

UNLOCKING WORKFORCE POTENTIAL

An employer guide to using the
Australian Core Skills Framework
in the workplace

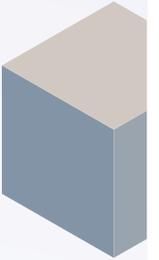




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This project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Industry.





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1. Introducing the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)

Literacy and numeracy are described in the Australian Core Skills Framework – as the core skills of learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy. These skills are needed to communicate at work, at home and in the community and are recognised as being critically important for individuals to continue to learn across their lifetime.

The ACSF provides a reference point and consistent language for describing and discussing performance within the five core skill areas. It is used for a variety of purposes by government, training providers and industry audiences.

Australian governments have committed to raising the core skill levels of the population through the National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults. The ACSF can be used to track improvement in core skill levels within the Australian population.

You don't need to know everything about the ACSF – primarily it is a tool designed for trainers and educators - but if you have a basic grasp of its function and language you can have far more effective conversations with your management team about the workforce development needs of your business, key gaps that need addressing and the ways you might plan for improvement.

This guide shows you how the ACSF can be used to:

- document workplace core skill requirements
- review your internal systems and processes for their core skill demands
- communicate with your workforce about core skills and their importance, and
- outline your core skill needs to trainers and training providers.



2. The challenge

Pickers and packers have to be fast, but they also have to be accurate. Misreading or transposing a digit can result in a mix up of parts and mis-orders – a big waste of time and money!

HR Manager, Victorian manufacturing company

The workplace is noisy and there's a lot going on. We need to be sure that workers know what's going on before they start the shift. They need to be confident about the machinery they are operating and what to do when things go wrong. So we need people who are able to pass on key information to newbies and explain key dos and don'ts.

Training Manager, national forestry products company

There are a lot of people who are good at their job and can potentially offer more to the company as leaders but without help they will be stuck. Addressing literacy and numeracy skills at all levels of the workforce helps with succession planning.

National Manager Learning and Development, national transport company

93 per cent of employers identified some impact on their business of poor literacy and numeracy¹.

Employers have reported that improvements in literacy and numeracy skills in the workplace can lead to:

- increased productivity
- better use of time and resources
- more effective teams
- a reduction in mistakes and re-work
- safer work practices
- improved quality control
- more accurate reporting
- better customer service
- greater capacity to manage change.

Literacy and numeracy skills equip the workforce with the ability to communicate and problem solve. More importantly, literacy and numeracy skills equip individuals with the ability to up-skill, re-skill and adapt to changing workplace requirements.

It is quite common for adults to have difficulty with some literacy and numeracy tasks.

39 per cent

of the Australian workforce could have difficulty²:

- reading and understanding written instructions
- communicating via email
- using training material or manuals
- filling in forms
- interpreting simple graphs and charts.

49 per cent

of the Australian workforce could have difficulty³:

- completing time sheets
- recording accurate measurements
- calculating correct change.

Australian businesses need workers who can quickly adapt to change and confidently tackle new challenges. Literacy and numeracy skills are essential for individuals to successfully build their vocational skills. But many workers struggle with these demands of their current job, let alone the skills required for further learning and development.

Workers can 'get by' but training shows up weaknesses. The need for higher than basic skills are critical for advancement. Not many current employees would make it to higher levels of management without good skills. And we want to use the people we have, the people who are already good on the job, to move up the line to be our supervisors and team leaders.

Training Manager, national forestry products company

You know some people are just 'unfrozen' once they are given the chance to learn. One guy who had been off work for weeks with an injury came to the LLN training because he had been in his current job for years and he was aware that would give him other options. He saw that with a bit of help he could get to a much better place.

Training Manager, national forestry products company

Literacy skills are critical for getting the message across in committees, minutes for meetings, emails. This is where people go from simple writing or tick boxes to having to write full sentences that capture a fact or important idea. This is a big step up for some.

National Training Co-ordinator, national glass manufacturing company

3. Understanding workplace literacy and numeracy

There are simple things that employers can do to tackle the literacy challenge.

Employers who build their understanding of workplace literacy and its impact on business processes are better placed to do something about it. Being clear about the literacy requirements of specific jobs, workplace documents, communication processes, training programs and business systems will make it easier to choose and control solutions that really work for your business.

