Guidelines for Development of Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS)

International Labour Office

SKILLS–AP

Regional Skills and Employability Programme (SKILLS-AP)

Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific
(SKILLS-AP)

Guidelines for Development of Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS)

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Preface

The issue of skills recognition, and the development of national skills standards, has recently been of increasing importance in Asia and the Pacific. The need to improve the quality and effectiveness of training systems and the increasing mobility of skilled workers have been the main driving forces behind the need to develop new approaches to skills recognition together with new skills standards. There are very few tools available to help countries make these challenging reforms.

While many countries in the region had developed their national skills standards systems using the earlier Asia and the Pacific Skills Development Programme (APSDEP) Model Occupational Skills Standards, when a review of selected national systems took place in the mid-90s, it was clear that there was a move away from occupational standards towards industry-based competency standards. In this context, the ILO member States called on the ILO to develop a new model, which they chose to call Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS). While work on the new RMCS started at that time, the increasing pressure on countries to be competitive and improve productivity, along with greater mobility of skilled workers, has given new impetus to this work. In the first Technical Meeting of the Regional Skills Network Partner Organizations, held in Korea in November 2000, the ILO constituents identified skills recognition and the development of regional standards as high priority issues. This was reinforced at the Second Planning Meeting of the Network, which along with other regional meetings, called on the ILO to update the guidance materials and assess the currency of existing standards.

These revised Guidelines for the Development of Regional Model Competency Standards were prepared by Andre Lewis for the ILO Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP). I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Mr Lewis for his excellent work on this subject, together with the ILO, for many years. I am sure that these Guidelines will be greatly appreciated by countries in the region both for the development of their national standards, and as a basis for discussion on the recognition of skills across countries, in the context of the mobility of skilled workers.

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Introduction

National skill standards play an important and increasing role in vocational training and recognition in the Asia-Pacific region as they do in many other parts of the world. They are a guide to the scope of skills and knowledge required for a whole industry and can be flexibly combined into jobs or occupations. Skill standards are now the common basis for vocational training programs, and testing and certification in many countries. This Guideline is for development of Regional Model Competency standards (RMCS) that can be used in various ways to underpin efficient and effective skill development in the Asia-Pacific region.

The future of work is changing

The nature of work is changing rapidly due to new technology and work organisation innovations. This has a dual effect by tending to dramatically reduce the number of low or un-skilled positions available globally and additionally putting emphasis on the need to extend worker's skills over a shorter and shorter timeframe.

It is no longer sufficient to only have initial skills in say, a recognised trade as the changing nature of work will require individuals to regularly upgrade their skills or add completely new ones in order to remain fully employable. Most of this upgrading or addition of skills can be gained in a training centre or within the workplace but irrespective of how competency has been achieved it should be formally recognised in the same way as the initial trade skills were. RMCS can provide a flexible benchmark for the whole range of skills needed in an industry and so support recognition, upgrade training and certification irrespective of where or how the skills were gained.

Work or qualification levels across the region

Skill standards developed in different countries have levels or hierarchies used to group the skills defined. In the Asia Pacific region these are usually based upon occupational classification structures and the particular qualification framework for that country. However, both of these vary considerably across the Asia-Pacific region and worldwide in terms of the number of occupational definitions, levels of qualifications, and terminology used. For example common references to concepts such as 'basic' or 'advanced' are used as occupation or qualification descriptors in a number of countries but the definition of these terms is not consistent internationally.

As most countries in the region will have a level or classification system for their own particular qualifications or skill recognition credentials RMCS must allow for this. So RMCS do not define qualification levels but rather clusters competencies in logical groupings that can be translated into each country's classification system as required. As the movement of labour across borders increases every year it is important to have a common 'translation tool' such as RMCS to allow the skills of migrant workers to be evaluated simply no matter what qualification they hold.

Benefits of Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS)

RMCS are valuable for the following reasons:

- Changes in the labour market must be duly reflected in new regional skill standards. The ongoing effects of globalisation and technological development have a profound impact on jobs. The skill requirements for most jobs change rapidly so reflecting these changes and providing a basis for regional cooperation is necessary.
- Companies can use regional model competency standards to describe the skills they need in a common language. Existing workforces can be evaluated against model standards to determine whether the necessary range of skills and knowledge is held by workers and where any gaps may be.
- The approach to describing workplace needs for human resources in competency standards can accommodate rapid changes in skill requirements, as the process is more closely linked to the needs of industry than course based learning outcomes and curriculum.
- Previous skill description systems such as Model Occupational Skill Standards (MOSS) used traditional occupations as a basis for clustering competencies. The new competency-based model standards are designed for broader industry, industry sub-sector or occupational cluster coverage and so have a wider application and are quicker to develop for industry:

    - where there is migration of skilled workers;
    - where there is strong economic development; and
    - where work is service focussed and not only traditional manufacturing trades.

RMCS are simply developed sets of competency standards in streams of occupational or industry sector groupings. It is up to users in any particular economy to determine which of the standards should make up local qualifications or other recognition tools such as licensing. In most countries that use competency standards across their training system it has been found that whole qualifications are not always the only, or best way to aggregate competencies. Increasingly, smaller sets of skills make up highly valued job roles and assist individual workers not wanting or needing lengthy ‘trade’ style qualifications.

In today’s faster paced world of work even existing workers with respected qualifications still need to upgrade frequently to keep abreast of new technologies and workplace practices. They need to access short, sharp training programs that put together valuable new competencies that complement each other. There are also many new ‘portfolio’ workers who undertake a variety of jobs across various occupational sectors according to demand.

An Industry Focus for RMCS

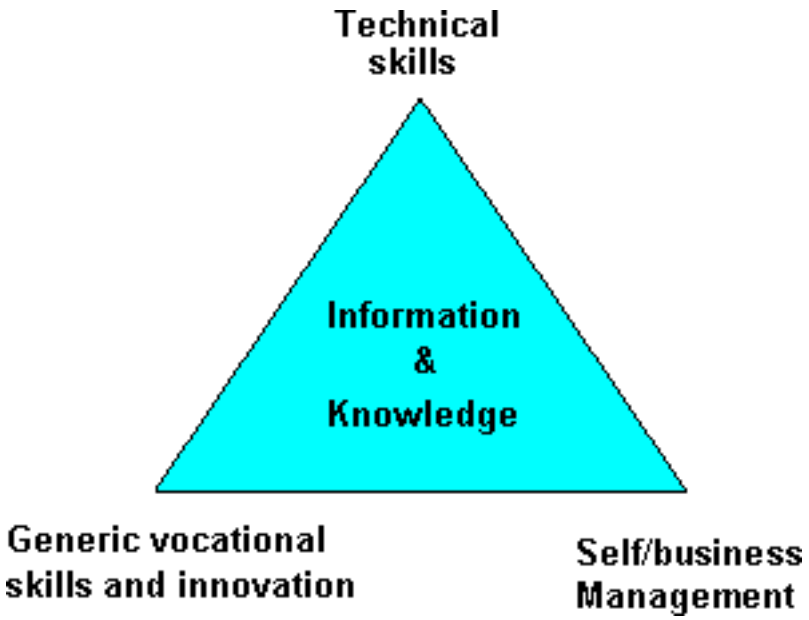
The RMCS concept deals with a whole industry or major industry sectors not single occupations. This does not mean, however that recognised occupations, including traditional trades are not covered by RMCS. All the functions and skills to work effectively in an industry or discrete industry sector can be

described in a common, competency-based format.

To do this the RMCS format is designed to allow various combinations of work functions to be put together to describe whole jobs. This approach can also show combinations of competencies that are the equivalent of existing trade or other occupations. Well-designed RMCS therefore accommodate industry job requirements and cross-industry or trade requirements from within the same framework of descriptors. In other words, everyone can get something useful from them as a tool for:

- describing new jobs for any industry;
- designing vocational training or testing materials for all work, including trades;
- conducting skills audits at the enterprise or national level i.e. for assessing the skills of migrant workers;
- restructuring an enterprise or industry sector for development of new services and manufactures;
- planning for multi-skilling of a workforce; and
- introduction of team based approaches to work.

The economic success of any countries' businesses will be through high value technical application, innovation, customer service, business acumen and enterprise. Workers in the emerging world economy must be more knowledgeable about their industry culture and enterprise needs and utilise this knowledge to contribute to innovation. The co-relationship between technical skills, knowledge (technical and vocational), innovation and business/self management looks like this:



Competency

It is useful to view competency as being in essence extremely simple, involving being clear about what people in, or entering work need to be able to do.

When this is described in a standard outcomes-focussed format it is an essential tool for:

- basing training and assessment, at the least, on those identified outcomes; and
- certifying that people can actually do what was specified as the outcome and credentialing them accordingly.

This requires a standard that enables industry to accurately define its workplace requirements - these are called competency (not 'skill') standards. As well as underpinning training and vocational education outcomes they can provide the benchmark for recognition of competencies gained informally.

> *The fundamental concept of competency in RMCS is that it focuses on what is expected of an employee in the workplace rather than on a learning process or time spent in training or education.*

In other words, it describes exactly what someone should be able to do and not any particular training they should undertake. It also embodies the ability to transfer and apply broad skills and knowledge to new situations and environments. The description of competency must therefore capture the way effective workers operate not just list their duties.

This is a comprehensive definition of competency in that all aspects of work performance, not only narrow task skills, are included. It encompasses:

- the requirement to efficiently perform individual tasks [task skills]
- the requirement to manage a number of different tasks within a job [task management skills]
- the requirement to effectively respond to irregularities and breakdowns in routine [contingency management skills]
- the requirement to deal with the responsibilities and expectations of the work environment [job / role environment skills], including working with others and in teams.

In addition to being based on this broad concept of competency, RMCS have to be:

- related to realistic and current workplace practices;
- expressed as outcomes; and
- written in clear, simple, user-friendly language that is readily understandable to employees, employers, trainers, supervisors, and trainees.

RMCS also incorporate appropriate underlying skills and knowledge as this relates to competence in regional workplaces, and deal with attitudes and values in a way that focuses on the outcomes to be achieved rather than the views of individuals. It is important that the standards are free of bias and discrimination.

There is a common international terminology used in competency

standards development. A glossary of RMCS and other internationally recognised competency terms is at **Appendix I**

Describing every aspect of work

By describing work in terms of outcomes that encompass skills, knowledge and the capacity to prioritise and manage roles and functions, RMCS can be a valuable tool for determining not only the duties each person is required to carry out in an organisation, but also the scope of their work, how they combine functions and the necessary level of performance.

So work roles must be described in ways that capture:

- **autonomy** – covering whether workers are expected to make certain decisions for themselves, and perhaps prioritise their work or determine the best means to carry it out;
- **responsibility/accountability** – where workers may have responsibility for the work or training of others and/or be accountable for the quality of products, services and productivity levels;
- **complexity** – because some work is more complex than others in terms of the motor skills , analytical ability or underpinning knowledge needed to carry it out;
- **workplace environment** – as not all work is carried out under perfect conditions and pressures of the natural or organisational environment are important factors in describing effective performance;
- **choice and range of contingences** – because work is carried out using various resources, both material and human, and competent workers need to know what choices they have in this regard and be able to make decisions logically; and
- **discretion and judgement** – we know few workers are supervised for every single aspect of the work they do and so describing the degree of discretion they can apply in what they do or how they do it is important, as are the necessary judgmental abilities required for this.

