Gender and Culturally Inclusive Training in the Forest, Paper and Wood Products Industry

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Forestry Workforce Training Program

Acknowledgement of Country

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About ForestWorks

ForestWorks is an industry-owned not-for-profit organisation offering skills development services for the forest, wood, paper, timber, furnishing, textiles, clothing and footwear industries.

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Materials produced under this program do not constitute Australian Government policy.

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Introduction

The **Gender and Culturally Inclusive Training in the Forest, Paper and Wood Products Industry** is a Forestry Workforce Training Program guide designed for resource creators, trainers, and assessors and training package developers. It provides actionable advice to support the design and delivery of gender and culturally inclusive training programs that reflect equity principles, meet compliance requirements, and promote workforce diversity across the forest, paper and wood products industry.

This guide supports compliance while helping improve training effectiveness and learner engagement, especially for underrepresented groups.

How to Use the Guide

The Guide addresses inclusivity and gender diversity themes by presenting the supporting information then invites the user to apply the principles in their workplace. There are practical application recommendations or suggested exercises for each section. The themes addressed are as follows:

1. Building Inclusive Training Content

Recommendation

Analyse your training methods and delivery material to see if it incorporates inclusivity and diversity principles and identify possible improvements in terms of:

- Inclusive language
- Examples of diversity in the workplace
- Web based training accessibility
- Equitable assessment practices
- Representation of women in the training content.

2. Supporting Women's Participation in Forestry Training

Recommendation

Analyse your training strategies to see if the following is incorporated and identify possible improvements:

- Inclusive curriculum and training materials
- Appropriate mentoring and peer support
- Flexible and accessible training delivery
- Gender-aware assessment practices
- Promotion of visibility and success stories
- Professional development opportunities for trainers and assessors
- Supportive of broader industry engagement.

3. Embedding Cultural Awareness and Inclusion in Workplace Practices

Recommendation

Analyse your current training and workplace strategies to ensure the following elements are effectively incorporated, and identify areas of improvement:

- Cultural awareness practices that go beyond compliance and actively foster respect, inclusion, and collaboration
- Recognition of cultural concepts of time, ensuring workplace expectations are flexible, clearly communicated, and culturally informed
- Anti-racism training that equips staff and leaders to identify, challenge, and prevent discriminatory behaviours or systems
- Inclusive leadership approaches that promote genuine participation and avoid isolating individuals from underrepresented groups in workplace or organisational events
- Awareness and management of cultural load, ensuring participation in diversity and inclusion activities is fair and sustainable
- Recruitment and development of a diverse training workforce, reflecting the communities and learners your organisation serves.

4. Training Diversity and Inclusion Skills in Practice

A Diversity and Inclusion Skills and Training Framework is outlined in this section. It highlights key diversity-related skills, explains their significance, and illustrates their relevance to training delivery and assessment aligned to the core units of:

- FWP30122 Certificate III in Forest Operations, and
- FWP40121 Certificate IV in Forest Operations.

Tool

Diversity & Inclusion: A Skills and Training Framework

Exercise

Applying the Framework: Practical Assessment Questions for Diversity and Inclusion Skills in Training

5. Assessing Diversity and Inclusion Skills in Practice

Building onto the skills listed in the Diversity and Inclusion Skills and Training Framework, this section provides an assessment criteria framework for the following skills:

- Cultural competence
- Empathy
- Active listening
- Unconscious bias awareness
- Inclusive communication
- Conflict resolution
- Adaptability
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Leadership differences
- Emotional intelligence

Tools

- Diversity & Inclusion: A Skills and Training Framework
- Applying the Framework: Practical Assessment Questions for Diversity and Inclusion Skills in Training
- Attachment C. Checklist for Assessing Diversity and Inclusion Skills

Exercise

1. Refer to Attachment C.
2. Apply a suggested question with candidate(s) for each skill area.

6. Embedding Diversity and Inclusion in Training Package Development

Tool

Checklist for Gender and Culturally Inclusive Advice in Companion Volumes and Equity Considerations in Vocational Education and Training.

Exercise

1. Refer to checklist.
2. Provide examples of how to incorporate the following **Companion Volume** points into training and assessment practices:
    - Access and equity considerations in training delivery and assessment
    - Examples that reflect gender and cultural diversity in workplace contexts
    - Approaches for making reasonable adjustments to accommodate diverse learner needs
    - Use of inclusive language, terminology, and visual representation in learning resources.

1. Building Inclusive Training Content

Overview

Inclusive training practices start with a clear understanding of gender diversity and the role of inclusive language. This section is designed especially for resource creators, trainers and assessors, offering practical guidance on how to design and deliver training that recognises the diversity of learners and promotes equitable participation.

The focus is on supporting women, as well as individuals from gender and culturally diverse backgrounds, within the forest, paper and wood products industry, ensuring training environments are respectful, relevant, and accessible to all.

Understanding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Workplaces reflect the diversity of society. Diversity is not limited to ethnicity, race, or gender – it also includes age, disability, background, education, work style, and more. Training programs that value and respond to this diversity help foster participation, increase learner confidence, and support better outcomes.

The following definitions, adapted from the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing[1], provide important context:

- **Gender Equality** means equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for people of all genders. It focuses on removing systemic barriers and ensuring outcomes are not determined by gender.
- **Gender Equity** recognises that different groups may have different needs and experiences. It involves fairness in how benefits and responsibilities are distributed, addressing disadvantages to achieve meaningful equality.
- **Intersectionality** acknowledges that individuals can experience overlapping forms of disadvantage (e.g., due to age, disability, race, location, or income). Inclusive training must consider these intersecting factors to ensure genuine access and support.
- **Diversity** is about recognising, respecting, and valuing individual differences. In training, this includes tailoring content and delivery methods to reflect the diversity of learners and workplaces.

[1] Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024). *Training Package Products Policy*. [online] Available at: https://www.dewr.gov.au/training-package-assurance/resources/training-package-products-policy-0 [Accessed 8 May 2025].

Using Inclusive and Gender-Neutral Language

The consistent use of inclusive language is essential to creating safe and welcoming learning environments. Gender-neutral terms such as *'student', 'worker', 'supervisor'* or *'assessor'* avoid reinforcing stereotypes and signal that all individuals belong.

Key considerations for resource developers and trainers include:

- **Use of role-based terms**: refer to individuals by their function or title, not by gender. Avoid terms such as 'he/she' or 'foreman' in favour of neutral alternatives.
- **Avoid gendered assumptions**: phrases like 'requires physical strength' can discourage participation by women and gender-diverse learners. Instead, describe tasks in terms of required competencies, teamwork, or safe operating procedures.
- **Promote inclusive assessment language**: ensure instructions and performance criteria do not rely on gendered imagery or assumptions, and support learners from all backgrounds.

See Attachment: A. Gender-Neutral Alternatives to Gendered Words.

Making Web-Based Training Accessible

Web based training content accessibility is critically important to women working in the industry because it directly impacts their ability to enter, engage with, and progress within a sector that hasn't historically supported pathways for women.

The Australian Government mandates Web Based Content Accessibility (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA as the minimum standard for all government websites.

This requirement is outlined in the Digital Service Standard (DSS) and supported by the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA).

The **four principles of WCAG 2.1** are that web content must be:

1. Perceivable	• Text alternatives for non-text content • Captions and other alternatives for multimedia • Content adaptable and distinguishable (e.g., sufficient contrast)
2. Operable	• Keyboard accessibility • Enough time to read/use content • Navigation is clear and consistent
3. Understandable	• Readable and predictable content • Input assistance (e.g., error suggestions for forms)
4. Robust	• Compatible with assistive technologies • Use of clean, standard HTML/CSS for long-term accessibility.

For women in non-traditional occupations, aligning with WCAG 2.1 ensures digital tools, training platforms, and recruitment sites are:

- **Supportive of diverse learning needs**: accessible training ensures that all people can fully participate in training opportunities.
- **Flexible and enabling remote learning:** women have a disproportionately large amount of family and caring responsibilities. Accessible web-based training assists in keeping them engaged in the industry and progress their careers.
- **Builds a more inclusive industry culture:** providing accessible online training shows a commitment to equity and inclusion, reinforcing to women that they are valued in the industry by reducing dependency on informal or in person knowledge transfer, which can exclude woman; and, by normalising diversity in training helping shift the industry's culture.

