



Training Information Bulletin 3/2014

This Training Information Bulletin is provided in the interests of making sure that volunteers are able to be better informed about training issues surrounding national units of competency. The ability to be awarded national units of competency will be included in volunteer pathways and the release of the pathways will require some decisions by volunteers in regards to the training framework they are going to be included in.

Also included is information relating to a change to the pre requisites for entering the Incident Controller Level 1 pathway.

If you have questions following reading this bulletin please email them to academy@dfes.wa.gov.au

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Training Information Bulletin 3/2014 will be covering the following topics:

- Incident Controller Level 1 pathway pre requisite change
- Volunteer Pathways and national units of competency
- Volunteer Pathways and DFES competencies



Incident Controller Level 1 Pathway Pre requisite

Key Information

- Removal of the Fire Control Officer course prerequisite to enter Incident Controller Level 1 pathway.

Overview

Following feedback from various stakeholder groups and consultation with subject matter experts the requirement to have completed the Fire Control Officer course as a pre requisite to entering the Incident Controller Level 1 pathway has been removed.

The pathway reflecting this change has been uploaded to the Pathways site which can be accessed through the Volunteer Extranet and the DFES Portal.

Obtaining National Competencies; the pros and cons

Key Information

- Training with DFES can result in either a National Unit of Competency or a DFES Competency
- Following the release of Volunteer Pathways, volunteers will need to commit to which of these outcomes they wish to follow.
- Advice, through a number of different communication channels will occur when the volunteer Pathways are released.

Overview

The release of volunteer Pathways is approaching. The pros and cons of training to national competencies and qualifications compared to DFES competencies are outlined in this document. The aim is to assist you as volunteers to decide which option best fits your individual needs.

National units of competency (UoC) are the building blocks for nationally-recognised qualifications. Certificates for achievement of nationally-recognised qualifications or UoC can only be offered by DFES for UoC or qualifications currently included on our Scope of Registration. Successful completion of a number of units may result in a qualification if combined in accordance with Packaging Rules in the Training Package. A number of national UoC issued by DFES can only be issued as stand-alone units because the remainder of the qualification they are drawn from is not on our Scope of Registration.



Training within DFES can result in one of two outcomes:

- national UoC, (e.g. *PUATEA001B Work in a team*) which may package to form a nationally recognised qualification (e.g. *PUA20701 Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations)*); or
- DFES competencies, targeted at specific skills or tasks to meet job role requirements within DFES (e.g. *DFES0406 Crew Leader Bushfire*)

Following the release of volunteer Pathways, all volunteers will need to commit to which of these outcomes they wish to follow. Reasons for this include:

- Registered Training Organisation (RTO) reporting requirements make it necessary for DFES to nominate the number of people who study for and complete national UoC and qualifications each year;
- Professional Development Portfolio needs to be able to monitor individual progress and completions of national UoC and qualifications to ensure training is completed within required timeframes;
- Communications need to be provided to students enrolled in national UoC or qualifications when there are changes to the Training Package or national regulatory system; and
- Once committed to a DFES competency Pathway, any decision to 'change track' to a national UoC Pathway will require completion of pre requisite units as well as gap training or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to complete the foundations of the new Pathway. Making this change could be time-consuming and require considerable effort from the individual.

It's important to recognise that the same standard of quality training delivery is provided under either banner. Participants will usually be attending the same courses at the same time with the same trainers irrespective of the pathway they've chosen. The major differences occur before and after the training; before in meeting pre requisite requirements, and after with respect to assessment. Achievement of national competencies brings with it the assessment rigour and compliance requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). This may include additional assessment events and further post-course evidence collection on the job.

The Common Ground

Whether participating in training to national UoC or DFES workplace competencies, you'll be trained to a level which enables you to:

- improve workplace safety and performance;
- gain formal recognition for skills which may have been developed largely outside a classroom;
- have your achievements formally recognised;
- gain personal confidence and trust from colleagues in having the skills to do the job; and
- develop workplace skills to specific workplace standards.



Making a Choice

If you choose a nationally-recognised training Pathway	If you choose a DFES competency Pathway
National UoC and qualifications are recognised by other RTO's Australia-wide, but transferring them to a new organisational may still require further 'induction' or 'orientation' training.	If you want to have DFES competencies recognised by another organisation you would have to 'make a case' for recognition and may be required to participate in a RPL process.
By achieving lower level qualifications you may be able to enter into higher qualifications in the vocational education and training (VET) sector and in some cases into university courses.	If you wanted to have DFES competencies recognised by another training organisation for advanced standing in a higher course it would be up to you to 'make a case' for recognition.
Experienced volunteers may be able to achieve lower level qualifications largely through the RPL process.	RPL is not available for achievement of DFES competencies.
RPL can be time-consuming requiring collection of evidence often coupled with challenge testing and further assessment. Even after this the most likely outcome is an Individual Development Plan (IDP) requiring further assessment, challenge testing or evidence gathering.	
Pre-requisites have to be completed prior to achieving a national UoC, through training or RPL. This may require documented evidence, or training and/or challenge tests to demonstrate competency (some of which may not relate directly to your volunteer job).	The order in which competencies are gained is determined by DFES and defined in the relevant Pathway. Some DFES competencies will have agreed pre requisites.
Training to national UoC requires meeting a range of variables which you may never use on the job while working for DFES	Competencies awarded by DFES are achieved using DFES standards, practices and equipment and focus specifically on the job roles being performed.
Trainer and assessor qualifications are externally regulated and listed in the DFES Training Procedures Manual (TPM).	Trainer and assessor requirements are set by DFES and listed in the TPM.
National competencies are traditionally not designed for casual or volunteer personnel. They provide employment outcomes requiring assessment across a variety of conditions and over a period of time. In combination with nominal hour requirements this can be difficult to achieve within a short timeframe, particularly for volunteers with limited time to commit to training.	DFES competencies are designed to accommodate the limited training time available to volunteers, and are restricted to the range of skills and circumstances likely to be encountered in doing the job within DFES.



If you choose a nationally-recognised training Pathway	If you choose a DFES competency Pathway
Volunteers who choose national UoC or qualifications need to commit by way of an enrolment/application form and undergo regular monitoring to ensure completion of the training within a nominated period in order to meet national reporting requirements.	Volunteers on a DFES competency Pathway will determine the number of courses on the Pathway they choose to undertake and the timeframe in which this occurs.
Future changes in Training Package content may require completion of gap training or further evidence-gathering to keep pace with updated versions of national UoC. Changes to Training Packages can occur on a regular basis outside of DFES control.	DFES competencies are changed only as required, in response to identified continuous improvements within the DFES work environment. Changes to practice adopted by other national agencies are only introduced into DFES training after detailed consideration and endorsement by senior Operations and Capability Command personnel.

Summary – Next Steps

You will be advised through a number of different communication channels when the volunteer Pathways are released. Using this document as a guide, you need to consider now which option best fits your individual needs so you will be ready to commit when asked to do so.

You will be required to nominate on your Pathway nomination form whether you intend to undertake a DFES competency Pathway or if you are choosing a nationally recognised training Pathway. Selecting a nationally recognised training Pathway confirms your commitment to undertaking all pre requisite requirements and working toward completing the required training courses in a defined timeframe.

It is important to remember that once committed to a particular Pathway, any decision to ‘change track’ to the alternative may be time-consuming and require considerable effort.

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