Well-drafted RMCS incorporate these aspects of job roles not as separate lists of job characteristics but as integral aspects of demonstrable performance by individuals. It is these comprehensive performance requirements described in easily understood 'chunks' of information that makes competency-based standards particularly valuable.

In summary, the RMCS for an industry provides a multi-dimensional matrix of what competency outcomes are required, in what combinations they may be used and how they can interrelate vertically and horizontally through any organisational, occupational or qualification structure.

An example of a broad skills hierarchy similar to that developed and used for occupational or qualification systems in several countries is provided at **Appendix II.**

Knowledge and Competency

There is a great deal of research on the nature of knowledge and its acquisition and while much of it is very technical with issues far from resolution, there is an apparent convergence which throws light on the nature and acquisition of knowledge in people's work performance. In particular, it shows that knowledge used in work performance is not just

abstract theoretical knowledge but knowledge that has been *transformed* and assimilated into the individual's capacity to do the work at hand.

Industry developed competency standards such as RMCS do not always give to trainers, teachers, assessors (and learners) a vivid enough picture of what competent performance really looks like. One specific improvement to address this is for the knowledge embedded in competent performance - the thinking about how to tackle a work task, in handling contingencies and in imagining improvements - to be effectively indicated in the Performance Criteria and Essential Skills and Knowledge of RMCS standards.

This knowledge must encompass the 'here and now skills' that people need to operate plant and machinery, to make and manipulate tools and products, and to deal with people and their needs in the provision of services. It should be 'applied' knowledge in how to diagnose problems and cope with contingencies. The more traditional store of 'what' and 'why' knowledge is still important but it has to be known and understood in a meaningful context not in a way that is just theoretical and detached.

A corollary of this is that assessment of knowledge and skills can no longer be separated. Assessment should not be by proxy, assuming that knowledge acquired in the classroom will always translate into practice in the workplace. Rather, assessment needs to be of performance on the job or under the nearest possible simulated workplace conditions.

Briefly:

Knowledge should always be put in a context:

- descriptions of knowledge and understanding can be incorporated throughout RMCS Performance Criteria, Evidence requirements, Critical Skills and Essential Knowledge and Range Statement;
- competency is holistic, integrating skills, knowledge and their practical application. When assessment is undertaken knowledge can provide evidence to ***infer*** competency, in addition to evidence from direct performance;
- only knowledge which is related to the required actual workplace performance outcomes should be included in RMCS.

RMCS must avoid the inclusion of knowledge requirements which are unconnected to work application or simply a pre-requisite for undertaking formal training at the next level. However provision should be made for including and/or linking broader areas of knowledge which underpin a particular group of units in an RMCS standard.

The Structure of RMCS

Regional Model Competency Standards have the following three primary components:

1. **Industry Descriptor and Coverage**
2. **Primary Functions**
3. **Units**

The third component – **Units** – are structured with four sub-components:

- **Performance Criteria**
- **Evidence requirements**
- **Critical Skills and Essential Knowledge**
- **Range Statement**

Let's look at each component and sub component in turn with examples of how they are used and drafted.

Industry Descriptor and Coverage

A Regional Model Competency Standard for say, the Air-conditioning industry might include the following information in its description and coverage statement:

> Industry Descriptor and Coverage
> The coverage of this RMCS is the design, building, installation and maintenance of domestic and industrial air-conditioning systems. This includes sale to customers, drafting of technical specifications and drafting, manufacture, off and on-site assembly, commissioning, hand-over, maintenance and repairs …

The intention of this opening RMCS statement is to describe succinctly and clearly what the whole set of model standards covers in industry or industry sector terms. It is important not to simply go to occupational descriptions because one industry may use skills from many occupations and, conversely, occupations can cross a number of different industries. The Descriptor and Coverage needs careful consideration because it defines the parameters of the model standards being developed and sets the boundaries of the skills defined.

Primary Functions

Continuing with this example of an RMCS Industry Description and Coverage, one of the Primary Functions for our Air conditioning industry could be:

Primary Function - *Install, test and commission domestic air-conditioning systems*

This is a broad range of work that occurs after specifications for an air conditioning system have been determined, the system has been built or acquired and is now ready for installation. It would be broken down into a number of different actions and each will require a range of skills to be used. This is where the RMCS Unit structure comes in.

Units

Again using the above example of a Primary Function in Air Conditioning installation some of the relevant Units could be:

1. *Planning work to meet all requirements of installation drawings and technical specifications;*
2. *Installing with minimal structural displacement, to a clean finish and within relevant building codes of practice;*
3. *Connecting the system to domestic power supply in a safe manner which meets applicable electrical regulations;*
4. *Testing and adjusting system to ensure flow rates, noise levels, and filtering meet system specifications and customer requirements;*
5. *Commission system and hand over to customer with appropriate warranty documentation, operating instructions and maintenance schedules accurately completed and explained.*

As noted above each Unit has a number of sub-components. The first is Performance Criteria

Performance Criteria

The first example **Unit** above would have a number of **Performance Criteria** describing real work outcomes. They are drafted to describe in detail the skills a worker applies when undertaking the work defined in the Unit. While quite concise they must set out fully what is done, how well the work should be performed and allow for a measurable outcome. For example a Performance Criterion for Unit no. 1 above could be:

- *Installation plans and manufacturers specifications of air-conditioning units are interpreted to accurately determine the time needed to complete the work, the equipment required and any additional materials required for fabrication or finishing.*

This shows a fundamental beginning process in undertaking the task of installation where the worker has to read and interpret plans and make decisions about the resources/tools required and how long it will take to complete the work. It is an essential aspect of professional performance and easily measurable and assessable through observation in the workplace or a simulated work situation (i.e. a training college). It is not just about being able to read a plan but also about understanding it and using judgment and planning.

Evidence

In an RMCS Unit it is necessary to provide details of how to assess if a worker has the correct mix and level of skills. Some aspects of work can be almost 'hidden'; when observing a person undertaking a task although what a competent person does may involve quite complex thinking and decision-making processes. The **Evidence** guidance for assessment of the unit in the example could include:

- *Evidence of the ability to interpret drawings accurately and in various on-site conditions to determine all the tools and materials required to complete the job*

This reminds an assessor or trainer to check that in reading plans and getting resources and tools together the worker fully understands why they are doing this and makes allowances for the environment they are going to work in. This may mean limited access because of the space available or involve working at a height above the ground that could involve using ladders or scaffolding. These must be fully considered and planned for if the worker is to be deemed competent.

Critical Skills and Essential Knowledge

Reinforcing the need to fully understand every aspect of applying a skill or combination of skills the RMCS sets out Critical Skills and Essential Knowledge that a competent worker must possess so they can perform to the standards required.

The **Critical Skills** for our example Unit could include:

- *Safe use of hand and relevant power tools*
- *Capacity to read and interpret technical drawings*
- *Ability to use gas welding equipment and weld minor structural steel to international welding code*
- *Wiring electrical connections strictly to codes of practice*

Plus **Essential knowledge** such as -

- *Building codes and regulations relevant to internal and external installation of mechanical and electrical equipment*
- *Occupational health and safety regulations*
- *Technical drafting*

As you can see this covers the less obvious aspects of competent performance such as the underpinning ability to use tools, weld and follow wiring codes. The knowledge required includes what relevant building or other codes impact on the installation work and how plans are drafted so they can be interpreted correctly. This is a vital aspect of assessment as knowledge can be inferred from performance but may also need to be separately tested to be sure the worker has sufficient knowledge of everything that affects their work performance and outcomes.

Range Statement

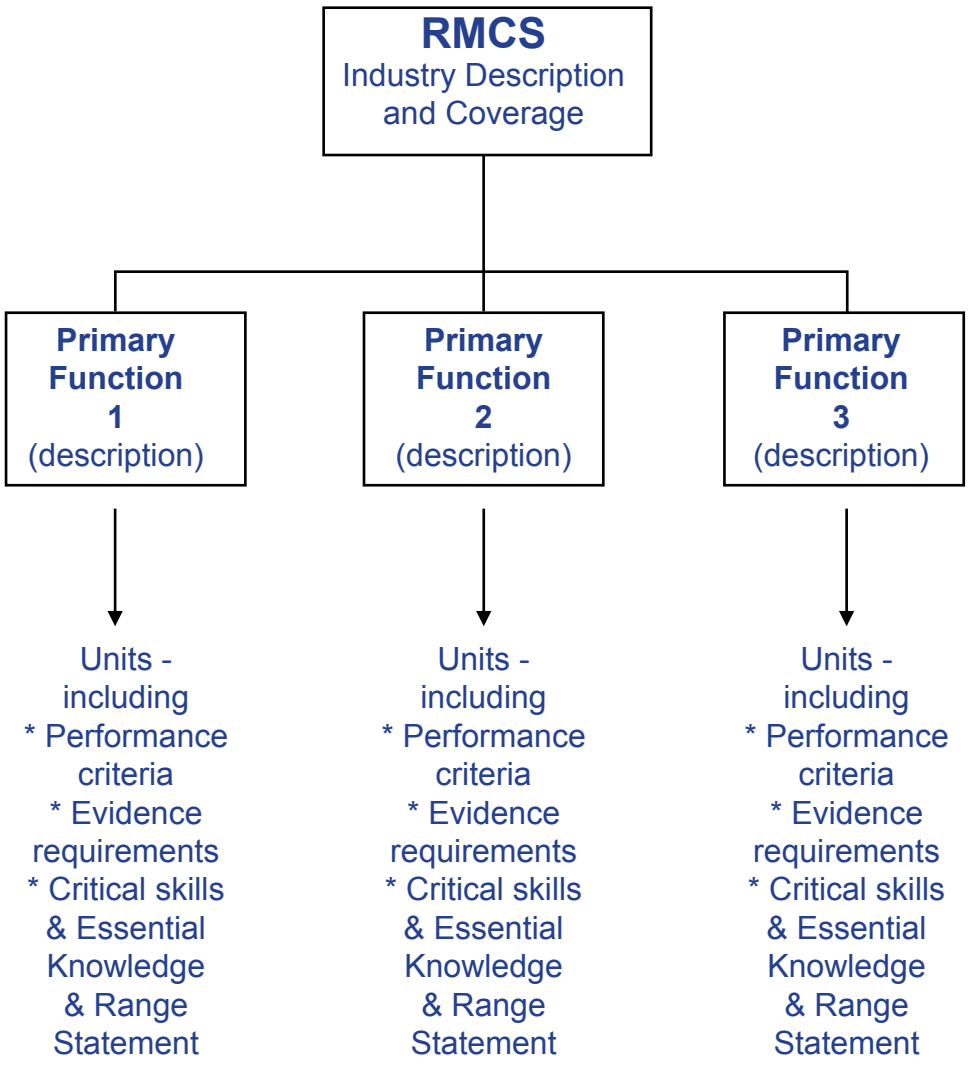
Finally the job/role environment must be considered. Not all work is conducted in the same place every time or in perfect conditions. Any work, building construction for example, is reliant on the weather which can change dramatically how a person works or whether they can do so safely at all. In an RMCS Unit the range of possible environments, resources, workplace requirements and so on should be described so a person's competency is tested to determine whether they can operate effectively in the normal range of contexts they will encounter in the workplace.