The **Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)** is a framework that describes literacy and numeracy skills. It is primarily a tool for education and training specialists, but employers have also found it useful for building understanding about literacy and numeracy.

5 core skills

- reading
- writing
- oral communication
- numeracy
- learning

The ACSF describes five core skills – reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy and learning. Individuals have different strengths and weaknesses. Someone with good oral communication skills, for example, does not necessarily have good reading, writing or numeracy skills.

After using the ACSF we have a more sophisticated understanding of the issues.

Manager, manufacturing company

The ACSF gives a moderated language to talk about literacy. It can be used in a general way or at a level of specificity, allowing us to talk about the level of complexity of real workplace documents.

National Manager Learning and Development, national transport company

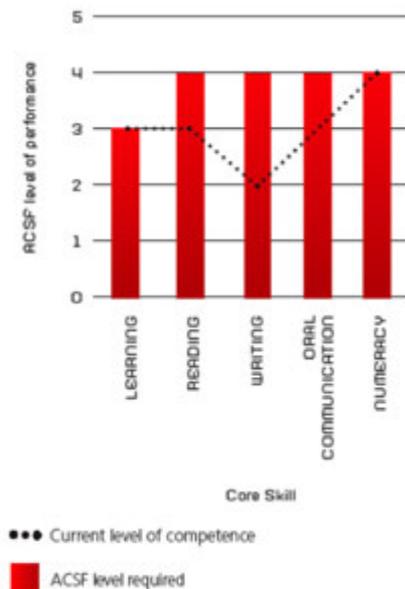
People have different strengths and one of the good things about using the ACSF is that it helps us to identify what individuals are good at, as well as where there are gaps.

Manager, manufacturing company

Sometimes people develop strong skills in one area to compensate for a weakness in another; workers who have difficulty reading instructions may develop strong listening skills for memorising verbal instructions. People who have English as their second language may have very strong reading, writing and numeracy skills, but difficulty with speaking in English. Learning skills are the biggest barrier for some people – they have reasonable reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy skills but are not confident or practised at using them in new situations. This type of individual variation in skill across the core skills is often referred to as a *spiky profile*.

Often workers do not need to be strong in all of the core skills because job roles and workplace tasks also have spiky profiles. Some jobs require high level oral communication skills, for example in sales, but may not involve a lot of reading or writing. Some jobs include complex numerical tasks but may require little oral communication.

Figure 1: Stav: Core skills profile



Scenario 1: Helping meet the core skill requirements of a new job

Stav has been offered the opportunity to undertake training to prepare for a supervisory position. She has enrolled in Certificate IV in Frontline Management. An LLN specialist used the ACSF to compare the core skills required for this Certificate with Stav’s current skills.

In the assessment, the teacher/trainer chose texts and tasks from Stav’s workplace context. However, when she introduced some unfamiliar texts and tasks relevant to the Frontline Management training, which involved using formal language for report writing and scanning more academic texts, it was clear that Stav was not confident and requested additional support. This was particularly marked in the Writing assessment.

The spiky profile shows that Stav would benefit from developing her Reading, Writing and Oral Communication skills, and the LLN specialist will work with the workplace trainer to integrate targeted core skill development with the Certificate IV training.

p.13 ACSF, Commonwealth of Australia,2012

Literacy issues arise in the workplace when there is a mismatch between the literacy and numeracy skills profile of workers and the literacy and numeracy skill demands of the task, or of the training.

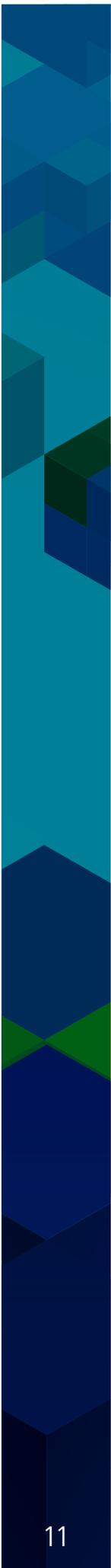
Employers can use the ACSF concept of spiky profiles to describe the types of skills that are required in different job roles. This can then help with the development of induction and training programs.

Graphed spiky profiles would be useful for plotting the required outcomes from a training course. We could compare our targets with our progress.