Designing Fair and Equitable Assessments

Assessments must fairly evaluate learners based on demonstrated skills and knowledge, not assumptions linked to gender or physical ability.

Practical strategies for equitable assessment include:

- **Focusing on job-relevant competencies**: emphasise technical skills, safety knowledge, and collaboration over physical attributes unless they are essential and clearly defined.
- **Communicating learner rights**: make learners aware of their right to equitable assessment and how to raise concerns, including about bias or discrimination.
- **Recording reasonable adjustments**: when adjustments are made to support a learner, assessors should document:
    - The reason for the adjustment
    - The specific measures taken.

This documentation helps uphold transparency, consistency, and compliance with inclusive practice standards.

Representation of Women in Training Content

Women are often underrepresented in training materials, particularly in case studies, visuals, and example scenarios. Ensuring visible representation matters.

To support inclusive learning, training materials should:

- **Include images and case studies featuring women** in a range of roles, including leadership and technical positions.
- **Avoid reinforcing stereotypes** by showcasing diverse tasks, work environments, and career paths.
- **Use gender-balanced names and pronouns** when developing example profiles or assessment scenarios.

Increased representation:

- Reinforces that women belong in all roles across the industry
- Encourages participation and leadership among female learners
- Signals a workplace culture that values fairness and diversity.

Conversely, limited representation can undermine these goals and perpetuate exclusion.

Conclusion

Inclusive training design is not just about avoiding bias – it is about actively creating environments where all learners feel valued, respected, and capable of success. Gender-inclusive language, equitable assessments, and diverse representation in learning materials are practical, achievable steps toward that goal.

Recommendation

Analyse your training methods and delivery material to see if it incorporates inclusivity and diversity principles and identify possible improvements in terms of:

- Inclusive language
- Examples of diversity in the workplace
- Web based training accessibility
- Equitable assessment practices
- Representation of women in the training content.

2. Supporting Women's Participation in Forest, Paper and Wood Products Training

Overview

Supporting the participation of women in the forest, paper and wood products industry is a shared responsibility across the training ecosystem. Training package developers, trainers, assessors, and resource creators play a key role in creating inclusive learning experiences that promote equitable employment pathways and foster a more gender-diverse workforce.

This section outlines key barriers faced by women in the industry, provides insights into the industries demographics and workplace perceptions of gender diversity, and provides strategies that education and training professionals can implement or support to reduce these barriers and promote inclusive employment outcomes.

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Diversity and Inclusion Charter monitors women's participation in the industry through annual surveys. In 2023, women represented 23% of the workforce, reflecting a 2% increase since 2021.[2]

Understanding Barriers to Participation

The forestry sector, encompassing forest management, forest products, haulage, processing, and timber manufacturing, has traditionally been male dominated. This underrepresentation of women continues due to a combination of cultural and structural barriers that restrict participation and progression.

The 2025 Forestry Australia survey, *Women in forestry and forest products industries*[3], provides insights and statistical analysis on this subject and is referenced below.

[2] Australian Forest Products Association (2023). *New Industry Survey Data Highlights Significant Increase in Female Executives - Forest & Wood Products Australia*. [online] Forest & Wood Products Australia. Available at: https://fwpa.com.au/news/new-industry-survey-data-highlights-significant-increase-in-female-executives/ [Accessed 22 Aug. 2025].

[3] Forestry Australia, 2025, Review Report for the FWTP Project 17: Mentoring Program for Women in the Industry. Commissioned and funded by ForestWorks and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry as part of the Australian Government's Forestry Workforce Training Program (FWTP).

Key challenges contributing to the gender imbalance include:

- **Lack of clear career pathways into the industry for women:** entry points into operational or technical roles are not always well advertised or easily accessible, and school-to-career pathways often fail to highlight forestry as a viable option for young women. This lack of clarity limits participation and long-term commitment. 55% of respondents to the *Women in forestry and forest products industries* survey stated they had no practices, programs and/or initiatives to support and encourage women's participation and advancement.

- **Limited access to female role models and mentors, reducing visibility and support**: the scarcity of visible female leaders, supervisors, or senior technical staff within the industry reduces the likelihood that women will see a long-term future for themselves in the sector. The 2025 Review Report for Mentoring Program for Women in the Industry found that:

  > *Women-focused mentoring programs respond directly to these barriers. They help participants build confidence, navigate organisational culture, negotiate salaries, and pursue promotions. Participants in such programs consistently report greater self-awareness, resilience, and achievement of professional goals.* [4]

- **Restricted training and development opportunities, particularly in technical and leadership roles:** training programs and upskilling initiatives are often informal or not promoted equally to all staff. As a result, women may miss out on essential development opportunities that would prepare them for supervisory, operational, or specialised technical positions. This can lead to stagnation in lower-level roles and further entrench gender disparities in leadership and high-skill areas. Results from the 2025 *Women in forestry and forest products industries* survey show that the vast majority of woman in the industry work in non-technical roles. The continued lack of female representation in traditionally male dominated roles is limiting the further integration of woman into the industry.

- **Low overall visibility of the industry as a viable and inclusive career option:** the industry is often perceived through outdated perceptions that associate it with masculine work whilst ignoring modern roles, technological advancements, and inclusive practices. These perceptions can deter women from considering careers in the field.

[4] Forestry Australia, 2025, Review Report for the FWTP Project 17: Mentoring Program for Women in the Industry. Commissioned and funded by ForestWorks and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry as part of the Australian Government's Forestry Workforce Training Program (FWTP).

- **Unconscious bias and workplace cultures that may not support gender equity:** even in workplaces that do not actively discriminate, unconscious biases can shape how women are perceived, hired, trained, and promoted. Respondents to the 2025 *Women in forestry and forest products industries* survey consistently scored their own workplace's culture on gender inclusivity more favourably than the industry as a whole. Indicating that individuals and organisations may have a gap in how they evaluate their own behaviours and workplace culture as a pose to the industry in general, which they view more objectively.

Women continue to encounter barriers to accessing and sustaining employment in the forest, paper and wood products industry. For rural and Indigenous women, these challenges are often compounded by limited access to training, experiences of gender and racial discrimination, economic insecurity, and insufficient health and safety support.

Well-designed training programs can help address some of these challenges by:

- Promoting equitable access to learning and employment opportunities,
- Supporting the diverse needs of learners, and
- Actively challenging stereotypes that restrict women's participation.

Training Strategies that Support Women's Engagement

To support greater participation and employment outcomes for women, training stakeholders can implement the following evidence-based strategies:

Inclusive curriculum and training materials:

- Integrate case studies, profiles, and images of women in diverse forestry roles.
- Avoid gendered assumptions in tasks or performance expectations.
- Highlight pathways for women in leadership, technical, and operational roles.

Mentoring and peer support:

- Partner with industry to embed mentoring within training programs, especially for early career entrants.
- Encourage mentorship pairings through industry networks such as *Women in Forests and Timber Network*.

Flexible and accessible delivery:

- Design programs that accommodate part-time study, modular learning, and online options to support those balancing work or care responsibilities.
- Ensure resources are accessible to regional and remote learners, including women in rural communities.

Gender-aware assessment practices:

- Train assessors to recognise and mitigate bias in assessment.
- Ensure assessments reflect a broad range of job-relevant skills – not only physical attributes.

Promoting visibility and success stories:

- Share examples of women excelling in the industry through student materials, newsletters, and classroom discussions.
- Include diverse voices in guest lectures, videos, and field visits.

Professional development for trainers and assessors:

- Offer PD sessions on gender equity, inclusive delivery, and unconscious bias.
- Encourage trainers and assessors to participate in equity-focused communities of practice.

Supporting broader industry engagement:

While training providers may not control all workforce entry points, they can influence attitudes, opportunities, and confidence among learners. By collaborating with industry and community partners, training organisations can help dismantle systemic barriers and strengthen employment pathways.