A **Range Statement** for our example Unit in Air Conditioning installation could include -

- *Installations could be in a range of locations including single domestic dwellings, high rise building and commercial premises;*
- *Relevant regulations could include electrical connection regulations, building safety codes and local government planning requirements;*
- *Plans and drawings could be part of larger architectural plans; plant installation plans or computer-generated site-specific drawings.*

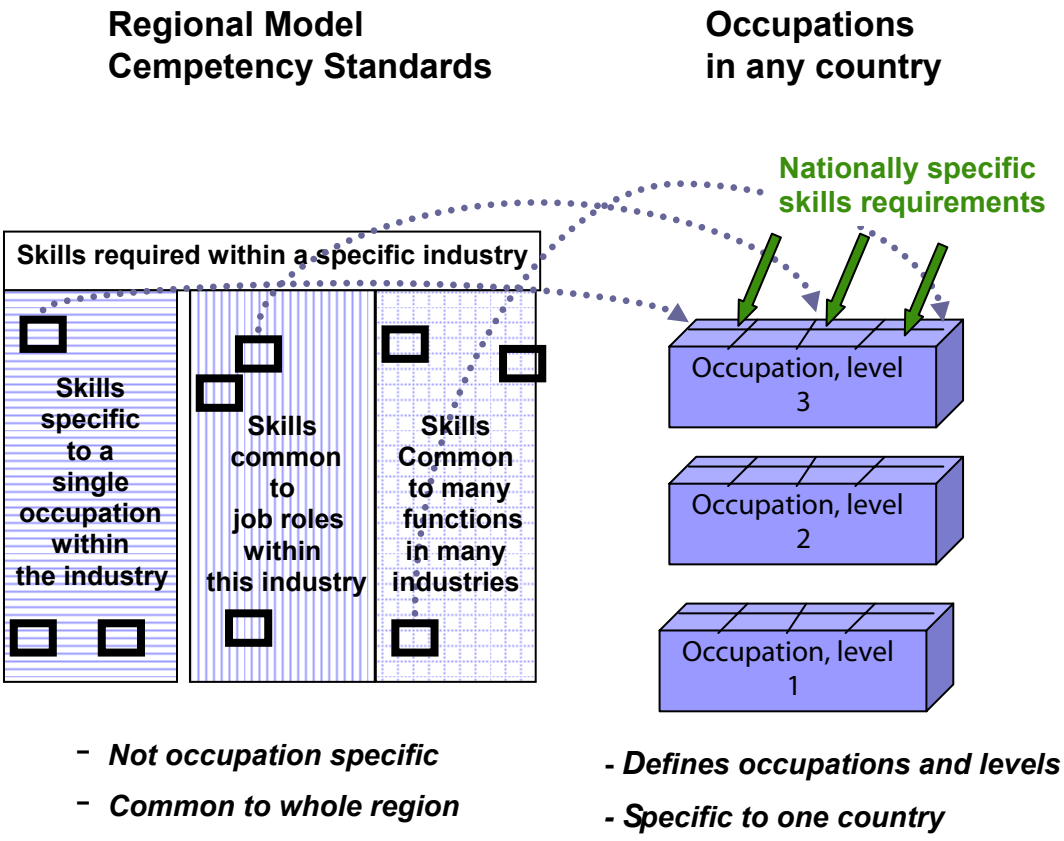
RMCS Format

Each preface to an RMCS should have the Industry Descriptor and Coverage statement and outline the major Functions also briefly described, followed by a diagram to make this information clear. Shown diagrammatically below is the simple structure that illustrates the relationship between the components. The Primary Functions would be shown as illustrated and the detailed Units would follow in the RMCS in the same order as the Functions.



An important feature of RMCS is that they cover a whole industry in this broad, functional structure and not by identifying discrete occupations or job roles. This is because as regional model standards they cannot accommodate every possible combination of skills that would make up all the recognised occupations in various countries. Traditional trade roles and the different stages of development across the region means defined occupations are not easily compared between countries. In addition many countries have developed levels within their trades or national occupations and linked these to local qualifications.

But the RMCS accommodates multiple combinations of the units in the model standards to suit any local occupational outcome. This is illustrated as follows;



This shows that units can be selected as appropriate from within or across any Primary Function of an RMCS and combined to describe the skills needed in any specific occupation.

Not only can this approach be used so regional model standards can help to design local qualifications in any country, but it allows for easy comparison to another country's qualifications by using RMCS units as skill benchmarks. This is particularly valuable when assessing the required skills of migrant workers with unfamiliar qualifications.

Each industry RMCS should give examples of how the units in the Primary Functions can be combined into common occupational roles. The Tourism RMCS has examples on pages 9/10.

RMCS Component details

This section of the Guidelines shows examples of how an industry might construct an RMCS. A companion document to these Guidelines is a full example of an RMCS for the Tourism Industry to show how each component is set and defined. So the following uses Tourism examples plus other different industry model in each case for comparison and to best illustrate the quality requirements.

Industry Descriptor
This details what industry, sector or occupational cluster the standard deals with and its main work coverage. An **Industry Descriptor** for the Tourism sector is:

Example 1

These Regional Model Competency Standards cover the Tourism sector and include competencies for -

- Tour Operations
- Guiding
- Attractions and 'Theme' Parks
- Travel Services (Retail and Wholesale)
- Visitor Information Services
- Meetings and Conventions
- Tourism Product Development

The scope of the standards is for entry level to middle management and encompasses common sector skills in the areas of customer relations, tourism product development, sales and bookings, travel and tour operations and tourist attractions.

There is also inclusion throughout of competencies that are not exclusive to the Tourism industry but are common skills that could apply to many different workplaces. These include:

- Customer Service
- Hygiene, Health, Safety and Security
- General Administration
- Financial Administration
- Computer Technology
- Technical and Maintenance Services
- Merchandise Sales
- Training
- Management and Leadership.

NOTE: *This RMCS does not cover Hospitality functions*

Example 2

For comparison an **Industry Descriptor** that might be used for an RMCS covering a large sector of the automotive industry could be:

> This Regional Model Competency Standard covers the **Automotive Manufacturing** sector and includes competencies for the manufacture of –
>
> - Cars;
> - Light trucks;
> - Primemovers;
> - Buses and coaches; and
> - Motorcycles.
>
> The scope of the standards is from entry level to technical supervisory positions in the design, process set-up, body construction, production and finishing, engine assembly, quality assurance and wholesaling of the vehicles noted.
>
> ***NOTE:*** *This RMCS does not include third party component manufacture, vehicle testing for regulatory compliance and specialist coachbuilding.*

A template for compiling an industry RMCS preface like these is provided in **Appendix III.**

Primary Functions

Every RMCS will have a number of **Primary Functions**. How many of these there are depends upon the particular industry or occupational cluster covered by the RMCS. Each primary function describes the major type of work involved - administrative, technical and so on with a range of contexts for its application.

Careful construction of the Primary Functions is necessary as they determine the utility of the whole RMCS. This is the major difference between defining a set of model standards for an industry or a similar exercise for an occupation. Occupations are definitions of sets of skills with broad descriptions of how they are applied but they do not easily show what skills are brought to bear in any particular industry or enterprise.

Working from what occurs in an industry allows all the work functions to be defined not just those covered in traditional trades or well known jobs. It shows how work interrelates across an industry and what the full range of skills necessary are.

To illustrate the sort of functional breakdown for an RMCS, one for the Tourism sector would be:

Example 1

Tourism Core

In addition to specialist areas in functional groups there are competencies required by all people working in the Tourism Industry. There are four (4) units comprising these competencies in the first section designated 'A'.

Primary Functions

B **Tourism Product Development**	***C*** **Sales & Marketing**	***D*** **Office Administration & Venue Maintenance**	***E*** **Tour Operations and Guiding**	***F*** **Attractions & Theme Parks**	**G Supervision and Management**
(this includes developing tour packages, travel specials, conventions)	(this includes travel agency work, tour sales and regional tourism promotion)	(this includes geranial administration and cleaning. Set up of conference and other tourist venues)	(this includes all aspects of managing and conducting tours and various escorted activities)	(this includes ride and animal parks as well as eco-tourism operations)	(this includes general frontline management roles and sire management of venues and company operations)
13 units	*24 units*	*24 units*	*19 units*	*17 units*	*27 units*

(The units comprising this RMCS have a prefix letter – **B** to **G** – designating which functional group they come from plus a number for each group)

This approach introduces a simple coding system for the units that make up the RMCS. The letter (alpha) assigned to each Primary Function becomes the first identifier for each unit from that function. The units are then simply numbered in sequence as a quick means of identifying them out of what may be a large number in a complete RMCS.

Example 2

An example of primary Functions for the Hospitality industry could be as follows:

Primary Functions

A **Professional Cooking**	**B** **Food and Beverage Service**	**C** **Accommodation Operations**
(this includes hotel and restaurant services, event and outside catering, plus commercial cookery such as airline, hospital and industrial catering)	(this includes hotel, restaurant, club and event and commercial catering services. Covers operations in food service, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage service and management)	(this includes hotel accommodation front office and housekeeping, motels, clubs and serviced apartment operation and management)
'x' units	*'y' units*	*'z' units*

This simple framework ensures that any user can look at the introduction to an RMCS and see quite easily what the industry coverage is and how this is broken down into broad skill areas.

Units

RMCS should provide the basis for skill formation now, and in the future. Capturing the ability to apply skills in new situations and changing work organisation rather than only reflecting the tasks currently performed.

Each Primary Function has a number of **Units** describing the work in more detail. These are statements about what particular work is done - utilising certain technology or materials, working with others or alone, operating within certain regulatory requirements and so on - and the performance measures that apply to a competent worker. It is vital that these are in outcome terms and do not simply describe a process or input. Each begins with a brief statement of what the Unit covers.

As industries develop RMCS, it is important to pinpoint current and likely changes, and identify the skill requirements emerging from these in the coverage statement. It is one of the most vital aspects of making model standards really useful and 'future-proof'. Compare the following examples:

Example 1(a)

> **Unit B2 - Use tourism brochures to advise customers**
>
> Unit coverage
> Deals with the skills and knowledge for selecting, and reading tourism brochures and similar information in order to inform customers of product choices.