National Manager Learning and Development, national transport company

We have 34,000 workers who need to participate in training on EEO standards. Vilification, harassment, opportunity are big words and concepts that need some explanation for workers from non-English speaking backgrounds. It would be best if this training could be done online, but it needs to be accessed AND understood. We knew some workers would need extra face-to-face support to participate, so we designed a program to provide that.

National Manager Learning and Development, national transport company



5 levels of skill

The ACSF explains what makes literacy and numeracy tasks simple or difficult. The five core skills – reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy and learning are described across five levels of increasing difficulty.

Many training documents are written in management or VET speak, not in a way that cuts through. By understanding the skill levels in the ACSF we can figure out where these internal communications go wrong and what can be done about it.

Training Manager, national forestry products company

Examples of the types of tasks at different ACSF levels can give employers a better understanding of the difficulty of different workplace tasks.

	Reading	Writing
Level 1	understand DANGER, STOP, EXIT signs	type name and password into computer program
Level 2	read short shift changeover note	complete leave form
Level 3	skim SOPs to find necessary information	use email for routine communication
Level 4	interpret technical information in charts and tables	prepare SOPs for use in the workplace
Level 5	read and evaluate information in complex report/technical manual	develop promotional material for specific audience

	Oral communication	Numeracy
Level 1	tell supervisor about a hazard	read times and dates on work roster
Level 2	receive and pass on phone messages	measure using simple instruments
Level 3	listen and respond to routine customer complaints	calculate GST for tax invoice
Level 4	provide feedback to a trainee in structured interview	use ratio and scale to interpret dimensions on plan
Level 5	lead focus group discussions to solve problems	research and analyse statistical data

	Learning
Level 1	find out about new work requirements
Level 2	identify skills that need further development
Level 3	organise own participation in training program
Level 4	manage resources for self-paced learning program
Level 5	undertake independent research project

Knowing about these five levels can help employers, managers and supervisors understand the complexity of skills required in the workplace and identify tasks where workers might have trouble.

3 domains of communication

- personal + community
- workplace + employment
- education + training

The ACSF describes three broad contexts where people use literacy and numeracy skills. Skills developed and used in one context are not necessarily transferred to a different context, particularly at the lower skill levels. Just because someone is able to write a note to their child's teacher or speak with others at their local sporting club, does not mean they can complete forms or communicate effectively in the workplace.

Literacy and numeracy skills are developed over a lifetime. They need to be continually practised, built, adapted and updated to meet the demands of new tasks and environments. Literacy and numeracy skills deteriorate over time if they are not used. Workers who have not had to use their literacy or numeracy skills at work for a long time are likely to have lost some of the skills they developed in their initial education or training.

Employers particularly notice when workers cannot transfer their skills from school or education settings into the workplace. School leavers can have difficulty making the connection between maths skills developed at school and the numeracy tasks required on the job.

When people shift from one domain of communication to another they can seem a bit out of their depth and may perform in certain core skills at a lower level while they come to terms with the new context.

People might have learned a concept at school but are using it in a different way in the workplace. There needs to be a refreshing of the theory behind some of the workplace tasks that involve maths. VET training needs to focus on the level of transfer required.

National Training Co-ordinator, national glass manufacturing company

The apprentices struggle with the maths, for example, to calculate angles to put up a bracket. Apprentices can do well in tests, but they can't do maths in the workplace – they can't transfer to a new context.

Employer, Brisbane manufacturing company



4 performance variables

support
context
text complexity
task complexity

The ACSF describes factors that can influence an individual's ability to perform literacy and numeracy tasks. These relate to the difficulty of the task, the amount of help available and the environment where the task is being performed.

Learning is an issue for many who have left school early and are attempting a Certificate II or III in Sawmilling and Processing. They need support, not only for their off-the-job learning, but also in the workplace.

Training Manager, national forestry products company

Everyone finds it easier to perform tasks when they have help and the task is familiar. A worker may perform well when they are working with an established team in a familiar environment, but the same task could be challenging for them in a new workplace or with new co-workers. Workplace change – new systems, new processes, new forms and new regulations – can initially increase the difficulty of all literacy and numeracy tasks. Workers need time to become familiar with the new requirements and to adapt and practise their skills under the new conditions.

Aside from change, other factors in the workplace can make literacy or numeracy tasks more difficult than they might be in other environments. These factors can make it harder for workers to properly complete a task:

- noise and distractions
- production speed and time constraints
- availability of assistance or support
- quality requirements and customer expectations
- complex documents and communication processes.