Opportunities for collaboration include:

- **Partnerships with Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Industry Groups:** work with organisations supporting women in forestry to co-design training initiatives and share resources.
- **Advocating for supportive policies:** Promote the adoption of gender-equity policies among partner employers, including flexible work and anti-discrimination measures.
- **Data collection and feedback:** monitor participation rates of women in training and seek regular feedback to improve access and retention strategies.

Conclusion

Promoting women's employment in forestry and wood products starts with inclusive education and training. By addressing barriers through curriculum, delivery, mentoring, and assessment practices, training stakeholders can support a more diverse and sustainable workforce and contribute meaningfully to broader gender equity goals across the industry.

Recommendation

Analyse your training strategies to see the following is incorporated and identify possible improvements:

- Inclusive curriculum and training materials
- Appropriate mentoring and peer support
- Flexible and accessible training delivery
- Gender-aware assessment practices
- Promotion of visibility and success stories
- Professional development opportunities for trainers and assessors
- Supportive of broader industry engagement.

3. Embedding Cultural Awareness and Inclusion in Workplace and Training Practices

Overview

Cultural awareness is not only a moral or ethical responsibility but also a strategic advantage. Workplaces that actively foster inclusivity benefit from stronger teamwork, improved communication, greater innovation, and higher overall performance.

When people feel respected and understood, their engagement and loyalty increase, leading to better outcomes and lower staff turnover. In contrast, a lack of cultural awareness can cause miscommunication, disengagement, and workplace conflict, all of which can damage team cohesion and organisational reputation.

Embedding cultural awareness in workplace practices is therefore in a business's direct interests. It enhances both operational effectiveness and employee wellbeing.

Understanding the Cultural Concept of Time

Different cultures have varied relationships with time. In some, punctuality is essential; in others, arriving late is normal and not considered disrespectful. Without awareness of these differences, misunderstandings and tension can arise in the workplace.

Fostering a flexible approach to time, through open communication, mutual respect, and understanding of cultural norms, supports inclusion and helps manage expectations effectively. Recognising that "time" itself carries cultural meaning is a key step toward building trust and harmony among colleagues.

The Importance of Anti-Racism Training

While many organisations provide cultural awareness and unconscious bias training, racism remains a persistent issue. Anti-racism training takes this further. It equips trainers, leaders, and staff to recognise, challenge, and prevent racist behaviours or systems that may exist within workplace culture, whether intentional or not.

By building the confidence and skills to address racism directly, organisations can create safer, more equitable, and genuinely inclusive environments.

Inclusive Leadership and Cultural Load

Leaders are central to ensuring that diversity and inclusion efforts are both meaningful and sustainable. When inviting individuals from diverse backgrounds to participate in meetings, decision-making processes, or advisory groups, it is important to avoid isolating individual.

Inclusion is most effective when individuals are supported, for example, by inviting more than one person from the same community to participate. This approach fosters confidence, safety, and genuine engagement.

Cultural load refers to the additional emotional and cognitive strain placed on people from diverse backgrounds when they are repeatedly asked to represent their community or culture in workplace activities. Over time, this can lead to fatigue, stress, or burnout.

Leaders can address this by acknowledging cultural load, distributing responsibilities fairly, and ensuring participation is managed equitably.

Developing a Diverse Training Workforce

Long-term inclusion relies on building a workforce that reflects the diversity of learners and communities it serves. Recruiting trainers and educators from varied cultural backgrounds improves cultural safety, relevance, and trust in training environments.

Targeted recruitment and employment demonstrate a genuine commitment to equity and inclusion, helping to address systemic barriers and create lasting change across the organisation.

Conclusion

Embedding cultural awareness and inclusion within workplace practices helps building respectful, high-performing, and future-ready organisations. When cultural differences are recognised and valued, workplaces become safer and more cohesive.

Ongoing leadership commitment, and targeted actions, such as anti-racism training and achieving a diverse training workforce, ensure that inclusion is not a one-off initiative but a lasting part of organisational culture.

Recommendation

Analyse your current training and workplace strategies to ensure the following elements are effectively incorporated, and identify areas of improvement:

- Cultural awareness practices that go beyond compliance and actively foster respect, inclusion, and collaboration
- Recognition of cultural concepts of time, ensuring workplace expectations are flexible, clearly communicated, and culturally informed
- Anti-racism training that equips staff and leaders to identify, challenge, and prevent discriminatory behaviours or systems
- Inclusive leadership approaches that promote genuine participation and avoid isolating individuals from underrepresented groups in workplace or organisational events
- Awareness and management of cultural load, ensuring participation in diversity and inclusion activities is fair and sustainable
- Recruitment and development of a diverse training workforce, reflecting the communities and learners your organisation serves.

4. Training Diversity and Inclusion Skills in Practice

Overview

To foster inclusive training environments and support diverse learner cohorts, trainers and assessors must recognise and apply essential interpersonal and cultural skills when working with learners. These skills must also be intentionally taught, as they are embedded within forestry training qualifications, particularly across the core units of competency. Such skills are not only critical for effective communication and teamwork but also play an important role in building inclusive and respectful workplaces.

Capabilities Required to Deliver Inclusive Training

To deliver inclusive training and effectively teach inclusion skills to leaners, trainers and assessors need to develop capability in knowledge, practical skills, and professional behaviours.

Knowledge	• Principles of inclusive education and how these apply in training and assessment contexts. • Cultural awareness and sensitivity, including understanding the impact of bias, privilege, and discrimination. • Strategies for designing differentiated learning experiences to accommodate diverse learning styles, backgrounds, and access needs. • Awareness of accessibility standards and inclusive language use. • The role of respectful communication in supporting learner engagement.
Practical Skills	• Designing and delivering differentiated training that addresses varied learning styles, backgrounds, and access needs. • Developing and using accessible digital materials (e.g., captioned videos, recorded sessions, screen-reader friendly content, plain-language guides).

	• Applying a variety of teaching methods to engage different learner cohorts. • Confidently using learning technologies and accessibility tools to support equity in face-to-face and online settings. • Using inclusive language and diverse teaching methods to support participation • Providing learners with opportunities to practise inclusive behaviours (e.g., equal participation in group work, adapting communication styles).
Professional Behaviours	• Modelling respect, fairness, and openness to diversity in all interactions. • Creating safe, supportive, and welcoming learning environments for all learners. • Demonstrating empathy and responsiveness to individual learner needs. • Encouraging equitable participation in group activities and adapting communication to suit different learners. • Encouraging learners to reflect on personal experiences and apply inclusive practices in workplace and community settings.

Diversity and Inclusion Skills and Training Framework for Trainers

The table on the following page highlights ten key diversity and inclusion skills embedded within the core units of:

- FWP30122 Certificate III in Forest Operations, and
- FWP40121 Certificate IV in Forest Operations.

Teaching these skills effectively ensures that graduates of forest, paper and wood products training are not only proficient in technical tasks but are also prepared to foster respectful, equitable, and safe workplaces.

Trainers, assessors, and resource developers play an important role in modelling these behaviours and integrating them into the training experience.

This skills framework can guide **Training Package Developers and Resource Creators** to:

- Embed inclusive practices in unit content, scenarios, and assessments.
- Design learning activities that develop these interpersonal capabilities.
- Ensure assessment tools allow for reasonable adjustments that support inclusion.
- Incorporate role models, case studies, and examples that reflect diversity in gender, culture, and background.