This Unit reflects a traditional and essentially narrow approach to information gathering and customer service in an industry such as tourism. As future trends in products and services expected by customers are considered however, it is obvious this will underplay skills and knowledge used in new approaches to finding data, customer service; e.g. anticipating needs, promoting services, etc.

So these are better captured in the following structure:

Example 1 (b)

> **Unit B2 - Research tourism data and advise customers**
>
> Unit coverage
> Deals with the skills and knowledge required to conduct research and assess data in a tourism context in order to be well informed and provide clients with up-to-date and valid information. It applies to all tourism industry sectors

Your can see that the (b) example covers much more of the real skill involved in advising a customer on tourism products. It acknowledges that each worker performs a minor research function in looking for promotional material, evaluating it and using that knowledge to really provide customers with the right information. The (a) example misses much of the essential aspects of this skill.

Performance criteria

Performance criteria are evaluative statements in a Unit which specify what is to be done in the work environment and the required level of performance. It is here that the activities, skills, knowledge and understanding which provide the evidence of competent performance, are specified as outcomes within the Unit. Considering the following principles and examples will support development of good performance criteria. Breadth and precision in expression is essential.

Example 1

Performance in a unit dealing with travel agency bookings from the Tourism RMCS could include:

> *International travel products are evaluated and advice provided to clients that best suits their destination requirements, budget and travel purpose*

Note that this Performance criterion does not stop after*...and advice provided to clients …* because this is just the description of the task. The real required outcome is that the advice provided ***suits*** the needs of the customer and so the criterion goes on to explain that what is really required is advice that meets three measures of performance – customer requirements, budgets and reason for travelling.

Example 2 (a)

To illustrate breadth of application and concise drafting a Performance Criterion in a Unit from an RMCS covering the health industry dealing with emergency care or first aid might include:

> *Pulse, breathing, etc are assessed …*

and then continue on trying to capture all the various strategies that dealing with an accident victim might entail. But this could be more broadly and usefully expressed as:

Example 2 (b)

> *Accident victim vital signs are assessed, in accordance with specified first aid procedures and patient is treated as appropriate until specialist care is available*

In (b) the range of possible problems the skilled worker could have to deal with is encapsulated in a straightforward way while still providing an evaluative outcome in terms of providing appropriate aid until help arrives. This illustrates that good Performance Criteria avoid repetition and long lists.

Lengthy performance criteria are unnecessary if the Range Statement (covered later in these Guidelines) is used to specify common processes or products that may be used in the Units of a Primary Function.

Example 3 (a)

Performance Criteria from an RMCS dealing with administration work:

- *Computer databases are effectively maintained...*
- *Personnel files are effectively maintained...*
- *Assets and stock registers are regularly updated…*

and so on.

Repetition of this sort can be avoided by using the Range Statement as follows:

Example 3 (b)

> *Performance Criterion:*
> *Information systems are used and maintained for administrative functions in accordance with enterprise requirements*
>
> *Range statement in the same Unit:*
> *Information systems may include:*
> - *computer databases*
> - *personnel files*
> - *assets and stock registers …..*

This way the term “information systems” could be used in a number of Performance Criteria and all possible types of system can be covered in detail if necessary in the Range Statement.

As mentioned previously it is necessary to always capture the ***evaluative*** aspect of performance when drafting Performance Criteria. This aids trainers and assessors to ensure they assess against a complete outcome.

In a Tourism RMCS dealing with starting a new project:

Example 4

> *Projects are commenced and resources to support project work are fully assessed prior to initial development as evidenced by assessment reports and supervisor approval*

Or in an RMCS covering using paint and other products to complete the finish on a manufactured product:

> *Finishing procedures for all products are carried out using approved chemical agents in correct amounts to ensure a quality finish with minimal wastage and avoidance of workplace hazards*

Another is a Performance Criterion from an RMCS where the skill is leading a team of other workers:

> *When leading a team potential conflicts in the team operation are identified and effective responses formulated, using principles of negotiation and conflict resolution*

In each case you can see how the task or role is set out first, followed by a description of the parameters that will show measurable performance in carrying it out.

This illustrates another principle to follow in drafting good, clear Performance Criteria - avoid overly detailed descriptions.

For an RMCS covering aspects of work in the chemical industry a Unit and its Performance Criteria could deal with using machinery to mix certain chemicals. The wrong way is to set out the detailed procedures that a person would follow (probably sourced from the machine instruction manual):

Example 5

> *Resin is loaded into the mixer first ensuring bottom door of mixer chamber is closed, vibrator is turned on, ……*

As you can see this approach will lead to excessively detailed Units and the whole RMCS will be lengthy and often limited to a particular process and method which could involve a very lengthy description.

It would be much better to state:

> *Product additives are mixed, loaded and processed according to appropriate product, equipment and enterprise operating specifications*

This broadly describes a range of possible mixing activities and the Range Statement can deal with the sorts of product, machinery and specifications to be referred to. Assessing someone against several of these will allow the trainer or assessor to determine if they can carry out similar tasks using a variety of materials or mixing techniques by transferring their skills and knowledge to different situations. This is a much better outcome.

Finally the values and attitudes intrinsic to an industry or enterprise influence the achievement and exercise of competency in a job setting. Within the Units it may be appropriate to try to describe certain important values, attitudes or approaches to the work, which are necessary for effective performance.

For example, in some industries such as providing health-related services, competency may be influenced by expressing values of caring and empathy for people who are the clients. Values and attitudes can be included in the RMCS, provided proper regard is given to the requirement that standards should be outcome based. A focus on the outcomes of using these values at work could produce a performance statement such as:

Example 6

> *Therapy approaches are determined and acted upon, based on information available and empathetic interpretation of the clients' expectations and experiences.*

This Performance Criterion enables a focus on the **application** of values such as empathising with a client at work, and how these contribute, with other skills, to a quality outcome. Individuals may, of course, hold and apply a varied range of values and attitudes that can lead to the same outcome. They are not being judged on what they believe, or value but on what they **do**.

Evidence

The next component of the RMCS is guidance on the sort of **Evidence** that would support an assessment process and determine if an individual really held the competencies described. Evidence covers the sort of broad activities that should be observed or simulated in an assessment to reliably attest to a person being able to apply a competency in a realistic workplace environment and include the modes of evidence that are best for the competency:

- direct observation for some units;
- written or oral testing for others; or
- evaluation of longer term work or practice outcomes such as complete products, service records and so on.

An RMCS Evidence requirement needs to provide information on the ways in which competency can be reliably determined – as previously noted it is particularly important to cover aspects of work that are not easily observable in routine situations.

In the Tourism RMCS one of the primary Functions covers tour guiding. A Unit might deal with guiding a group of tourists in remote or potential hazardous situations (e.g. abseiling in a mountainous area or rafting in a swiftly flowing river system). An Evidence statement might therefore be required which ensures a trainer or assessor evaluates whether the potential tour guide understands the safety and environmental aspects of guiding their clients:

Example 1

> *Evidence of competency in effective tour guiding in remote locations must include observation and verification that clients are fully informed of all relevant safety requirements in the area visited and communication throughout a guided experience covers both cultural and scenic information and the need to maintain the environment.*

Another example in an aspect of work in an RMCS covering community or emergency services may have a requirement to Manage an Accident Scene. Something that will probably not occur during an assessment:

Example 2

> *Evidence of competency must include observation in the workplace or where this is not possible a closely simulated environment. The interactions of others in work teams and the needs of possible victims must be considered. Where work performance or simulation is inconclusive a test of emergency procedures knowledge specific to accidents may be used as supporting evidence*

Also important is what evidence is sufficient – for example, whether a single observation is enough or demonstrated application over time in a variety of contexts is required. Within this may be consideration of whether it is appropriate to assess competency over a period of time, or if it is necessary to test several times in different situations to establish an overall consistency in performance in that competency. In a tourism or retail industry environment, dealing with many different customers and products will mean this is appropriate.

In an RMCS dealing with customer service Evidence might need to be set out like this:

Example 3

> *Evidence of effective customer service should be collected on a number of occasions to allow for a full range of customers and service situations to be encountered. This should include busy periods and occasions when complaints have to be dealt with or difficult requests responded to.*

The Evidence statements should specify what applied knowledge should be tested - this is particularly important for competency units that cannot always be observed in normal routine work or its simulation such as emergency procedures that may need to be followed.

Some critical aspects of a competency relate to particular applied knowledge that is *essential* to performance. In a technical area of competency where there is an important need to be able to measure and calculate based on sound knowledge of fundamental principles, it would be essential to refer to this in the Evidence requirements.

In an RMCS where handling reactive chemicals was part of a job role the Evidence should therefore refer explicitly to the relevant calculation requirements:

Example 4

> *It is essential that competence is demonstrated in the relevant aspects of:*
> - *measurement of fluids*
> - *calculations of volume of irregular shaped containers*

The Evidence should also refer to the potential scope of work and processes in which the competency would be expected to be performed.

To explain – An RMCS Primary Function might include working with several types of plant, equipment, machinery or processes for performance of certain competencies. The Evidence should therefore indicate whether it is necessary to assess some or all of these to attest to competency achievement.

Example 5

> *Competency must be demonstrated in at least 6 of the 8 basic types of plant and equipment listed below:*

In cases like this where there are multiple options for performance, further specification of evidence could include:

> *Two of the types of equipment assessed must be x and y equipment.*

This makes it clear that simply testing someone against one sort of equipment is probably insufficient to determine the full extent of competency and so several types should be included in assessment.

Critical Skills and Essential Knowledge

Skills and knowledge are integrated into all competency standards although how this is done can vary. The practical skills to be demonstrated in an occupation or job are best interwoven into the performance criteria rather than separately referred to but a list of what might be termed ‘critical’ skills can be noted.

Using our Tourism RMCS a Primary Function component is promoting and attracting tourists to events such as sporting tournaments, concerts and so on. A Unit dealing with communicating with clients to ascertain their needs in this regard would have **Critical Skill** aspects to be assessed:

Example 1

> ***Critical Skills***
> *Effective event management including the ability to communicate with clients on a one-to-one basis, motivate sales staff to promote a wide range of tourism*

products and services and manage a variety of operational staff in dispersed locations

Critical applications of competency might also include having sufficient theoretical knowledge to source alternative options/strategies, based on the evidence, i.e. problem solving skills including knowledge of some broad process. This is illustrated in a competency from an RMCS for Automotive Service and Repair dealing with the technical skill of diagnosing faults in vehicles.

Example 2

Critical Skills
Diagnosing faults in a range of vehicles requires underpinning knowledge and understanding of hydraulic, electrical, pneumatic and mechanical systems to enable identification of a variety of possible sources of a problem.

Essential knowledge

The application of knowledge is usually the key to the transfer of competency to new situations. In addition, underpinning knowledge has to be assessed in order to ensure that the person understands the "why" as well as the "how" in the work they perform.

Knowledge and the understanding this implies should always be placed in the context of actual workplace operations and not treated as a separate aspect of performance such as being exhibited in tests.

