comprehensive response than assessments done individually
- participants should submit their own workbooks and if appropriate, their notes and preparation materials as evidence of their work. Hand written notes as background material are acceptable to demonstrate your personal contribution
- each participant is required to formally acknowledge his or her contribution to the joint assignment
- the joint assignment must be signed by both parties..

If there is continuing doubt as to a candidate's competence then the assessor may seek additional information. The assessor may:

- ask for a third party reference from their workplace supervisor addressing the overall unit and the specific elements which are lacking
- talk to the candidates separately to discuss content of the unit, their work practice and the assessment task generally
- observe the individual candidates in their workplace undertaking tasks or retrieving information and explaining procedures

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) acknowledges skills and knowledge that people possess through formal or informal learning and experience. RPL recognises that individuals can achieve a qualification by collecting and presenting evidence from previous or current training, work experience and/or life experience. Evidence of previous training and work experience should be within the last five years. Many workers who have developed skills and knowledge in the workplace but do not have a related qualification now have an option other than structured training to achieve a qualification.

The NSWFA issues nationally recognised qualifications according to the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Please contact the training administration coordinator for more information if you are interested in RPL. Please note that any application for Recognition of Prior Learning must be made on the forms supplied and supporting evidence attached to these forms. An RPL information pack and registration form can be downloaded from our website. RPL may also be known as RCC – Recognition of Current Competency.

Appeal of Assessment or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Results

The CTSH acknowledges a training participant or RPL applicant's right to appeal on any decision regarding assessment. This is reflected in the NSWFA's Participants Grievance Policy.

If a participant is not happy with the result of the assessment, s/he can appeal the decision by completing an 'I want to appeal' form and send it to the relevant Training and Resource Worker or the training administration coordinator. The written appeal form will be acknowledged within two weeks of receipt.

The Appeal will then be referred to the Manager, Good Practice Unit who will review the appeal with another internal assessor (the panel). If the appeal cannot be finalised at this point a third 'benchmark specialist' will be invited to review the appeal with the panel. The appellant [person who put in the appeal] may have a support person (optional), who may be experienced in the topic or know of the applicant's work to support the applicant during the appeal process.

The panel will discuss and review the assessment decision or request additional information from the applicant where necessary. The panel will make a decision and record this. A review report will be completed and held in the participant's file. The outcome of the appeal will be given to the appellant in writing. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout all aspects of the appeal process.

Recognition of Qualifications Issued by other RTOs

Any training and/or recognition candidate can apply for a credit transfer to have units from relevant AQTF qualifications or Statements of Attainment issued by any other Registered Training Organisation recognised as part of the social housing qualification being sought. The qualification should have been obtained within the last five years. For example, you may have successfully completed a Certificate IV in Aged Care or a Diploma in Welfare within the last five years and therefore be eligible to have some of the units for this course credited towards your Cert IV in Social Housing CHC40802/CHC40908 or Diploma in Social Housing CHC50602/CHC50808. Participants will be required to complete an application for credit on the basis of certificates issued by other RTO's and will need to provide originals of all relevant documents for verification by one of our assessors. The course codes of units you already have achieved should match those that you are seeking a credit for. If not, then you will need to obtain additional information from the training organisation who issued your qualification.

Participant Support

The CTSH is committed to ensuring that participants needs associated with the training course are met before, during and after training.

The CTSH will ensure that:

- access and equity issue will be investigated and addressed
- all participants are well informed and aware of course expectations and our Training Code of Practice
- every effort has been made to use training facilities that are accessible where required
- participants with specific needs will be provided with the opportunity to discuss their needs with the Training Co-ordinator prior to commencement of course
- our service provision is as flexible as possible. If participants have any concerns or problems during the course they are encouraged to talk to the trainer for support

Trainers and assessors are expected to provide adequate and appropriate support services in terms of educational and personal issues where it helps participants to achieve their learning goals. If the issue is not associated with the educational outcome a referral will be made.

All trainers have well developed referral skills and access to up to date referral information.

It is expected that mutual respect and the rights of others (fellow participants and trainers) be observed at all times. Where it is deemed that a participant's conduct is disruptive for the majority of the training group, or serves to undermine the CTSH's training principles / code of practice, the CTSH maintains the right to take appropriate action. Such action will be taken by the Executive Director, Good Practice Unit Manager and/or trainer and may include removing a participant from the training group or cancellation of their enrolment. Detrimental conduct may include physical/verbal abuse, drunkenness, etc (refer 4.5 Participants Welfare & Guidance Policy).

If a student is not satisfied with the trainer or training they should speak with the Manager of the Good Practice Unit. If a dispute arises the participant should refer to the Participants Grievance Policy.

Confidentiality and Your Records

The CTSH will keep accurate and up to date records on attendance, financial records, and all participants' progress and results in accordance with our *Participant's Record Keeping* policy. These records are confidential and will be kept securely in accordance with AQTF standards. Participant's can request access to their personal records at any time.

Flexible Learning

NSWFHA is committed to providing flexible training and assessment. We recognise that not all participants have the same learning needs and so use a variety of learning methods to assist in learning new skills and knowledge. These methods include interactive group work, problem solving, case studies, quizzes, games and video.

We also acknowledge that participants have work and home commitments which impact on their availability for training and completing assessments. While we expect participants who are completing the face to face delivery of the training to attend as much of the training as possible, we can negotiate alternative arrangements for participants requiring more flexible options. We can provide a combination of face to face, E-learning, recognition and distance delivery options to suit you.

We also aim to provide flexible assessment which includes our assessors working with you personally to meet any gaps in your completed assessment tasks, and if possible providing on the job assessment in the workplace.

Please note that Diploma units are currently available on line only.

Certification for Accredited Training

Both the Certificate IV in Social Housing CHC40908 and the Diploma of Social Housing CHC50808 are accredited courses and therefore provide participants with the opportunity to attain a nationally recognised qualification and/or Statement of Attainment. By attending and successfully completing the assessment task for each unit you have registered for you will be issued with a Statement of Attainment.

You can choose to go on and complete the full Certificate IV in Social Housing over a period of time via attending training, distance delivery, or through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process, or a combination of each of these. There is also the opportunity to complete selected units on line.

You may also choose to attend the training we offer as one-off professional development training sessions.

Statements of attendance will be issued on a request basis by the Training Co-ordinator.

Our Commitment to Quality Assurance

The NSW Federation of Housing Associations is committed to upholding the legislative requirements as a Registered Training Organisation, and in particular to:

- The provision of our services and products free of discrimination and to promote and encourage equal opportunity and the provision of access and equity;
- Ensuring that our services complies with the relevant Commonwealth and NSW legislation and regulatory requirements that are relevant to our scope of registration as listed on page 3 of this document. standards of quality required of vocational and training legislation (with particular reference to the Vocational Education and Training Act, 2005);
- Issuing qualifications that meet licensing and other regulatory requirements.

All information in this handbook has been based on the NSW Federation of Housing Associations Training Policies & Procedures manual. If you would like a copy of these please contact the Good Practice Unit (see below for details).

CONTACT DETAILS:

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