Trainers and Assessors can:

- Model these behaviours in classroom and workplace settings.
- Provide feedback that encourages inclusive communication and collaborative skills.
- Support learners in developing these capabilities as part of their professional identity.
- Adapt training and assessment methods to suit individual needs, learning styles, and access requirements.
- Encourage self-reflection and continuous improvement through journals, feedback, and goal-setting activities.
- Contribute to a more inclusive workforce by preparing students to thrive in diverse, real-world environments such as forestry and other traditionally male-dominated sector

Diversity & Inclusion: A Skills and Training Framework

Skill	Description	Why It Matters	Connection to FWP Core Units	Assessment Example
Cultural Competence	Understanding and engaging with people from diverse cultural backgrounds with awareness and sensitivity.	Enhances team cohesion, reduces miscommunication, and ensures all learners feel respected and supported.	Integrated across communication and teamwork requirements in **FWPCOR2208**, **FWPCOR4205**, and **FWPCOR2206**.	Provide an example of cultural differences that may occur in the workplace.
Empathy	Understanding and responding appropriately to others' emotions and experiences.	Supports conflict resolution, fosters trust, and ensures learners feel heard and understood.	**FWPCOR2208**: Focus on active listening (PC 2.2) **FWPCOR4204**: Includes recommendations for team well-being in procedures (PC 4.4).	Describe how empathy might be used while communicating with a person working in a challenging situation in forest or wood products operations.
Active Listening	Fully concentrating, understanding, and responding appropriately to others.	Prevents misunderstandings, encourages engagement, and supports inclusive learning.	Reinforced in communication tasks across **FWPCOR2208**, **FWPCOR2206**, and **FWPCOR4205**.	Demonstrate active listening in a one face-to-face communication with a co-worker on a forest or wood products work related matter.

Skill	Description	Why It Matters	Connection to FWP Core Units	Assessment Example
Unconscious Bias Awareness	Recognising and mitigating internalised stereotypes and assumptions.	Essential for fair assessment, recruitment, and fostering workplace equity.	**FWPCOR2208**: Includes identifying suitable communication modes (PC 1.2) **FWPCOR4205**: Emphasises equitable communication practices.	Provide an example of how unconscious bias could impact work taking place in the forest, paper and wood products industry.
Inclusive Communication	Using respectful, non-discriminatory language that reflects the diversity of learners and colleagues.	Promotes a sense of belonging and respect. Reduces exclusion and reinforces that all learners are valued.	**FWPCOR2208**: Emphasises communication skills including acknowledging social and cultural differences (PC 7.4) **FWPCOR2206**: Covers expected workplace conduct and communication protocols.	Demonstrate how following workplace communication procedures used in forest or wood products operations can promote inclusivity.
Conflict Resolution	Managing disagreements constructively and respectfully.	Ensures inclusive learning environments and maintains team harmony.	**FWPCOR2208**: PC 7.5 – resolving contradictions for effective communication; **FWPCOR2206**: Includes appropriate oral communication strategies.	Demonstrate how conflict resolution might be employed in a group discussion at the workplace.
Adaptability	Staying open to change and diverse perspectives in dynamic environments.	Supports resilience, encourages inclusive problem-solving, and	Underpins teamwork, communication, and innovation across multiple units including	Describe an example of adapting to a forest or wood products

Skill	Description	Why It Matters	Connection to FWP Core Units	Assessment Example
		strengthens learner engagement during change.	**FWPCOR4205** and **FWPCOR2206**.	workplace that is becoming more diverse.
Teamwork and Collaboration	Working effectively across diverse teams toward shared goals.	Encourages mutual respect, innovation, and equal participation. Reduces stereotypes and fosters belonging.	**FWPCOR2208**: PC 2.3 – engaging in collaborative communication **FWPCOR4205**: Establishing and maintaining inclusive work practices.	Demonstrate how a diverse team can take steps to work cohesively together.
Leadership Differences	Leading inclusively by recognising individual strengths and ensuring equitable decision-making.	Builds inclusive team cultures and empowers all workers to contribute meaningfully.	**FWPCOR4205**: Developing improved work practices (PC 3.1) **FWPCOR4204**: Promotes health, safety, and environmental care across diverse teams.	Describe how inclusive leadership can set the standard for workplace behaviours.
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	Managing your own emotions while understanding and responding to those of others.	Strengthens team communication, reduces conflict, and models inclusive behaviour. Especially relevant in leadership and assessor roles.	Embedded in leadership-related units including **FWPCOR4204** and **FWPCOR4205**, with implications for team wellbeing and behavioural modelling.	Provide an example of when managing our own emotions could help resolve conflict with a colleague.

Source: BSV Training and Gender July 2025

Exercise:

Teaching Diversity and Inclusion Skills to Forestry Learners

The table above highlights key diversity-related skills, explains their significance, and illustrates their relevance to training delivery and assessment aligned to the core units of:

- FWP30122 Certificate III in Forest Operations, and
- FWP40121 Certificate IV in Forest Operations.

Apply assessment examples suggested in the table.

5. Assessing Diversity and Inclusion Skills in Practice

Overview

This section provides a practical framework for evaluating learners' or staff members' capabilities in applying diversity and inclusion principles within forest, paper and wood products industry settings. It is designed to support:

Training package developers	To integrate observable, inclusive skill progression into unit outcomes.
Trainers and assessors	To evaluate learners consistently across vocational competency standards, using inclusion-aligned language.
Resource creators	To design learning materials and workplace scenarios that reflect diverse capability levels.
Workplace supervisors	To coach and mentor employees towards more inclusive workplace behaviours.

Assessment Framework for Diversity and Inclusion

The table below outlines key inclusion-related skills across four performance levels: Emerging, Developing, Proficient, and Advanced. Each level reflects progressive competence and alignment with workplace expectations for inclusive practice.

Skill	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Cultural Competence	Demonstrates limited awareness of people's differences; may rely on stereotypes.	Acknowledges people's differences but may struggle with adapting behaviour.	Engages respectfully and appropriately across genders and cultures; adapts communication as needed.	Champions learning; actively promotes interpersonal understanding in the workplace.
Empathy	Struggles to recognize or validate others' emotions or experiences.	Acknowledges others' feelings when prompted; inconsistent in showing understanding.	Demonstrates consistent emotional and cognitive empathy; responds with care and respect.	Creates space for others to share experiences; mentors others in empathetic leadership.
Active Listening	Frequently interrupts or misses key points; limited feedback.	Listens with some focus; occasionally checks for understanding.	Consistently listens without interrupting; confirms understanding through feedback.	Models excellent listening; helps others improve their listening skills.

Skill	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Unconscious Bias Awareness	Unaware of personal biases; denies or resists feedback on bias.	Recognises some biases when prompted; open to learning.	Identifies own biases and takes steps to address them in decision-making.	Advocates for systemic change; leads initiatives that reduce bias in the workplace.
Inclusive Communication	Uses language or behaviours that may exclude or marginalise.	Tries to be respectful but may overlook inclusive practices.	Communicates inclusively; considers audience needs and avoids biased language.	Leads by example in inclusive language; coaches others and contributes to workplace improvements.
Conflict Resolution	Avoids or escalates conflict; shows limited understanding of others' perspectives.	Attempts resolution but may struggle with fairness or emotional regulation.	Resolves conflict constructively with empathy and fairness; seeks mutual understanding.	Facilitates complex conflict resolution; supports others in navigating workplace disagreements.
Adaptability	Resistant to change; struggles with differing perspectives.	Willing to adapt but needs support in uncertain situations.	Embraces change; responds flexibly to different viewpoints and environments.	Drives positive change; mentors others in adaptability and resilience.
Teamwork & Collaboration	Struggles to work cooperatively; shows limited regard for diverse perspectives.	Works with others when required; occasionally incorporates diverse viewpoints.	Collaborates effectively with team members; values and uses diverse input.	Fosters inclusive teamwork; actively seeks out and integrates diverse contributions.

Skill	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Leadership Differences	Fails to recognise or respond to team diversity; applies one-size-fits-all leadership.	Recognises team differences; beginning to adapt leadership approach accordingly.	Leads inclusively, considering individual strengths and backgrounds in decision-making.	Models inclusive leadership; ensures equity in opportunities and promotes team cohesion.
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	Struggles to identify or manage own emotions; limited awareness of others' emotions.	Can recognise basic emotions, beginning to respond appropriately to emotional cues.	Understands and manages own emotions; responds empathetically to others.	Demonstrates high emotional awareness; supports others and builds emotionally intelligent teams.

Source: BSV Training and Gender July 2025

Applying the Framework: Practical Assessment Questions for Diversity and Inclusion Skills in Training

This section provides sample assessment questions designed to reflect workplace-relevant capabilities in diversity and inclusion, with a focus on the skill area of cultural competence, as outlined in the Assessment Criteria Framework on pages 18-20.