For RMCS essential knowledge may best be developed as a separate list and although it must be specific to the functions and units being described it and should be indicative rather than overly prescriptive i.e.:

Example 3 (a)

Essential Knowledge
current knowledge of relevant legal and enterprise public health and safety requirements that applies to commercial food preparation

This adequately notes the parameters of the knowledge and its application in a particular context. But descriptions can sometimes be too open and encompassing:

Example 3 (b)

Essential Knowledge
knowledge of health and safety legislation

In some applications there may not only be legal requirements but also enterprise operational procedures that have to be followed. Also legislation described this broadly could be voluminous and apply to a wide range of applications far beyond the competency in question. It could lead to unreasonable testing of a candidate's knowledge which is not necessary for them to competently carry out the work.

However, be careful not to go too far the other way in refining down the specific knowledge required:

Example 3 (c)

> ***Essential Knowledge***
> *knowledge of health and safety regulations 1998, HCH 52, sub-clause 2.3*

This much too specific and would probably only apply in some countries and contexts and even if the requirements were international the reference to full details of act clauses can easily alter over short timeframes as legislation changes and so outdate the standards.

Range Statement

An important information source in RMCS is a **Range Statement** covering the many possible ways in which the work could be performed. A range description is beneficial where different technologies are used regionally or within a country for essentially the same work outcomes, or where legislation is likely to apply but will differ according the country where the work is carried out.

The Range Statement sets the parameters for application of the competency and usually tries to capture the types of work, resources, services and so on that would come into play when the competency was being used. An example would be a Unit that dealt with the common function of collecting, ordering and storing data. Clearly there are unchanging aspects of competency for this work that requires understanding of the process and outcomes such as:

- accurate interpretation of the data gathered for classification purposes;
- systematic collation of the data in logical groups; and perhaps
- accurate transcription and secure recording.

But what may be different in applying the function is the means of handling, manipulating and storing the data which could in some cases be paper-based and manual, but also possibly fully computerised or even a mix of both at various stages. A Range Statement that noted that the competency could be applied in these various ways is therefore valuable and does not confine it to particular techniques or technology. Full achievement of the competency may, of course, need to demonstrate in one or all possible modes of application.

Using our Tourism RMCS again a Unit dealing with documentation and ticketing for travel could have a Range Statement outlining its coverage and materials dealt with as follows:

Example 1

Range Statement

- *This competency applies to all tourism industry sectors.*
- *This competency may apply in a domestic or international context.*
- *Documentation may be processed using a manual or automated system.*
- *Documentation will vary according to the industry sector but may include accommodation vouchers; bus/coach tickets; car hire/motorhome vouchers; cruise vouchers; tour vouchers; vouchers for attraction/theme park entry; travel insurance documentation; confirmation vouchers; commission vouchers; visa forms; passport forms; travellers cheque requests; itineraries; proformas; sales returns.*

In an RMCS covering construction work a Unit could deal with erecting scaffolding. In this case the circumstances of erecting it could require explanation in a suitably drafted Range Statement as follows:

Example 2

Range Statement

- *Work involves the erection, dismantling and relocation of scaffold up to 4 metres*
- *Information about installation processes, product requirements, customer requirements is used to inform planning of own work.*
- *Work is generally performed under some supervision, within a team / group environment*
- *Environment includes movement of equipment, goods, materials and vehicular traffic*
- *Hazards may include:*
  - *construction activity involving other workers and contractors that may constitute personal risk*
  - *work at heights, manual handling and hazardous materials*
  - *dust / vapours, noise, light, energy sources, air temperature, moisture*
  - *electrical equipment, stationary and moving plant, equipment and materials*

You can see in these examples how detailed aspects of the work that are necessary to assess competent performance can be set out in simple lists rather than trying to make the Performance Criteria lengthy and overly complex.

This completes the quality principles for all the components of an RMCS.

RMCS Unit Layout

For ease of use it is important that all RMCS have a common unit layout so users throughout the region can easily understand the information provided. Using our Tourism RMCS an example is shown below for a complete unit in the area of bus and coach driving to illustrate the appropriate layout. A template for unit layout is provided at **Appendix III**

Tour operations and Guiding Function

Unit E3 - Drive Coaches/Buses

Unit coverage

Deals with the skills and knowledge required to drive a coach/bus safely, including systematic and efficient control of all vehicle functions, care of passenger comfort and effective managing of hazardous situations.

Performance criteria

1	Driving the coach and ancillary equipment safely and under a variety of conditions in a manner which maximises the comfort of a variety of passengers and does not adversely affect the mechanical condition of the vehicle
2	Monitoring traffic and road conditions to ensure the best and safest route is taken to complete the tour and achieve all intended activities
3	Monitoring and maintaining coach performance at all times for the comfort and safety of passengers and other road users.
4	Operating radio communication systems where fitted to ensure the coach participants are in a safe and monitored situation at all times.

Evidence of competency

Assessment must confirm knowledge of the requirements for the use of ancillary equipment such as trailers and also dealing with passengers with a disability.

Assessment must confirm the ability to navigate and manoeuvre vehicles in a real road transport environment or a simulation that replicates all the possible conditions encountered in normal work situations.

Competency may need to be assessed on more than one occasion to ensure consistency of performance in a complete range of contexts expected to be encountered during normal work.

Critical Skills and Essential Knowledge

To demonstrate competence, evidence of the skills and knowledge below is required.

Critical Skills:

- Coach driving in a range of situations including highways, cities and steep terrains
- Efficient driving techniques that minimise fuel use and wear and tear on the vehicle
- Map reading and planning routes
- Defensive driving techniques for passenger safety
- Monitoring and anticipating traffic hazards
- Use of two-way radio communication equipment

Essential Knowledge:

- Road laws applying to large vehicles
- Stress management relevant to driving over long periods while dealing with passengers
- Mechanical features of coach vehicles related to their safe operation and minor adjustment in normal day-to-day running, but not to the level of mechanical maintenance or repair

Range Statement

Type of vehicle includes all coaches and buses relevant to specific license classifications.

Workplace environment includes all road transport situations, for example: operations conducted at day or night; in confined spaces, exposed conditions and controlled environments; at depots; in the vehicle on the road; at the client's workplace; in a range of typical weather conditions.

The level of supervision will be limited.

OH&S standards as described in organisation and statutory requirements.

Regulations/legislation include license categories; traffic laws and regulations; special regulatory requirements; emergency procedures.

Documentation and reporting systems as defined in organisation requirements.

Procedures are those prescribed for the specific vehicle by the relevant authority and organisation policies.

Developing RMCS

The first stage of drafting an RMCS is specifying a discrete industry or industry sector and then managing the process of identifying its competency needs. This may be done through a variety or combination of techniques, including DACUM or modified DACUM, Functional Analysis, Nominal Group Technique and Critical Incident Analysis (see Glossary in **Appendix I**).

These data-gathering techniques require an expert focus-group approach to qualify, order and group competency requirements for an industry, sector or enterprise. This is often the most difficult part of the process, as it requires reaching consensus on what industry ***future*** work requirements may be rather than simply re-ordering data about what currently occurs. A Delphic type approach is therefore sometimes an aspect of the development work although full, iterative Delphi surveys are not commonly used in the development process.

Focus groups should include:

- representatives from typical enterprises across the industry
- employer bodies and associations representing major aspects of the work covered
- worker's organisations
- 'expert' employee representatives
- professional associations where they exist
- regulatory or licensing bodies where relevant
- educators and trainers with special expertise
- other industry bodies with existing similar or potentially overlapping standards

The groups will need an expert facilitator – who may or may not have experience in the industry for which the standards are being developed. The facilitator must, however fully understand the format and underpinning principles of the RMCS and be adept at synthesising the data provided by the industry experts into coherent and useable standards.

Relationships between work roles, progression and portable recognition

It is usually the case that workers, even acknowledged 'experts', see their own particular job in sharp focus and this view may possibly extend to a few closely associated colleagues, subordinates and supervisors.

Their understanding and appreciation of the work of most others in an organisation is usually much less clear, however. Thus opportunities for extending workplace networks, working in more harmonious and productive ways and perhaps understanding career progression options can be lacking.

RMCS must try to capture all the inter-related work roles in an industry by gathering data from everyone and giving this a broad perspective. They should show all work interrelationships, and make transparent the work roles and responsibilities of others.

Through good RMCS, individuals will be able to see their potential for job and career satisfaction may not necessarily rely upon a vertical progression through a narrow 'stream' of expertise. In the modern enterprise's flatter structure, traditional vertical career progression is less likely and may in any case entail a complete shift of skill and knowledge application. Progression may well be through multi-skilling or holding a

pivotal, even rotating role in a team based organisational structure.

Validating RMCS

After developing each component of the RMCS that expresses these industry requirements clearly and comprehensively, the draft RMCS should then be agreed as accurate by a peak national group representing the industry.

This might be an especially convened steering group from the RMCS development project, or an existing body that has credibility in the industry or sector. Ensuring the RMCS are in a consistent format and validated by a broad representative industry body means users of the standards are able to trust, understand and consistently interpret what is presented.

Users include employers; agencies assessing skill development and recognising trade level achievement, and training institutions needing to use the standards for training programs.
To ensure the success of the validation process it is worthwhile developing a validation approach that takes into account the following:

- the size and geographic distribution of the industry so that representative enterprises can be involved;
- the diversity of the industry in terms of technology utilised and products produced;
- the worker profile to ensure all competencies are included not just those of a few recognised trades;
- the costs of validating so that the process – important as it is – does not become too expensive to undertake; and
- the timeframe available, which cannot be extended indefinitely if the RMCS are to be made available.

In essence, the final draft of the standards should be presented to *as wide an audience as possible*. Validation also requires more in depth involvement from participants than just providing editorial comment on copies of draft standards. Validators should be encouraged to critique all aspects of the standards – their structure, functional breakdown, performance criteria, knowledge requirements, bias and discrimination and so on.

Ask the right questions

Questions to consider putting to validators for deciding if the RMCS is useable include:

- Is the flexibility in the grouping of the competencies sufficient to meet the widest range of possible workplace applications?
- How well is the future orientation of the work captured to retain currency and a reasonable ‘life’ for the standards?
- Will the standards assist the industry and enterprises to move towards international best practice?
- How appropriate is the advice on evidence of achieving the standards and what additional information (if any) would be useful?
- Can the standards be interpreted broadly enough to be applicable to a significant part of the industry or do they only describe narrow functions for some sectors?
- What aspects of the standard’s construction supports them being easily understood in the workplace and training environment and can this be improved?
- What evidence is there that the stan-

dards have no bias and discrimination that would be an unreasonable impediment for an individual to achieve the competencies?

A simple set of questions that can be used as the basis for validating any RMCS either within the country developing them or regionally is provided in **Appendix III**.