These factors need to be considered when the difficulty of work tasks is being considered and, in particular, when training programs are developed. Literacy and numeracy skills are best developed in the context in which they will be used because then individuals can build the specific skills to perform under workplace conditions.

A full copy of the Australian Core Skills Framework can be found at www.industry.gov.au/skills/pages/default.aspx

4. Taking action

There are a number of things employers can do to tackle workforce literacy issues. To tackle these issues in your business you need to think about the specific skills needed in the workplace, your communication practices and the characteristics of your workforce. All businesses can take some simple steps to identify areas for improvement and develop solutions. Not all solutions will involve literacy training – you can also have an impact by improving communication systems and processes, simplifying workplace documents and establishing a supportive workplace culture.

We want to use the people we have, the people who are already good on the job, to move up the line to be our supervisors and team leaders. We had a production worker who was identified as being able to write SOPs for key machinery. With assistance he has moved to technical writing training. That's worth a lot, to him and to the company.

Training Manager, national forestry products company

From an employee perspective the investment in literacy training was very worthwhile. A Packaging Supervisor from a non-English speaking background said her once a week lessons helped her to translate 'what was in her head into English'. It's great that she could recognise the benefit and from our point of view it's just great she can do her job even better.

HR Manager, Victorian manufacturing company

The more the workplace culture is accepting of difference, the better chance we have that these issues can be identified and addressed. If you don't gain a person's trust, you don't get their buy in – a no blame or shame approach.

National Manager Learning and Development, national transport company



What actions have you taken to date to address core skill development in your workplace?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4.1 Reviewing internal systems and processes

A good starting point in tackling workforce literacy issues is to consider whether workplace systems and processes make literacy and numeracy tasks more difficult than they need to be. All workers will benefit from clearer, simpler documents and systems, not just those with low level literacy skills.

Businesses use in-house jargon, customised reporting procedures, established spiels for communicating with customers, templates for preparing quotes or calculating materials, instruction manuals and standard operating procedures. Often the people responsible for preparing these documents and processes have different literacy and numeracy skills from those who will be using them.

The simplest way to find out whether in-house systems are causing problems is to ask the people who work with them.

Informal discussions with small groups of workers can be used to talk about workplace documents – these may be forms, reports, SOPs, manuals, checklists.

The following questions can be used to talk about how these workplace documents are currently used and identify any problems they may be causing.

Ask workers:	
When do you use this workplace document?	▶ What makes you use it?
What happens if you don't use the workplace document?	▶ Are there other tools or strategies you can use instead?
How does this workplace document help the work you are doing?	▶ Is there anything about it that makes your job harder?
Have you made any modifications to the workplace document?	▶ How could it be changed to make it more useful?

It's important that workers understand that the purpose of the discussion is to make improvements to the documents and processes – not to test their knowledge or compliance.

We are introducing online payslips for the whole workforce. The writers of the instructions for how to access the payslips got advice from literacy teachers on using Plain English so that all workers could understand them. The whole organisation benefits from this.

National Manager Learning and Development, national transport company

You can also ask employees about communication processes. You could consider instructions, safety notices, operating procedures, meeting papers, reporting templates.

Ask workers:

- ▶ Are some instructions or messages difficult to follow?
- ▶ Do you have ways for asking questions or providing feedback to supervisors and management?
- ▶ Are the reporting processes logical and easy to follow?
- ▶ Do teams and co-workers work together well and support each other with difficult tasks?

Discussions with workers can be used to find out about new documents or tools that would help them to do their job, e.g. examples of completed forms, templates for common reports, lists of frequently used terms.

These discussions can also be an opportunity to learn about how workers understand the workplace requirements. Often there is an assumption at management level that everyone can see the connection between safety precautions and hazard reduction, or between reporting requirements and production outcomes, but these links are not always evident to all workers. Gaps in employee understanding indicate a breakdown of the organisation's communication processes.

For one manufacturer it was shocking to find during a maintenance check that cables on the gantry crane had worn very thin but hadn't been reported in the regular safety checklists.