The following examples are intended to support trainers, assessors, and resource creators in embedding inclusive practices within training and assessment strategies aligned to:

- FWP30122 Certificate III in Forest Operations, and
- FWP40121 Certificate IV in Forest Operations.

Assessment Question Examples

Skill Area: Cultural Competence

Question	Answer
1. **How does cultural competence influence team collaboration and morale?**	It fosters mutual respect, reduces misunderstandings, and encourages inclusive communication. Teams are more cohesive, and individuals feel comfortable contributing, enhancing collaboration and job satisfaction as well greater commitment to the organisation's success, performance and impact.
2. **What are some common challenges when working in a diverse team?**	**Communication Barriers** – Differences in language, nonverbal cues, and communication styles can result in misunderstandings or misinterpretations among team members. **Cultural Misunderstandings** – Diverse cultural norms related to hierarchy, gender roles, or decision-making processes can create confusion or conflict within teams. **Unconscious Bias** – Individuals may unknowingly rely on stereotypes or assumptions that influence interactions and compromise fairness. **Conflicting Work Styles** – Team members from different backgrounds may have varied approaches to problem-solving, collaboration, and feedback. Without effective management, these differences can cause tension.

Skill Area: Cultural Competence	
Question	**Answer**
	Lack of Inclusion – In the absence of an inclusive culture or strong leadership support, some team members may feel excluded or undervalued, affecting team cohesion and morale. **Concept of time** – different cultures often have varied relationships with time. For example, in many cultures being late to a meeting or event is considered normal whereas in other cultures it may be seen as rude and disrespectful to be late. Supporting different conceptions of time is important in fostering culturally inclusive workplaces.
3. Describe a workplace situation in the forest, paper and wood products industry where two colleagues use active listening to better understand each other. **Explain how their diverse backgrounds influence the situation.**	A well-developed response should include the following elements: • **Clear Context and Setting** Describe a realistic scenario relevant to the forest, paper and wood products industry – such as a site safety briefing, a forest operations planning meeting, or field-based problem-solving. The setting should reflect actual workplace conditions and tasks. • **Colleagues from Diverse Backgrounds** Identify two colleagues with different personal or professional backgrounds – for example: ▪ Cultural or linguistic background

Skill Area: Cultural Competence	
Question	**Answer**
	▪ Gender identity ▪ Age or generational cohort ▪ Educational or training experience ▪ Role within the organisation (e.g., operations worker vs. environmental planner) Briefly explain how these differences may shape their communication styles, perspectives, or assumptions. • **Use of Active Listening Techniques** Demonstrate how both colleagues engage in active listening. This may include: ▪ Asking open-ended or clarifying questions ▪ Reflecting or paraphrasing the other person's points ▪ Demonstrating empathy or withholding judgment ▪ Using positive body language and giving full attention Emphasise how these behaviours help them understand each other's views and reduce potential miscommunication. • **Positive Outcome or Resolution** Conclude with a practical benefit resulting from the use of active listening, such as:

Skill Area: Cultural Competence	
Question	**Answer**
	▪ Resolving a disagreement or misunderstanding ▪ Reaching a more informed decision ▪ Strengthening team collaboration ▪ Building mutual respect and trust The outcome should show how inclusive communication practices lead to a more productive and respectful workplace environment.

Skill Area: Empathy	
Question	**Answer**
1. Why is empathy considered a key component of emotional intelligence?	Empathy enables individuals to recognise, understand, and respond appropriately to the emotions of others. In a sector such as the forest, paper and wood products, empathetic individuals are better equipped to manage conflicts, support colleagues, and create inclusive environments. Ultimately fostering a greater gender balance within the sector. Emotional awareness is essential for effective leadership, teamwork, and collaboration, making empathy a foundational skill within emotional intelligence.
2. How can empathy support conflict resolution in the workplace?	Empathetic individuals listen without judgment, acknowledge different perspectives, and seek common ground, leading to respectful dialogue and lasting resolutions. When someone approaches a disagreement with empathy, they listen without judgment, acknowledge the other person's perspective, and seek common ground. This reduces defensiveness and opens the door to honest dialogue. As a result, conflicts are more likely to be resolved collaboratively and constructively, leading to lasting solutions and a more respectful, cohesive work environment.
3. Describe a situation within the forest, paper and wood products industry where	A well-developed response should incorporate the following key principles:

Skill Area: Empathy	
Question	**Answer**
colleagues from diverse backgrounds successfully navigated a difficult conversation through empathy – such as addressing bias, resolving team conflict, or rebuilding trust on a job site.	• **Clear Context and Setting** Begin with a realistic forest, paper and wood products industry scenario, for example: ▪ A conflict arising during harvesting operations ▪ A misunderstanding at a team planning meeting ▪ A disagreement during safety compliance checks The situation should be specific and grounded in typical forestry work environments. • **Nature of the Difficult Conversation** Clearly identify the focus of the conversation, such as: ▪ Responding to a biased or insensitive comment ▪ Managing tension between team members ▪ Addressing a breakdown in communication or trust Explain why the conversation was challenging and required a thoughtful response. • **Diversity of Backgrounds** Describe the differences between the colleagues involved. This may include: ▪ Cultural, ethnic, or linguistic backgrounds

Skill Area: Empathy	
Question	**Answer**
	▪ Gender or generational differences ▪ Varying professional roles or industry experience Explain how these differences may have influenced their perspectives or contributed to the issue at hand. • **Empathetic Behaviours Demonstrated** Detail how empathy was shown in the interaction, such as: ▪ Listening actively and without interruption ▪ Acknowledging the other person's feelings or point of view ▪ Using respectful, inclusive language ▪ Showing patience and openness to understanding Highlight specific actions or dialogue that demonstrate empathy in practice. • **Constructive Dialogue and Resolution** Describe how empathy helped to: ▪ De-escalate tension or conflict ▪ Clarify misunderstandings or intentions ▪ Reach a compromise or shared understanding

Skill Area: Empathy	
Question	**Answer**
	The outcome should reflect the positive impact of empathetic communication. • **Impact on Team and Work Environment** Explain how the experience contributed to broader improvements, such as: ▪ Strengthened working relationships ▪ Enhanced trust and morale ▪ Greater inclusiveness and team cohesion This underscores the long-term value of empathetic behaviour in diverse teams. • **Professional Tone and Industry Relevance** Ensure the scenario remains respectful, realistic, and aligned with the forest, paper and wood products industry's operational context. Avoid exaggerated or inappropriate examples.

Skill Area: Active Listening

Question	Answer
1. What are the differences between passive hearing and active listening?	Passive hearing and active listening differ in both intent and engagement: • **Passive hearing** is the disengaged act of listening to another person. It is without focused attention or processing what's being said. • **Active listening** is an intentional process. It involves fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and remembering what the speaker is communicating. It involves verbal and non-verbal cues like asking questions or summarising to confirm understanding. In short, passive hearing is simply noticing sound, while active listening is making a conscious effort to understand and engage with the message being shared.
2. How does active listening improve team performance and reduce conflict?	Active listening improves team performance and reduces conflict by fostering clear communication, mutual understanding, and trust among team members. When individuals listen attentively, without interrupting, judging, or assuming, they better understand each other's perspectives, which helps prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations that often lead to conflict. It also encourages team members to feel heard and valued, increasing engagement, collaboration, and morale.

Skill Area: Active Listening	
Question	**Answer**
	As a result, teams are more likely to work efficiently, resolve issues constructively, and achieve shared goals with fewer interpersonal obstacles.
3. Relay a short conversation between two colleagues in the forest, paper and wood products industry – one of whom is a woman in a non-traditional role – where they use active listening to better understand each other's perspectives on a workplace challenge.	A strong answer to this question should contain the following key principles: • **Clear Context and Setting** - establish the forest, paper and wood products industry setting (e.g., on a job site, during a team meeting, or in the office). Provide a workplace challenge that is relevant and specific to the industry (e.g., resource allocation, project deadlines, safety concerns, or implementing a new strategy). • **Diverse Colleague** - identify the colleagues involved, with one of them being a woman in a non-traditional role (e.g., a woman working as a forestry technician, logger, or in field operations). Concisely demonstrate how their roles or experiences may differ, which could influence their perspectives on the challenge. • **Use of Active Listening** - clearly show the principles of active listening, such as focus being given to the speaker, asking open-ended or clarifying questions to ensure understanding, paraphrasing to confirm understanding, and validating opinions respectfully.