The final step after producing a draft acceptable to the industry is to provide the Regional Model competency standards to the ILO for dissemination. The distributed version should include a response form so that feedback on the utility of the standards can be passed on from users to the developers. In this way the RMCS can be regularly reviewed and improved rather than being static products that quickly lose their relevance.

Appendix I

RMCS Glossary

Accountability - workers may be accountable for the quality of products and services they are responsible for or for productivity levels of themselves and others.

Assessment - the process of collecting evidence and making informed judgements on whether competency has been achieved.

Autonomy – the degree to which workers are expected to make certain decisions for themselves in terms of prioritising their work, determining the best means to carry it out, what facilities or materials they may nee and other workers they may have to involve.

Competency - relevant knowledge and skill applied to the standards of performance expected in the workplace. Includes the capacity to apply skills and knowledge to new tasks in a range of environments.

Competency standard - the specification of competencies required for effective performance in the workplace expressed in a consistent format.

Competency-based training (CBT) - training designed and delivered so that a person acquires and can demonstrate industry set competencies and is not restricted to a particular training process or time for achievement.

Complexity –work varies in complexity in terms of the motor skills , analytical ability or underpinning knowledge needed to carry it out.

Contingency management skills - the ability to effectively respond to irregularities and breakdowns in work routine including dealing with variations in materials, operating conditions, other workers and the required outcomes.

Criterion referenced assessment - is assessment of an individual directly against an agreed competency standard that covers all relevant performance requirements.

Critical Incident Analysis - often used in combination with a DACUM approach this technique observes an expert and elicits detailed descriptions of particular work situations or environments.. This is not to only capture the competencies required but provide more data on underpinning processes and individual characteristics necessary for effective performance.

Critical Skills - aspects of skill application that are fundamental to effective performance. This relates not to simple task skills but the broader enabling skills that underpin a range of activities and outcomes..

Curriculum - a plan for a structured series of learning experiences and associated assessment of achievement against these. Also details the facilities, infrastructure and materials that may be required to deliver the training and provide assessments.

DACUM or modified DACUM - is a structured interview process that brings together a small group of vocational experts who, guided by a skilled facilitator, describe the duties performed in a particular occupation or industry sector. The tasks and competencies that make up the duties are then elicited and rated across a range of dimensions such as complexity, frequency or application, essential or non-essential and so on.

Delphic survey - is a technique of iterative questionaries provided to industry experts that asks to progressively agree on where an industry is going in a technical and skills requitement sense. It therefore provides a future-oriented view as to the competencies workers will need not just a description of current practice.

Discretion and judgement – workers are not supervised for every single aspect of the work they do and describing the degree of discretion they can apply in what they do or how they do it is required, as are the critical judgmental abilities required.

Essential Knowledge - the knowledge a worker must have and utilise in skill application to ensure safe, accurate and required performance. This is applied knowledge and should be assessed in this context; it is not tied to information at any given point in time but should always reflect current data. There are two aspects to knowledge - a) cognitive skills involved in manipulating retained data involved in process such as judgement, critical thinking and understanding and b) information, which is the basis of factual and theoretical materials that is accessed, manipulated and used cognitively.

Evidence - Information that supports a determination that competency has been achieved. Evidence can take many forms and be gathered from a number of sources that may be by direct observation or through a third person.

Fairness - a fair assessment of competency will not disadvantage any person and will take into account special needs of the person being assessed and the conditions under which the assessment takes place.

Functional Analysis - is a technique where expert groups or industry lead bodies describe whole industry functions at a level above individual occupations or jobs. The analysis then continues to smaller components of the competency required to perform the functions in a structure similar the RMCS.

Industry Descriptor and Coverage - a concise description of the industry or industry sector the RMCS covers and the parameters of that coverage in terms of functional occupational outcomes.

Job / role environment skills - the ability to deal with the responsibilities and expectations of the work environment including working with others and in teams.

Multi-skilling - development of competencies or combinations of competencies that have formerly been associated with discrete occupations of classifications of work. A worker therefore can perform a variety of tasks and functions across traditional boundaries of work. It includes concepts such as broad skilling (the expansion of competency into new areas at the same level); upskilling (the expansion of competency into new areas at higher levels) and contributory skilling (the expansion of competency into new areas at the same or different levels drawn from different industries).

Nominal Group Technique - A group of content experts from both skilled technicians and supervisors or managers are asked to respond to specific research questions about the parameters of jobs and the outcomes expected. It depends upon an already agreed mapping of the industry functional areas and can be useful for providing detailed descriptions of particular aspects of competent performance.

Norm-referenced assessment - is assessment of achievement of an individual compared to peers involved in the same or a comparable assessment process.
Performance criterion - part of a unit which sets out the requirements for competent work performance; must be outcome focussed, evaluative and able to be reliably assessed.

Portfolio - a collection of evidence presented by a person to support a claim for achievement of competency.

Primary Functions - major grouping of skill application within the industry that act as streams or fields of expertise and work.

Range statement - an optional part of RMCS which sets out the range of contexts in which work occurs and the various techniques, equipment, conditions and regulations which affect it and determine effective performance

Recognition - the formal credentialing of a person's achieved competencies. May be a full qualification of smaller components of competency as described in a standard. Recognition of current competency involves assessment against an agreed standard.

Reliability - the consistency of interpretation of evidence to ensure determinations of a person's competency can be relied upon irrespective of when it occurred and who conducted the assessment.

Responsibility – workers can have varying responsibility for the work or training of others, the delivery of products or services and the financial viability of the work they perform or manage.

Skill - may be intellectual, manual, motor, perceptual or social. Most tasks require a combination of these and involve the application of cognitive and psychomotor functions together with appropriate knowledge.

Supplementary evidence - sources of evidence which include answers to oral or written questions, documented information about past and current work achievement (portfolios, resumes) and audio or audiovisual records of prior performance.

Task - a discrete, identifiable and meaningful component of work that is carried out by a person for a specific purpose and leads to a specific outcome.

Task management skills - the ability to manage a number of different tasks concurrently within a job to achieve a complete outcome.

Task skills - the ability to efficiently perform individual tasks that contribute to work outcomes singly or in combination.

Unit - a basic building block of an RMCS. It describes a discrete area of work and specifies the level of performance required for a competency worker.

Validity - a valid assessment assesses what it claims to assess; evidence collected is relevant and sufficient to ensure that the correct performance criteria required have been met.

Workplace environment context – not all work is carried out under perfect conditions and pressures of the natural or organisational environment are factors that must be accounted for when describing effective performance

Appendix II

Developing a skills framework

The following table is an example of a common approach to identifying a hierarchy of skills that could be applied across any sort of work environment. This example has eight levels but the same principles apply to frameworks with a greater or lesser number of levels:

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS	APPLICATION	DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE
Typical outcomes at LEVEL 8 involve	Knowledge and skills that: • involve the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, practice or techniques, through original advanced research of a quality to satisfy formal, academic review • reflect critical, independent and original thinking	Applied in activities that: • are set in a wide range of contexts involving new aspects or combinations of aspects • involve significant, complex and emergent issues which are tested, formulated and addressed, resulting in an original contribution to theory, method or practice	In conditions where: • there is minimal guidance • high level judgement, planning and organisation of self and/or coordination of others are needed
Typical outcomes at LEVEL 7 involve	Knowledge and skills that: • reflect critical awareness of current or new knowledge, practice or techniques, some of which are at the forefront of an area of study or practice • reflect critical and independent thinking	Applied in activities that: • are set in a wide range of contexts with significant unfamiliar and/or unpredictable aspects or combinations of aspects • involve significant, complex and emergent issues which are tested, formulated and addressed, resulting	In conditions where: • there is minimal guidance • substantial judgement, planning and organisation of self and/or coordination of others are needed

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS	APPLICATION	DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE
		in a significant contribution to theory, method or practice	
Typical outcomes at LEVEL 6 involve	Knowledge and skills that: • involve critical thinking and recognition of the limitations of current knowledge, practice or techniques • reflect broad mastery of the theoretical or technical basis of an area of study or practice	Applied in activities that: • are set in a range of contexts with significant unfamiliar and/or unpredictable aspects or combinations of aspects • involve non-routine, complex issues which are identified, tested and addressed by substantially changing or redeveloping procedures or guidelines	In conditions where: • there is broad guidance • substantial judgement, planning and organisation of self and/or coordination of others are needed
Typical outcomes at LEVEL 5 involve	Knowledge and skills that: • are technical and/or abstract with significant underpinning theory	Applied in activities that: • are set in a range of contexts with significant unfamiliar and/or unpredictable aspects • involve non-routine, complex issues which are identified, tested and addressed using substantially adapted guidelines or procedures	In conditions where: • there is broad guidance and direction • a considerable degree of judgement, planning and organisation of self and/or others are needed

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS	APPLICATION	DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE
Typical outcomes at LEVEL 4 involve	Knowledge and skills that: • are mainly theoretical and/or technical or abstract with significant depth in one or more areas	Applied in activities that: • are set in a range of contexts, most of which involve a number of unfamiliar and/or unpredictable aspects • involve largely non-routine issues which are identified and addressed using guidelines or procedures which require interpretation and/or adaptation	In conditions where: • there is broad guidance and direction • judgement, planning and organisation of self and/or others are needed
Typical outcomes at LEVEL 3 involve	Knowledge and skills that: • are a balance of theoretical and/ or technical and factual	Applied in activities that: • are set in contexts with some unfamiliar or unpredictable aspects • involve routine and non-routine issues which are identified and addressed by interpreting and/or applying established guidelines or procedures with some variations	In conditions where: • there is routine or general guidance and direction • some judgement, planning and organisation of self and/or others are needed
Typical outcomes at LEVEL 2 involve	Knowledge and skills that: • are manual, factual and/or operational in focus with a variety of options	Applied in activities that: • are set in a range of familiar and predictable contexts	In conditions where: • there is substantial support, guidance or supervision • limited judgement or discretion is needed

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS	APPLICATION	DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE
		• involve routine issues which are identified and addressed by selecting from and following a number of set rules, guidelines or procedures	
Typical outcomes at LEVEL 1 involve	Knowledge and skills that: • are manual or concrete or factual and/or operational in focus	Applied in activities that: • are set in a limited range of highly familiar and predictable contexts • involve straightforward, routine issues which are addressed by following set rules, guidelines or procedures	In conditions where: • there is very close support, guidance or supervision • minimum judgement or discretion is needed

Appendix III

Template 1 - an RMCS Preface

[Title] RMCS

Industry Description and coverage
These Regional Model Competency Standards cover the *{description of industry or sector dealt with}* sector and include competencies for -