To try to figure out what had gone wrong the issue was raised at one of our weekly Toolbox meetings and the surprising truth emerged. Many workers didn't understand the word 'gantry' on the safety checklist and didn't know which piece of equipment the question was referring to. They were too embarrassed to ask or admit that they were unfamiliar with the word, so they just put an OK tick on the checklist each time. Their embarrassment was nothing compared to that of management when we realised the quality system was flawed.

An understanding of the ACSF domains of communication can help highlight the challenge of transferring skills to different contexts and the significance of workplace vocabulary.



The tool for 'identifying levels of difficulty' in Section 5 at the back of this document can help you to think about how challenging workplace documents or processes might be for your workers.

4.2 Documenting workplace skill requirements

Putting an ACSF rating on our SOPs would make it possible to check whether workers need training support to use them.

Training Manager, national forestry products company

Accurately describing the required literacy and numeracy skills in job descriptions is a good way to make sure that workers are supported for career progression and internal promotion. When you are clear about what literacy and numeracy skills are required for particular positions you can design more effective selection, induction and training processes.

Detail from the ACSF can help you to identify and accurately describe the skills your workers need for different positions and tasks. You can:

- document the specific literacy and numeracy skills required for supervisory positions and use it to set up mechanisms to prepare internal candidates for promotion
- make sure that the required literacy and numeracy skills are included in induction programs to help workers build the skills for their new roles
- take account of the literacy and numeracy skills required for the introduction of new workplace systems or processes and make sure that the change process includes opportunities for workers to develop the necessary skills.

One Training Manager has plans to use the ACSF in position descriptions. The ACSF sample activities give you some good examples of what can be expected at each level. We could create some 'ready reckoners' of the key literacy and numeracy requirements of each job. So if we are talking about stacking trolleys, then that would require understanding of width and depth and length, the capacity to count in multiples, estimate numbers quickly by looking at a single tray and multiplying that. I'm thinking that is at least ACSF level 2, possibly 3. For writing we would say 'fill in simple forms' – numbers and words and reading would be 'order forms' and 'basic hygiene and safety notices'. I'd need to think more about that before I decided a level. This sort of information would also be useful for recruitment and induction training.

An understanding of the five levels of the ACSF can help HR managers recognise and clearly describe the core skill demands of particular jobs and trainers to incorporate core skill content into training programs.



The tool for 'analysing job requirements' at the back of this document can help you to think about and describe the learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy skills your workers need.

4.3 Communicating with the workforce

To identify and address literacy issues in the workplace you need to be able to communicate with employees about literacy. Employees who need literacy or numeracy support are often reluctant to talk about it. They are also unlikely to want to be singled out for special treatment. The best approach is one that involves ALL workers, emphasising the importance and workplace relevance of continually updating these skills.

You might consider using a third party – a union representative, consultant or training provider – to help you develop inclusive, non-threatening skill building solutions, but the most important contributors to the solution should be your workforce. You can give employees ownership of the literacy challenge and solution by asking them about their views, needs and preferences. By talking with employees you will also get a better sense of the distinction between issues that arise from workplace processes and issues that arise from workers' skill levels.

Creating an environment where people are comfortable talking about literacy issues is a crucial first step. Simple messages about workplace literacy can be developed and shared with the whole workforce:

- Our organisation will work better if all of our communications are clear. Communication processes may need to be improved at all levels. Everyone can help to identify where communication processes are going wrong.
- The introduction of workplace change brings new skill demands. It's normal for people to need to build or refresh their literacy and numeracy skills for new situations.
- Literacy issues are only a 'problem' when we don't deal with them. Individual workers don't have to tackle this on their own. When we work together workable solutions can be found that benefit everyone.





One manufacturer's internal recruitment process for supervisors had hit a snag. Not many candidates had applied for the Frontline Certificate training from the existing work teams and I couldn't work out why. I'd counted on Ray - after all he had worked for the company for 15 years and knew the workplace inside out. He was a real team player and always spoke up in meetings. I called him in for a chat.

It turned out that Ray knew he would make a good supervisor but he'd been frightened off by the computer course they'd all had to do earlier in the year. I knew Ray could do standard deviation calculations in his head and had the SOPs committed to memory so I was really surprised to hear Ray's concerns about his struggles in the computer course and his fears about his ability to do the reading and writing tasks required for the supervisor Frontline Certificate.

Now after 19 months of targeted support Ray is ready and confident to tackle the supervisor training. He'll make a great supervisor, but without the extra support we might have lost him from the company altogether.