Skill Area: Active Listening	
Question	**Answer**
	• **Constructive Dialogue** - describe how active listening allows the colleagues to share their perspectives openly and resolve the challenge collaboratively. The conversation moves towards mutual understanding and problem-solving. • **Professional Tone and Realism** - Maintain a professional tone suitable for the forest, paper and wood products industry while keeping the conversation grounded in real-life scenarios. Keep the dialogue realistic in terms of industry jargon, role responsibilities, and challenges.

Skill Area: Unconscious Bias Awareness	
Question	**Answer**
1. What is the impact of unconscious bias on workplace diversity and equity?	Unconscious bias can have a significant impact on workplace diversity and equity by influencing decisions and behaviours in subtle, often unnoticed ways. It can lead to favouritism toward certain groups and disadvantage others, despite intentions to be fair. For example, unconscious bias might affect hiring practices, promotions, or performance evaluations, where individuals from certain demographic groups are unfairly favoured or overlooked due to biases based on race, gender, age, or other characteristics. These groups are then less likely to join or remain in the workplace or sector.
2. What strategies can individuals and organisations use to mitigate unconscious bias?	To mitigate unconscious bias, both individuals and organisations can adopt various strategies that promote fairness, inclusivity, and objectivity. Here are some effective approaches: • **Training and Education** - Bias Awareness Training: Organisations can implement training programs to help employees recognise and understand unconscious bias and its impact on decision-making. • **Anti-racism training:** It equips staff and leaders with skills to identify, challenge, and prevent discriminatory behaviours or systems. • **Diverse Hiring and Promotion Practices** - Structured Interviews: Use standardised interview questions and evaluation criteria to ensure consistent

Skill Area: Unconscious Bias Awareness	
Question	**Answer**
	assessments of candidates. Diverse panels, ensure that hiring and promotion panels are diverse to balance out individual biases in decision-making. • **Implementing Objective Performance Metrics** - Clear, transparent metrics can reduce the potential gendered or other biases to impact workforce evaluations. • **Encouraging Feedback and Accountability** - Open feedback channels encourage employees to speak about instances where they feel bias may have influenced decisions. • **Accountability Systems** - Hold individuals and teams accountable for creating and maintaining inclusive practices. Leadership should actively model inclusive behaviours and encourage others to do the same.
3. **Describe a situation when an unconscious bias could adversely impact upon a female working in the forest, paper and wood products industry.**	A strong answer to this question should contain the following key principles: • **Context of the forest, paper and wood products Industry** - clearly define the setting within the industry (e.g., fieldwork, operations, leadership roles, or technical positions). Recognise the traditional gender dynamics in the industry, where it is often male dominated, which could lead to unconscious bias. • **Unconscious Bias Example** - identify a specific situation where unconscious bias may occur, such as assuming a female employee is less capable in physically

Skill Area: Unconscious Bias Awareness	
Question	**Answer**
	demanding tasks. Overlooking a female for leadership or advancement opportunities due to assumptions about her commitment or ability to manage specific work environments. • **Impact on the Female Employee** - explain the negative consequences of the unconscious bias, such as, reduced opportunities, she may be passed over for important assignments, leadership roles, or promotions due to bias. • **Professional Tone and Realism** - keep the situation realistic and grounded in actual challenges faced by women in the industry, ensuring the response is professional and relatable.

Skill Area: Inclusive Communication

Question	Answer
1. **Why is inclusive communication essential for fostering a diverse and respectful workplace?**	Inclusive communication is essential because it ensures everyone feels heard and respected. In a workplace that includes potentially hazardous situations it strengthens communication and promotes collaboration; this facilitates people of different genders participating equally in all tasks. And creates a workplace where diversity drives innovation and success.
2. **What role does language play in creating either an inclusive or exclusive environment?**	Language plays a key role in shaping an environment, inclusive language welcomes and respects all individuals, while exclusive language can alienate or marginalise people. The words we choose build belonging or reinforce bias and division.
3. **Give three examples of inclusive communication within the forest, paper and wood products industry aimed at better incorporating women into the workforce.**	Inclusive communication examples: • **Gender-neutral terminology** – using inclusive language like “forestry professionals” instead of or “woodsmen,” using they/them instead of him/her when talking generally about daily tasks. • **Highlighting female role models** – publicly acknowledging achievements of females in the sector to normalise their presence in the industry and highlight their contributions.

Skill Area: Inclusive Communication	
Question	**Answer**
	• **Inclusive training and safety materials** – designing materials that reflect diverse experiences and use imagery and language that represent both men and women equally.

Skill Area: Conflict Resolution

Question	Answer
1. What are the key principles of respectful and productive workplace conflict resolution?	Principles include: • **Active listening** - Give full attention to all parties, listen without interrupting, and seek to understand their perspectives before responding. • **Open and honest communication** - encourage respectful dialogue where individuals express their thoughts clearly and professionally, without blame or hostility. • **Focus on the issue, not the person** - address the specific problem or behaviour without making it personal, helping to avoid defensiveness and escalation. • **Seek common ground** - identify shared goals or interests to guide the conversation toward a collaborative and mutually acceptable solution. • **Stay solution-focused** - keep the focus on finding practical, forward-looking solutions rather than dwelling on past grievances or assigning blame. • **Maintain professionalism** - approach the conflict calmly and respectfully, preserving a positive work environment and setting a constructive tone.

Skill Area: Conflict Resolution	
Question	**Answer**
2. How can personal differences and biases influence conflict escalation?	Personal differences and biases can significantly influence conflict escalation by shaping how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to situations. When people have different values, communication styles, cultural backgrounds, or work approaches, misunderstandings can easily arise. If these differences are filtered through unconscious biases, such as assumptions about someone's competence, intent, or attitude – people may react emotionally or defensively without fully understanding the other person's perspective. Biases can also lead to unfair judgments or favouritism, which can make others feel excluded or disrespected, further intensifying conflict. For example, someone might dismiss a colleague's input based on gender, age, or background, causing the affected person to feel undervalued or retaliate.

Skill Area: Conflict Resolution

Question	Answer
3. Describe a situation where you successfully managed conflict that began with an unconscious bias against a female colleague in the forest, paper and wood products industry. **Describe if and how you would acknowledge the role of the unconscious bias in the conflict.**	A strong answer to this question should contain the following key principles: • **Clear and relevant context** - set the scene within the industry, such as fieldwork, planning, operations, or safety meetings. Identify the specific role of the female colleague, especially if it's a non-traditional role (e.g., field supervisor, equipment operator). • **Conflict triggered by unconscious bias** - describe the source of the conflict clearly (e.g., dismissive behaviour, questioning her competence, excluding her from a task). Demonstrate that the bias was unconscious, not overt discrimination. • **Recognition and acknowledgment of the bias** - clearly state whether and how the unconscious bias was acknowledged - either by you, the person displaying it, or both. • Include how recognising the bias helped change the tone of the conversation. • **Restoration of respect and collaboration** - describe how the situation was resolved positively, such as with improved understanding between colleagues, greater respect for the female colleague's expertise, and/or a change in behaviour or attitude from those involved.

Skill Area: Conflict Resolution	
Question	**Answer**
	• **Professional and reflective tone** - keep the tone professional, respectful, and grounded in the forest, paper and wood products sector. Avoid exaggeration or assigning blame and focus on growth and constructive action.