{list areas of work covered by the RMCS}

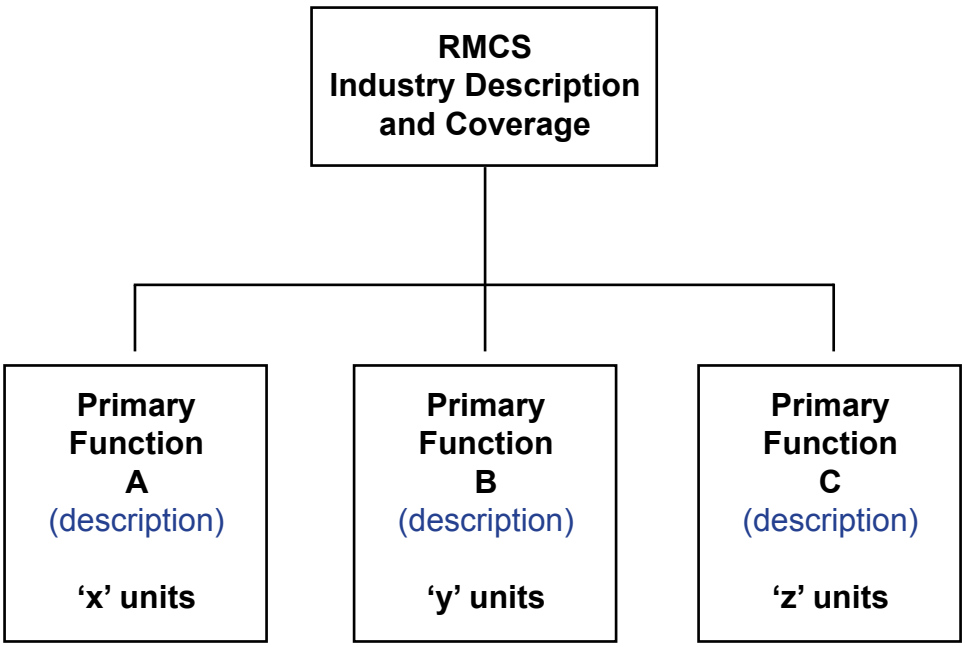
The scope of the standards is for *{the range of work levels covered}* and encompasses common sector skills in the areas of *{list key areas of skill included in the RMCS}.*

There is also inclusion throughout of competencies that are not exclusive to the *{title of RMCS}* industry but are common skills that could apply to many different workplaces. These include:

{list skill areas that are judged to be common to other industry areas such as administration, customer relations, etc}

NOTE: This RMCS does not cover *{enter here any skills not included in the RMCS if the title could possibly mislead users into thinking they are covered}*

{Follow with diagrammatic representation of the RMCS coverage showing primary functions it includes}



Template 2 - an RMCS Unit structure

Unit [number] *{usually an alpha representing a major function plus a number representing the unit's place in that group or list}* - **'[Title]** *{short, broad description of the unit's work outcome}*

Unit coverage
{concise statement about the work covered by the unit, how it may relate to other work in the industry or sector, and some key information about its purpose or a special factor of its importance such as safety}

Performance criteria

1	*{discrete statements of what work outcomes are covered by the unit, each described as an outcome sufficient to guide training and assessment}*
2,3,4, …	

Evidence
{one or more statements that provide clear advice how the individual performance statement tie together into meaning full work performed. Shows what is critical about how the person performs the work and what should be considered in assessment to ensure someone really is competent – i.e. assessment should be carried out on more than one occasion and/or in several different environments}

Critical Skills and Essential Knowledge
To demonstrate competence, evidence of the skills and knowledge below is required:

Critical Skills
{list of briefly described underpinning skills that are essential to performance}
…..
…..

Essential Knowledge
{list of areas and specific sets of knowledge needed to perform the work covered by the unit effectively in a range of contexts}
……
……

Range Statement
{list of short statements describing the potential range of contexts or conditions within which the competency is performed; the sort of related activity that might impact upon performance and the sort of supervision (or autonomy) the person doing the work might operate under}

Template 3 - RMCS Validation Questionnaire

Draft [*Title*] Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS)

The attached RMCS for the [***Title***] **Industry** have been developed in *{name of country developing the RMCS}* for use locally and in the Asia Pacific Region. They are a preliminary draft and will be amended as required based upon feedback from participants in their country or origin and regional participants. They are being circulated to generate your consideration and feedback so they can be made as useful a possible in underpinning skill recognition across the region.

The opening part of the model standards explains their purpose, coverage and structure. They are at a broad level of skill description and not intended to be the detailed standards used for all the relevant occupations in each country. They do not have levels or qualification outcomes as this is done when they are adapted and utilised in a particular country.

Draft RMCS have no status until validated by industry and participating countries in the region as appropriate to their needs and technically correct for the industry in question. You are therefore requested to examine the draft materials and circulate them as necessary to experts for advice on omissions or improvement.

The attached response pro-forma is provided for this purpose. Your feedback can of course, cover any aspect of the draft materials in addition to those noted on the pro-forma.

If you have any queries on the draft materials when evaluating them these can be put directly to the developer if required:

{include name and contact details of person(s) responsible for development}

Template 4 - RMCS Quality Questionnaire

Question 1 - Is the RMCS purpose explanation and terminology used throughout the draft adequate, easy to understand and useful for guiding trainers, skill recognition assessors and other industry users?

Response:

Draft material is satisfactory	*Draft material has the following errors:* *{please list problems found}*	*Draft material could be improved by:* *{please suggest ways to improve the draft information}*

Question 2 - Is the Industry coverage information and Primary Functions identified for the RMCS logical and sufficient to cover all the skills used in the industry, appropriately linked to essential knowledge?

Response:

Draft coverage and Primary Functions are satisfactory	*Draft material has the following errors:* *{please list problems found}*	*Draft material could be improved by:* *{please suggest ways to improve the Industry coverage and Primary Functions information}*

Question 3 - Is the titling and coding of the units in the Primary Function groupings understandable and useful in broadly mapping the skills used in the industry?

Response:

Unit titles and coding are satisfactory	*Draft material has the following errors:* *{please list problems found}*	Draft material could be improved by: {please suggest ways to improve the unit information}

Question 4 - Is the information in each of the RMCS units formatted clearly, logically sequenced and has relevant detail provided? Are the technical requirements of the industry as described in the units correct? If you have detailed advice on units needing amendment or addition please attach on a separate sheet a list of units and brief detail of what is required.

Response:

Draft units are satisfactory	*Draft material has the following errors:* *{please list problems found and units requiring attention or new units that should be provided}*	*Draft material could be improved by:* *{please suggest ways to improve the units overall}*

Question 5 - Are there any suggestions for improving the draft RMCS in any way so they have maximum utility in industry and would be useable throughout the region?

Response:

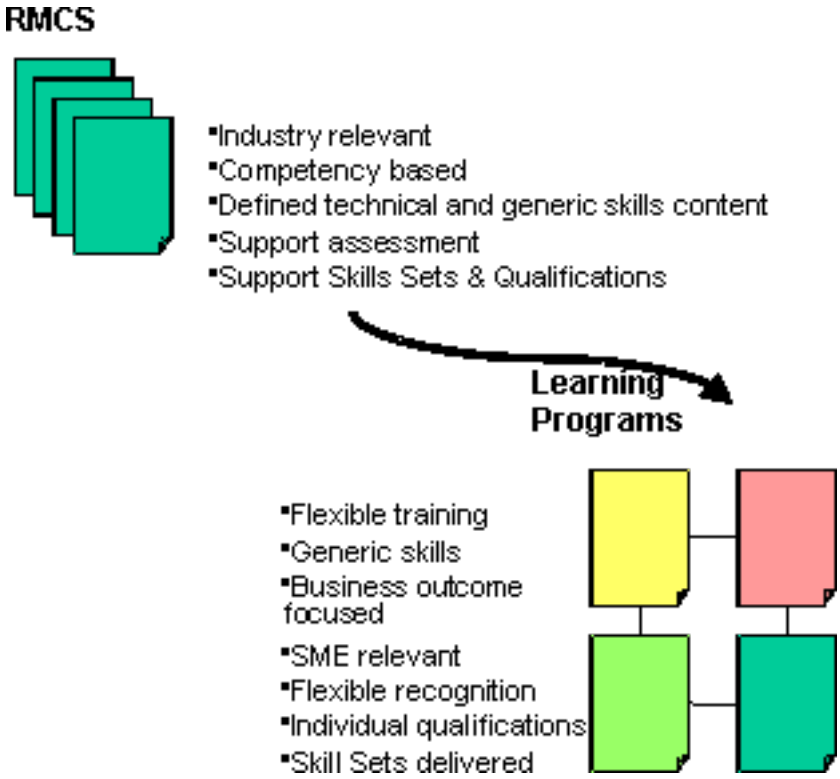
Draft material is satisfactory	*Draft material has the following errors:* *{please list problems found}*	*Draft material could be improved by:* *{please suggest any ways to improve the draft information }*

Any other comments?

Appendix IV

Standards to Training

Design of RMCS must transparently accommodate the needs of individual workers, SMEs, large enterprises and be readily understandable in industry and commerce. But they should also be user-friendly for training organisations and their personnel to access and use in development of appropriate short and longer-term development programs:



So as a primary use of RMCS is to underpin and inform courses and short training programs. It is useful if teachers, trainers and assessors all have a common understanding of how an RMCS is structured and how to utilise each component to develop a training program or evaluate an existing one against the standards.

The following example uses a simple Unit that covers a very common skill – Developing a Personal Budget. This is used as an example because it is not specific to the technical complexities of any industry and the general skills and knowledge required will be readily known to anyone.

The example is stepped through to show how each component can be analysed and utilised in program development.

Each RMCS Unit has a brief **Title, Code** and a **Unit Descriptor** setting out in broad terms the skill covered. Following this are the **Performance Criteria** which are 'building blocks' of the Unit that give it structure and demonstrate what comprises (and explains) competent performance. Unit Performance Criteria are good pointers to learning topics and help structure programs in a logical sequence.

Performance Criteria are short outcome statements that describe what a competent person is able to do and how well. They are brief but descriptive enough to guide what real application of the skill looks like in practice.

After the Performance Criteria is the **Essential Skills and Knowledge** component. We can all appreciate that just 'knowing things' - facts, figures, principles and so on - is not divorced conceptually or practically from action. To be able to do something properly in a variety of situations an individual has to use knowledge they have and integrate it with what they do. So dividing knowledge acquisition from its practical application when designing training and assessment completely misses the point.

Knowledge essential to competency is also not static. What is learnt in detail today may well be irrelevant or outdated tomorrow. Competency in action involves a person being able to access and interpret detailed knowledge in a variety of ways and not simply recall it. This means real competency for learners is to know where to look for data, how to sift and filter extraneous material and analyse and synthesise what information is necessary for their needs.

The **Range Statement** follows and its purpose is to accurately describe competency application contexts and provide detail about variables in the application environment or the means used for achieving outcomes. Remember it is a general guide and cannot predict or describe every potential possibility where different knowledge and skill application requirements might apply.

Finally each unit of competency has an **Evidence Guide** which sets out essential aspects for assessment of the skills described in the unit in a holistic way. This includes critical skill outcomes, assessment methodologies, context and any special resources needed.