An understanding of the ACSF Performance Variables can help those involved in recruitment and training to work with candidates on their strengths and assist them to overcome barriers and achieve new learning goals.



The tool for 'gathering insights from employees' at the back of this document can help you to talk to your workers about their literacy and numeracy skills and the skill demands of the workplace.

4.4 Communicating with training providers

The ACSF provides a nationally consistent way to describe literacy and numeracy skills in considerable detail. Understanding the language of the ACSF can help employers to talk to training providers about the specific literacy and numeracy demands of the workplace and the skill needs of the workforce.

As an employer you are unlikely to assess the literacy and numeracy skills of individual workers, but you could develop a sense of the ACSF level of different workplace tasks. You may also have a sense of the general skills profile of your workforce. This information is useful in discussions with training providers in a number of ways.

If you are planning a vocational or technical training program you need to be aware that not all vocational trainers and assessors know about the ACSF. You can use your knowledge of it to check that:

- vocational trainers and assessors are aware of the specific literacy and numeracy demands of the workplace
- the planned training and assessment methods take account of the literacy skill levels of your workforce
- the vocational program includes training and assessment of the literacy skills that are needed in the workplace
- real workplace documents and practices are used as the basis of training and assessment to build the skills needed in the workplace.

If you are planning a literacy and numeracy skills development program you can use your knowledge of the ACSF to communicate with specialist literacy and numeracy practitioners about your needs. You can work with a specialist literacy and numeracy practitioner to:

- assess the literacy and numeracy skills of individual workers to identify specific skill gaps
- develop targeted training programs to address identified skill gaps
- connect literacy and numeracy skills development with the specific requirements of the workplace through the use of real workplace documents and practices
- identify options for minimising literacy and numeracy demands in the workplace and simplifying workplace documents.



5. Tools



5.1 Tool for identifying levels of difficulty

The ACSF provides information on what makes different tasks easy or difficult. Many factors can influence an individual's ability to perform literacy and numeracy tasks. These relate to the difficulty of the task, the amount of help available and the environment where the task is being performed.

Knowing the level of difficulty for specific workplace tasks can help you with decisions about recruitment, induction, support and training. Sometimes small changes to the amount of support available, or the style and wording of a document can make a big difference to whether workers are able to reliably complete a task.

Context		ACSF
Is the task conducted in an environment where...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tasks are routine, familiar and predictable the audience is sympathetic 	Level 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tasks are routine the audience is familiar and friendly 	Level 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the audience is neutral 	Level 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the circumstances are unfamiliar the audience is unfriendly 	Level 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the audience may be hostile 	Level 5
Complexity		ACSF
Does the text or task include...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple, concrete ideas everyday language 	Level 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> obvious ideas short, plain, simple messages non-threatening issues 	Level 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> several ideas or steps mostly everyday, but some complex vocabulary and ideas 	Level 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complex relationships between ideas complex or technical vocabulary 	Level 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hidden or ambiguous meaning complex, technical and unfamiliar vocabulary and ideas 	Level 5
Support		ACSF
Does the context for the task allow the use of...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> models to copy support from friend or colleague to complete the task 	Level 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> examples and help close by 	Level 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dictionary, or model that can be referred to 	Level 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited support or models 	Level 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no support or models 	Level 5
Outcome requirements		ACSF
Do the task outcomes require...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited accuracy with plenty of time to do the task 	Level 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accuracy in single or familiar calculations 	Level 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accuracy across several steps in reasonable timeframes to complete the task 	Level 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high degree of accuracy within deadlines 	Level 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high degree of accuracy within tight timeframes 	Level 5
Numerical complexity		ACSF
Does the numerical content of the task involve...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> single operations and whole numbers 	Level 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some selection of familiar numerical operations applied in limited contexts 	Level 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some numerical interpretation applied in several contexts 	Level 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complex choices regarding mathematical operations 	Level 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluent use of a wide range of mathematical formulae complex data interpretation and interpolation 	Level 5



5.2 Tool for analysing job requirements

If you develop a clear idea of the level of skill required for specific jobs this information can be incorporated into job descriptions. Applicants and workers preparing for internal promotion will have a better understanding of the skills they may need to develop. It will also be possible to have more focussed and meaningful conversations with all workers about their literacy skill development needs.