Skill Area: Adaptability

Question	Answer
1. **What is the relationship between adaptability and inclusion in rapidly changing work environments?**	Adaptability and inclusion are closely linked in changing work environments. Adaptability allows individuals and teams to adjust to new challenges, while inclusion ensures diverse perspectives are valued, fostering creativity and collaboration. In fast-evolving workplaces, adaptable employees are more open to change, and inclusive environments help everyone feel supported and engaged. Together, they increase resilience, enhance problem-solving, and ensure that no one is left behind during transitions, leading to better outcomes for both individuals and the organisation.
2. **Why might people resist change, and how can this resistance be managed?**	Possible answers as to why people might resist change include: • **Fear of the unknown:** change often brings uncertainty, and people may feel anxious about how it will affect their roles, responsibilities, or job security. • **Comfort with the status quo:** people are often comfortable with familiar routines and may resist change because it disrupts their established way of working. • **Lack of trust:** if employees don't trust the leadership or the reasons behind the change, they may resist it, believing it won't be in their best interest. • **Perceived loss:** people may resist if they feel the change will lead to a loss of control, status, or opportunities.

Skill Area: Adaptability	
Question	**Answer**
	Examples of ways to manage resistance include: • **Clear Communication:** communicate the reasons for the change, the benefits, and the expected outcomes to reduce uncertainty and build trust. • **Involvement and empowerment:** involve employees in the change process, gather feedback, and make them feel part of the solution. • **Training and support:** provide resources, training, and support to help employees adjust to the new changes and feel confident in their ability to succeed. • **Address concerns:** actively listen to concerns, acknowledge feelings, and offer solutions or compromises where possible.

Skill Area: Adaptability

Question	Answer
3. Give three examples of adapting workplace behaviour and/or processes to better incorporate women into the forest, paper and wood products industry. Why would each of these adaptations would positively impact diversity?	A strong answer to this question should contain the following key principles: • **Examples of adaptations** - clearly provide three practical examples of adaptations, focusing on workplace behaviour or processes that specifically support female inclusion in the industry. For example, creating inclusive recruitment and promotion practices (e.g., ensuring gender-neutral job descriptions and diverse hiring panels). • **Adjusting physical requirements** (e.g., modifying certain job roles or providing equipment that accommodates all genders). Developing mentorship programs (e.g., pairing female employees with mentors to provide support and career development in a male-dominated field). • **Positive impact on diversity** - for each example, explain how the adaptation positively influences diversity in the workplace. For instance, inclusive recruitment increases gender balance by encouraging more women to apply and ensuring they are considered fairly for roles. Adjusting physical requirements ensures women are not unintentionally excluded due to physical standards that may be biased towards male body types, increasing equal opportunity. Mentorship programs provide a support network, fostering a sense of inclusion, growth, and confidence among women in the industry.

Skill Area: Adaptability	
Question	**Answer**
	• **Realistic and relevant examples** - ensure the examples are feasible and relevant to the industry, considering both practicalities and the current work culture in this sector.

Skill Area: Teamwork & Collaboration	
Question	**Answer**
1. How does diversity enhance team collaboration and innovation?	Diversity enhances team collaboration and innovation by bringing together different perspectives, experiences, and problem-solving approaches. When people from various backgrounds (e.g., gender, cultural, educational, or professional) work together, they approach challenges with unique viewpoints, which fosters creative thinking. This diversity of ideas encourages innovative solutions that might not arise in a more homogenous group. In terms of team collaboration, diversity promotes a broader range of skills and strengths within the group. By learning from each other and respecting different viewpoints, team members are exposed to new ideas broadening their skills base.
2. What challenges might diverse teams face, and how can they be overcome?	**Communication Barriers:** • **Challenge:** Differences in language, communication styles, or cultural norms can lead to misunderstandings or ineffective communication. • **Solution:** Encourage open and clear communication by promoting active listening, providing language support if needed, and fostering an environment where team members feel comfortable asking questions and clarifying information.

Skill Area: Teamwork & Collaboration	
Question	**Answer**
	Conflicting Work Styles • **Challenge:** Team members from different cultural or professional backgrounds may have varied approaches to work, such as decision-making speed, structure, or collaboration preferences. • **Solution:** Establish clear team goals, define roles and responsibilities, and agree on processes early on. Team-building activities and open discussions about work preferences can help align expectations. **Unconscious Bias** • **Challenge:** Team members might unintentionally favour others based on personal biases, leading to exclusion or unequal treatment. • **Solution:** Implement diversity and inclusion training to raise awareness of unconscious bias. Encourage behaviours that promote inclusion, such as rotating leadership roles and ensuring fair opportunities for everyone. **Resistance to Different Perspectives** • **Challenge:** Some team members may feel uncomfortable or defensive when confronted with perspectives that differ from their own.

Skill Area: Teamwork & Collaboration	
Question	**Answer**
	• **Solution:** Foster a culture of respect where differing viewpoints are valued. Encourage constructive debates and create a safe space for expressing diverse opinions. **Cultural Misunderstandings** • **Challenge:** Cultural differences can lead to misinterpretation of actions, behaviours, or intentions. For example, different cultures have varied relationships with time. In some, punctuality is essential. In others, arriving late is normal and not considered disrespectful. Without awareness of these differences, misunderstandings and tension can arise in the workplace. • **Solution:** Promote cultural awareness through training and learning opportunities, encouraging team members to appreciate and understand cultural differences. **Decision-Making Delays** • **Challenge:** Diverse teams may take longer to make decisions due to differing approaches or the need to consider multiple perspectives.

Skill Area: Teamwork & Collaboration	
Question	**Answer**
	• **Solution:** Set clear decision-making processes and ensure that all voices are heard efficiently while avoiding over-complication.
3. Relay two examples of how teamwork can be used to facilitate greater gender diversity within the forest, paper and wood products industry. Take one example from a manually laborious task and one from a managerial task.	A strong answer to this question should contain the following key principles: • **Clear industry relevant examples** - Include one example involving manual labour (e.g., tree planting, harvesting, or equipment handling). Include one example involving a managerial task (e.g., project planning, team leadership, or policy development). • **Teamwork as the enabler** - Show how teamwork supports gender diversity in each scenario. This might include, sharing physical tasks or rotating duties to allow equitable participation. Collaborative decision-making that values diverse input. Mentorship and peer support that builds confidence and skills. • **Addressing barriers to inclusion** - Acknowledge challenges women might face in a male-dominated industry (e.g., assumptions about physical capability or leadership potential). Show how team collaboration can overcome these barriers by promoting respect, inclusion, and equal contribution. • **Positive impact on gender diversity** - Explain how the teamwork approach leads to better outcomes for inclusion, such as increased participation of women in

Skill Area: Teamwork & Collaboration	
Question	**Answer**
	fieldwork or decision-making roles. Greater respect and cohesion within mixed-gender teams. Development of a culture that supports equity and values all contributions. • **Professional and constructive tone** - Maintain a tone that is realistic, inclusive, and solution-focused.

Skill Area: Leadership Differences

Question	Answer
1. What qualities define an inclusive leader, and why are they important in diverse environments?	An inclusive leader is someone who actively creates a work environment where all team members feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute. Key qualities that define an inclusive leader include: • **Empathy** – understanding and appreciating others' perspectives helps build trust and psychological safety. • **Self-awareness** – recognising personal biases and working to manage them enables fairer decision-making. • **Openness** – being receptive to diverse viewpoints and encouraging constructive dialogue promotes innovation. • **Cultural competence** – respecting and adapting to different cultural norms and communication styles strengthens team cohesion. • **Fairness** – ensuring equal opportunities for all team members fosters engagement and motivation. • **Active listening** – paying full attention and validating input from everyone helps ensure all voices are heard.

Skill Area: Leadership Differences	
Question	**Answer**
2. How can leaders ensure equity in decision-making and team development?	Leaders can ensure equity in decision-making and team development by applying the following key practices: • **Involve diverse voices** - Include team members from different backgrounds, roles, and experiences in discussions and decisions to ensure a wide range of perspectives are considered. Do this in a way that avoids isolating individuals; promoting safety through participation of multiple individuals from underrepresented groups. • **Establish transparent criteria** - use clear, consistent criteria for promotions, assignments, and evaluations to minimise bias and ensure fair treatment. • **Monitor representation** - regularly review team composition, leadership pipelines, and participation in key projects to identify and address gaps in equity. • **Offer equal access to opportunities** - ensure all team members have access to training, mentorship, stretch assignments, and leadership development programs. • **Encourage open feedback** - create a culture where team members feel safe giving and receiving feedback and use it to adjust practices that may unintentionally exclude or disadvantage others.