It is important not to completely disaggregate a unit of competency when designing your training program to meet the outcomes. Certainly use the Performance Criteria to frame topics and sequencing but always remember that the skill being developed is a complete, applied function not just unrelated learning components such as knowledge, examples, exercises and assessment. The knowledge must be solidly related to practice and the range of application should be interwoven into the exposure of the various aspects of the competency as your program takes the learner forward.

Development example

Here is an example of how to analyse and develop part of your program based on delivering a simple example Unit titled ***Develop and use a personal budget:***

First let's look at the very first part of any unit of competency – the **Unit Descriptor**. In this case the descriptor is straightforward and can very simply be used to describe this part of your program and introduce the expected outcomes to a group of adult learners:

> *This unit addresses the basic knowledge and skills required to develop, implement and monitor a personal savings budget. It covers exploring the benefits of budgeting, identifying income and expenses and ways to monitor the budget.*

This sets out the objective quite clearly and can go into your program introduction.

Next are the **Performance Criteria**. You can see in this case that the Unit Descriptor and the brief Performance Criteria titles can introduce your topic of personal budgeting to the target learners quite easily.

There are four Performance Criteria in this simple unit and each has an evaluative description. These are a sound and logical way to sequence the learning. Clearly what comes first is understanding of why anyone would want to budget their finances and what it means to them by doing this well – its part of the program where participants can be motivated to learn is so is rightly the first Criterion

1. Analyse and discuss budgeting as a financial tool
• The importance of budgeting appropriately and setting financial goals to meet expenses is analysed and related to different stages of life so that obstacles that might prevent financial goals being achieved can be understood

Next is establishing in the learners the fundamental actions that underpin developing a useable budget – recording expenses and costs, defining regular and fixed expense and so on. This is covered in the second Performance Criterion and helps show where essential ties to the participant's circumstances and needs can be anchored.

2. Prepare to develop a personal budget
• All sources of income and expenses – regular, fixed and occasional - for a short period of time are recorded to assist in estimating expenditure requirements

The third Performance Criterion is developing the budget itself. This is the 'nuts and bolts' part of the unit dealing with drafting a simple budget so that a picture emerges of the individual's financial position at any point into the future. Technically this needs to be explained to the learners as a straightforward process using information they are familiar with and have gathered for themselves. 'Example' information from a

mythical individual can be used to initially introduce the concepts and lay-out of a budget but for adults to absorb and learn this it must eventually be drawn from their own financial data as they practice drafting a budget for their own use. This will ensure transference occurs with what is already familiar to the learners.

3. Develop a personal budget
• Total expenses recorded are subtracted from the total income to determine a surplus or deficit budget for the specified period and reasons for a deficit budget are explored and ways to reduce expenses or increase income and use surplus funds are investigated

The final Performance Criterion is the all important follow through with the budget that has now been developed by program participants. The learners must understand that once developed the budget must be monitored regularly to assess progress and possible financial problems ahead. It's where the practical hints for making this work for someone can be used and tied to participant's own experiences or needs. Trainers should make the most of this final part of the unit topic material to make the learning 'live', useful and to test retention.

4. Implement and monitor the personal budget
• Actual expenses and income for the period during which the budget is implemented are recorded and compared to budgeted expenses and income and any differences in budgeted and actual amounts are looked at and the budget modified where necessary

Performance Criteria are one of the most useful components of a unit of competency for program developers. They not only concisely set out the essential learning but also define the parameters for assessing whether the learner has archived to a common standard. Look at the last performance criterion above:

> Actual expenses and income for the period during which the budget is implemented are recorded and compared to budgeted expenses and income and any differences in budgeted and actual amounts are looked at and the budget modified where necessary

It gets to the crux of monitoring any personal budget. Is the individual making the necessary comparison between budgeted and actual income and expenditure? If the initial estimations were wrong and say, rent is actually higher than budgeted it should be adjusted. Or if some regular overtime is available then income can be similarly adjusted and more disposal funds directed to savings. It is a practical outcome and the criteria for achievement are regular monitoring, sensible analysis of what is happening between budgeted and actual finances and suitable adjustments being made if required.

Each performance criterion should be looked at in the context of what the outcomes should be and what level of performance indicates successful achievement. Remember, however, that each performance criterion relates in an integrated way

firstly to the element it appears in and secondly to the overall requirements of the whole unit. Do not be tempted to treat each criterion as a subject topic or it will disjoint the learning and lose the holistic nature of the program.

The next component of the Unit is the **Evidence Guide**. Exactly as you may imagine it is a concise outline of the sort of evidence a trainer would look for to determine if the learner has achieved the desired outcomes of this part of the program. It can often be a good short form for setting out your training program objectives and tells the learners in clear terms the new skills they will have, such as:

- being able to explain the benefits and purposes of budgeting
- prepare a budget spreadsheet
- explain the difference between fixed and variable expenses
- prepare a personal budget
- implement a personal budget

Unit Evidence statements cover methods of assessment and points out that for valid and reliable assessment evidence should be gathered through a range of methods to indicate consistent performance. Assessment of the unit will usually include observation of processes and procedures, oral and/or written questioning on underpinning knowledge and skills and other methods as required.

In terms of context the unit may be assessed in a formal learning environment, in the workplace or within the environment of a related service provider such as government counselling or advisory services. Assessment of this Unit requires access to information about the budgeting process, personal financial records, software and other relevant resources.

Critical Skills and Essential Knowledge is the next component of the Unit and guides you in what are essential aspects of learning that must be integrated across the exposition of the whole unit. There are three knowledge components in the personal budgeting unit:

- principles of budgeting
- role of credit and savings in establishing personal wealth
- understanding of the financial institutions and their savings products

It is vital in your program that this does not become a ponderous exposition of financial terms and lists of financial organisations and their products. Trainers and teachers can too easily be led astray by knowledge aspects of a training program and use this inappropriately to fill in the time with tracts of information. “Principles of budgeting” could conceivably be a large part of a university course in accounting but that is not the purpose for your target groups. Ask yourself the following questions when putting together your program:

- Are the principles you expose the learners to clear and simple and relate to them in normal life and work situations? If they are just carefully worded but complex definitions they risk not being absorbed or the learners could fail to see how they

relate to the task at hand.
- Are the roles of saving and sensible use of credit tied to individual's current and likely future experiences? Talking about these aspects of managing money in broad economic terms will not allow many individuals to make the connection between the relevant knowledge and their personal development.
- Are explanations of financial institutions and products illustrative enough to show what they do and how to access them but not so voluminous and complicated that it becomes meaningless data?

This section of the unit also has generic skills requirements necessary to achieve the outcomes including :

- communication skills including active listening and the ability to provide explanations of complex concepts in plain language
- numerical and mathematical skills relevant to calculations of interest and loan repayments and surplus or deficit funds

Again make this an integral part of the program to achieve learner outcomes that meet the performance criteria. Don't be tempted to deliver non specific communication skills training or put the group through school mathematics subjects. Many of the target group can have less than fond memories of this sort of abstract learning so communication and numeracy must be firmly grounded in the unit topic matter.

A vital part of every RMCS Unit is the **Range Statement**. This sets out the parameters for the performance criteria and is an excellent guide for program developers and trainers on the extent of knowledge that underpins performance and the circumstances under which the competency will be applied. In this particular unit the first part of the range statement helps identify **different groups** who may budget. This is tied directly to the first Performance Criterion.

Groups who can use budgeting may include individuals who are:

> *single, married, elderly, students, tourists, travellers. It can also cover: families, businesses, Governments* and so on.

In addition **different stages of life** where budgeting will be of great help can include:

> *moving out of home, studying, starting a family, buying your first home, approaching and during retirement.*

All useful aspects of the topic which can be used to make it relevant for participants.

In the first Performance Criterion of the unit it refers to financial goals. In the Range Statement it could tell us that **financial goals** may include:

> *accumulating a set amount of money by a specified date in the future for the purposes of: purchasing assets, financing holidays, educational expenses, home renovations and other known future expenses, establishing a deposit for an investment such as a home or investment property, aiming to repay existing debts and be debt free, establishing a regular savings plan, handling income and expenditure responsibly and avoiding financial difficulties.*

Make sure your program material discusses each of these using participant's own goals to focus the learning.

Apart from goals the Performance Criterion notes there may be **obstacles** that might prevent such financial goals being achieved which include:

> *having insufficient income to afford items that are beyond the individual's means, or unexpected circumstances such as losing a job, falling ill and not being able to work.*

This part of an RMCS Range Statement therefore gives you as a program developer the types of examples and motivators that will connect the target learner group with the topic itself.

A Range Statement in personal budgeting may also refer to **behaviours and skills** required for successful budgeting that can include:

> *A disciplined approach to money, organisational skills, and record keeping.*

Some individuals may have imprecise ideas of what a budget actually is. The Range Statement will probably set out a simple and widely used definition and if so this is good information for grounding the topic material and introducing simple definitions that all participants can relate to. In this unit it tells us:

> *The term "budget" refers to: a calculation of all projected income and expenditure for period of time (eg over a weekly or monthly basis) which budget shows all projections versus actual income and expenses for the period that should be monitored*

Sometimes budgets can be developed using a simple computer **spreadsheet** program and that may be a useful way of achieving the competency covered by this unit in the second and third Performance Criterion. In this case the Range Statement could tell us that a spreadsheet used to develop and maintain a budget may be:

> *simple or complex depending upon the extent of the individual's finances or at the very least it should have one section for recording all money received as income and another section for expenses both variable and fixed. There should then be a section to record the difference between income and expenses for*

the period, this being the surplus or deficit financial situation for the period.

Some of the target groups you deliver to may not have easy access to computers in their own time so practice time should be built into the face-to-face delivery.

The Unit Range Statement will probably also define in a straightforward way some of key terms used and necessary for achievement of the Performance Criteria. This could cover **sources of income** such as:

Wages, commission, bonuses, tips, interest on investments, dividends, pensions, allowances, proceeds from sale of assets.

Clearly some of these will be more or less relevant to certain groups depending on their current circumstances and emphasis should be adjusted accordingly.

Also in the first Performance Criterion are **fixed expenses** that can include:

Rent, utilities, insurance, loan repayments if loan is based upon fixed interest rates (eg personal loans, car loans, credit card debts), fees for school or university, bank charges, travel including public transport, petrol, subscriptions (eg to magazines, newspapers, clubs).

There are also **variable expenses** which may include:

Living expenses such as food, clothing, medical, utilities such as water, gas, electricity, telephone, mobile telephone, loan repayments if loan is based upon variable interest rates, car maintenance, miscellaneous expenses (eg gifts, tobacco, recreation, entertainment).

Ways to **reduce expenses** would be set out such as:

Share accommodation, moving back home (for younger adults), reducing expenditure on discretionary items such as expensive clothing, magazines, eating out.

Plus ways to **increase income:**

Taking on a part-time job or holiday work, combining part-time work with studying, investigating eligibility for allowances or insurance/government benefits.

This completes a brief analysis of an example RMCS unit in order to show how to develop or improve a training program and assess the skills covered.

SKILLS–AP

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