Learning		ACSF	
Does the job require workers to...	regularly seek help or advice from supervisors, co-workers or experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check details on a roster confirm a task is completed correctly 	Level 1
	discuss their own skill development goals or training options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> talk about career progression or certification requirements consider whether to participate in a voluntary training program 	Level 2
	negotiate a professional development plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discuss performance requirements and career progression goals make arrangements to participate in professional development opportunities 	Level 3
	take responsibility for their own performance improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create personal resources for building own professional or technical knowledge seek feedback from others to improve own performance 	Level 4
	critically reflect on their own performance in relation to organisational objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate workplace learning culture and pathways to identify own training and development options implement systemic action learning project to support learning in project teams 	Level 5
Reading		ACSF	
Does the job require workers to...	recognise signs, letters and single words in the immediate work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify own name on a roster or payslip recognise days and months on a calendar 	Level 1
	read short, familiar texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> locate phone numbers in a directory interpret a short sequence of instructions combining pictorial and written information 	Level 2
	read and interpret texts with several familiar ideas from everyday contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> read meeting agenda and worksite notices use index and table of contents to access longer documents 	Level 3
	interpret and analyse texts with some complex ideas and unfamiliar vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyse reports or memos about a new and unfamiliar problem follow on screen instructions for installing new software 	Level 4
	interpret and analyse structurally intricate texts containing several complex or ambiguous ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyse complex reports that present different viewpoints use research material sourced from a range of internet sites 	Level 5
Writing		ACSF	
Does the job require workers to...	write a sentence or a group of words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write or copy own name, address and phone number record meeting dates on a calendar 	Level 1
	complete forms or write a number of sentences about a familiar subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete a log book or diary with routine information write a short shift report or message to co-workers 	Level 2
	produce logically sequenced texts for a particular audience and purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete forms that require factual data and individualised responses write clear, sequenced instructions for a routine task 	Level 3
	write texts that convey complex relationships between ideas and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> document roles, responsibilities and timeframes for a project plan compile a report on sales figures with input from a range of sources 	Level 4
	write complex texts that express precise meaning and demonstrate extreme control of stylistic devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write a position paper or report based on analysis of data and stakeholder consultations prepare an organisational plan based on task analysis, worker input and financial data 	Level 5

Oral		ACSF	
Does the job require workers to participate in...	very short spoken exchanges in highly familiar circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> express a personal opinion or preference in discussion with co-workers, such as preferred roster days listen to short announcements and identify own name and department 	Level 1
	short spoken exchanges that are relevant to familiar tasks and contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen to short, explicit instructions for new work procedures take part in straightforward face-to-face discussions with customers or co-workers 	Level 2
	spoken exchanges involving less familiar concepts within everyday contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> deliver short prepared talk to co-workers and respond to audience questions listen to clear, sequenced instructions of several steps 	Level 3
	a variety of spoken exchanges that require control of complex language and structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discuss causes of a problem with co-workers and negotiate a solution listen to a sequence of instructions and explanations to report information back to work team 	Level 4
	complex spoken exchanges in a broad range of contexts demonstrating flexible and effective use of language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain technical concepts to a work group unfamiliar with the concepts involved determine customer requirements through open-ended questioning, active listening, paraphrasing and summarising 	Level 5

Numeracy		ACSF	
Does the job require workers to...	locate and communicate everyday numerical concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> count and record quantities on a routine form read a simple diagram or graph 	Level 1
	use a limited range of processes to solve familiar and relevant problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> locate addresses using a street directory calculate time duration, such as opening hours or length of shift 	Level 2
	use a range of actions to identify and solve problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check for correct formula result in a spreadsheet adjust quantities required when altering a recipe or chemical dilution 	Level 3
	use a range of strategies to extract, interpret and solve work-based problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prepare data using graphs to show changes over time include formulas in spreadsheets for automatic calculation 	Level 4
	use a wide range of mathematical tools and techniques to interpret data, solve problems and communicate mathematically in a work context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use financial formulae to investigate and compare investment opportunities or capital acquisitions calculate distance, length and location using trigonometry and geometry 	Level 5



5.3 Tool for gathering insights from employees

Your workforce is the best source of information on literacy issues in the workplace. Apart from helping to identify literacy issues, gathering information from employees can provide you with ideas for possible solutions, warnings about potential barriers and advice on preferred options for development.

For consultation with employees to work, it has to be genuine. Employees need to be confident that there is no hidden agenda and that their honest responses will not backfire on them. For some organisations building this level of trust might take time. To bring employees on board you might want to consider:

- gradually rolling out information gathering processes across the organisation
- identifying supervisors and team leaders to champion open consultation and discussion around literacy
- holding discussions in 'safe' environments among co-workers or small work groups with identified issues reported to management anonymously
- sharing messages from management emphasising that it's normal to need to build literacy skills for new challenges in the workplace.

You can use the following questions in consultations with employees to gather information on suggested improvements to workplace practices and on workers' skill development needs, options and preferences.



Thinking about your job...	Do we need...	YES	NO
Could the reporting be simplified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● changes to processes ● changes to reporting forms or templates ● changes to instructions ● tools that can be used to help ● shared understanding of requirements 		
Can communication be improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● different team structures ● clear expectations about different communication processes – e.g. when does it need to be written or spoken? ● tools or models to use e.g. report templates, simplified forms ● clear guidelines or rules ● mentoring or skill development 		
Can numerical mistakes be avoided?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● clearer instructions or guidelines ● better shared understanding of the purpose of the numbers ● new or different tools and examples ● support systems for checking results ● mentoring or skill development 		

Thinking about your skills...	Do you need...	YES	NO
Do you have work skills that you could help others to develop?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● time to spend on coaching, advising or mentoring new or less experienced workers ● formal arrangements that document your role as a workplace coach or mentor ● advice on communicating and building positive relationships with the people you mentor or coach ● resources developed to support your role in coaching or mentoring others? 		
Are there new work skills you would like to develop?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● mentoring support from co-workers or supervisors ● learning resources that you can access at your own pace ● advice on training options and available support ● help accessing computer-based training ● opportunities to build your learning, reading, writing, oral communication or numeracy skills so that you can participate in training ● tools, templates or instructions that provide examples you can use in the workplace ● time to practice your skills in the workplace? 		
Does your work team need to develop some new skills as a group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● time to develop shared understandings of workplace tasks and requirements ● instructions, guidelines or rules that will help you all know what to do ● induction materials that will help new team members know how the group works ● feedback or support from someone outside the team? 		





5.4 Tool for talking with training providers

A training partnership is a two-way relationship between an enterprise and a training provider that delivers benefit for both organisations. Successful partnerships have clear, agreed goals and a focus on longer-term outcomes. Generally they involve sharing resources and information in a way that allows each partner to capacity build.

Building a partnership requires an investment of time and resources. Trust and ongoing communication are cited by many partnerships as the most important elements for success. The partners need to work together through the planning and establishment process.

Choosing the right training provider for your organisation is an important step in implementing a successful skills development program. You may need to talk with a number of providers in order to decide which will best meet your needs. This will involve asking questions about how they will work with you.



TRAINING PROVIDER CHECKLIST			YES	NO
Experience	Does the training provider have...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● people who can talk about your business needs on your wavelength ● expertise or experience in your industry area ● experience in the provision of programs that integrate literacy skill development into vocational training ● expertise in the use of the ACSF as a tool for identifying individual skill development needs ● specialist literacy support available when required ● knowledge of funding options and programs that may be available for your business? 		
Flexibility	Is the training provider...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● willing to customise training for your employee's literacy needs and for your business needs ● able to provide training at locations and times that suit your business and employees ● interested in exploring innovative solutions ● capable of working collaboratively with your in-house trainers and assessors, or with other external training providers ● able to adjust the training program if your business needs change? 		
Attitude	Does the training provider...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● respond positively and flexibly when considering your specific business needs ● understand your vision and your business imperatives for the development of your workforce ● communicate openly with you about issues or challenges that may arise and adopt a shared approach to resolving them ● actively encourage your input into the development of the training program? 		
Quality	Will the training provider...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use business equipment, processes and practices that are current and relevant to your organisation ● base the training program on real workplace requirements, using your business documents and processes ● establish clear roles and expectations for everyone involved in implementing the training program ● regularly evaluate and review the training and assessment services in consultation with you ● provide training and professional development for their own staff by encouraging them to learn from industry? 		

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