Skill Area: Leadership Differences	
Question	**Answer**
	• **Lead by example** - model inclusive and equitable behaviour, showing that fairness and inclusion are priorities in both words and actions. • **Cultural load of diverse peoples** - asking individuals repeatedly to represent their community or culture in workplace activities, can lead to fatigue, stress, or burnout. This needs to be acknowledged and managed carefully so participation is equitable and people are not overburdened.
3. **Imagine you are leading a diverse team in the forest, paper and wood products industry.** **How would you ensure that everyone's perspective is heard and valued during a team discussion?**	Incorporate the following practices: • **Create a safe and respectful environment** - foster a culture of psychological safety, where team members feel comfortable speaking up without fear of judgment or backlash. Set ground rules that encourage respectful dialogue and discourage interrupting or dismissive behaviour. • **Use inclusive communication strategies** - actively invite input from all team members, especially those who may be quieter or underrepresented (e.g., women in field roles or culturally diverse workers). Use open-ended questions to draw out different perspectives. Avoid jargon or assumptions that may exclude people with varying levels of experience or language backgrounds.

Skill Area: Leadership Differences	
Question	**Answer**
	• **Structure the discussion to encourage participation** - implement techniques to ensure everyone has a chance to contribute. • **Acknowledge and validate contributions** - actively listen and show appreciation for each person's input. • **Be aware of and address biases** - monitor your own behaviour and that of others for unconscious bias (e.g., interrupting women more often, overlooking quieter team members). Intervene constructively if certain voices are being dominated or dismissed. • **Follow through on feedback** - demonstrate that input is not just heard but valued by incorporating it into decisions where appropriate and giving credit where it's due.

Skill Area: Emotional Intelligence (EI)	
Question	**Answer**
1. How does emotional intelligence contribute to effective communication and leadership?	Leaders with strong EI understand their own emotional triggers and communication style, allowing them to express themselves clearly and calmly, even under pressure. Empathetic leaders can recognise and relate to the emotions and perspectives of their team members, fostering trust and mutual respect. EI helps leaders manage their emotional reactions, which is essential in maintaining professionalism and setting a positive tone, especially during conflict or high-stress situations. Leaders with EI build strong interpersonal relationships, listen actively, resolve conflicts effectively, and encourage collaboration. Emotionally intelligent leaders inspire and influence others through positive reinforcement, resilience, and a shared sense of purpose.
2. What are two of the core elements of emotional intelligence, and how do they impact workplace relationships?	Two core elements of emotional intelligence are empathy and self-awareness, and both have a significant impact on workplace relationships. • **Empathy** is the ability to understand and relate to the emotions and perspectives of others. In the workplace, it helps build trust, strengthens collaboration, and reduces misunderstandings. Empathetic employees and leaders are more likely to resolve conflicts calmly and supportively, leading to healthier and more inclusive work relationships. • **Self-awareness** is the understanding of one's own emotions, strengths, and behaviour. It allows individuals to recognise how their actions affect others and to

Skill Area: Emotional Intelligence (EI)	
Question	**Answer**
	adjust their communication accordingly. This awareness fosters respectful interactions, reduces emotional outbursts, and promotes accountability – key ingredients for strong, respectful workplace dynamics.

Exercise

Assessing Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Skills

1. Refer to Attachment C: Checklist for Assessing Diversity and Inclusion Skills.
2. Apply a suggested question to each skill area.

Checklist for Inclusive Training Delivery

This tool can be used to evaluate current practices and identify opportunities to strengthen inclusion throughout training delivery.

- ☐ Are enrolment materials free from gendered and culturally biased language?
- ☐ Are training resources reflective of a diverse workforce?
- ☐ Are all learners encouraged and supported to participate equally, regardless of their gender, cultural identity, or background?
- ☐ Are reasonable adjustments offered to accommodate a range of learner needs, including language support, cultural practices, and accessibility requirements?
- ☐ Are examples, images and case studies gender-balanced and representative of relevant cultures and workplace contexts?
- ☐ Are trainers trained in cultural competency and gender diversity awareness to ensure respectful, inclusive delivery and engagement?

6. Embedding Diversity and Inclusion in Training Package Development

Overview

This section provides practical guidance for embedding diversity and inclusion in the development of training package products, in line with national quality assurance and compliance requirements in vocational education and training (VET). It is intended to support training package developers, including Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs), responsible for:

- Aligning training products and companion volumes with national equity and quality standards
- Preparing submissions for assurance and endorsement.

The guidance addresses compliance requirements under anti-discrimination legislation and the Training Package Organising Framework and outlines how to integrate inclusive practices across training package components – from unit design to assessment requirements and companion volumes.

Meeting Equity and Anti-Discrimination Requirements

Training package developers, specifically JSCs, must ensure that all endorsed and non-endorsed components are designed to promote equity and prevent discrimination. This requirement aligns with the Training Package Organising Framework (TPOF), which includes the Training Package Products Development, Endorsement Process Policy (TPPDEPP), Training Package Products Policy (TPPP) and the Standards for Training Packages. Training products must not, in any form, directly or indirectly discriminate against any individual or group.

All training products must comply with Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws including:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Age Discrimination Act 2004.

Developers must also provide documentation to the Assurance Body that demonstrates how inclusive design principles and legislations have been applied and validated throughout the development process. Submission evidence should clearly reference how inclusive approaches were integrated – from stakeholder consultation to final product review.

See attachments:

- D. Summary of Standards and Policies for Inclusive Training Package Design which includes applicable anti-discrimination legislation and its relevance to the development of training packages.
- E. The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and Its Interplay with the State and Territory Acts.

Key Practices for Inclusive Training Design

All components of training products – including units of competency, assessment requirements, and qualifications – must enable access and participation by learners of all genders, backgrounds and abilities. To support inclusive training package development, the developers should consider the following practices:

- Use gender-inclusive and respectful, contemporary language (e.g., 'person with disability')
- Avoid role-based assumptions traditionally linked to specific genders in unit descriptions, performance evidence, or workplace scenarios
- Design non-discriminatory assessment requirements, allowing for reasonable adjustments and multiple demonstrations of competence
- Create qualifications that offer flexible and accessible pathways for all learners
- Embed inclusive practices and learner support strategies for training providers in companion volumes, including examples and scenarios reflecting gender-diverse participation in forest, paper and wood products roles.

Supporting Inclusive Delivery through Companion Volumes

Companion Volumes play an important role in supporting inclusive training and assessment. They should offer clear, practical advice to RTOs on delivering inclusive training and assessment.

To support this, developers should ensure Companion Volumes:

- Provide clear guidance on addressing access and equity considerations in training delivery and assessment
- Include real-world examples that reflect gender and cultural diversity in workplace contexts
- Recommend approaches for making reasonable adjustments to accommodate diverse learner needs
- Offer advice on using inclusive language, terminology, and visual representation in learning resources.

Conclusion

Embedding gender and diversity inclusion in training package development is not just a compliance requirement, it is a strategic approach to developing a future-focussed workforce. It strengthens the relevance, accessibility, and quality of training products and ensures that all learners, regardless of background, can participate fully and equitably in the forest, paper and wood products industry.

Checklist for Gender and Culturally Inclusive Advice in Companion Volumes and Equity Considerations in Vocational Education and Training

Companion Volumes should include the following elements to support inclusive training and assessment practices across gender and cultural backgrounds:

- ☐ **Inclusive Language Guide**: Recommendations for using language that is respectful, non-gendered, and culturally appropriate in both delivery and assessment contexts.
- ☐ **Case Studies:** Examples that reflect the participation and experiences of women, gender-diverse individuals, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in forest, paper and wood products roles.
- ☐ **Reasonable Adjustment Tips:** Advice on adapting training and assessment methods to accommodate diverse learner needs, including those related to gender, culture, language, and learning preferences.
- ☐ **Resources Section:** List of inclusive tools, training modules, and support services that promote equity, cultural safety, and diversity in learning environments.

Exercise

Embedding Diversity and Inclusion in Training Package Development

Provide examples of how to incorporate the following Companion Volume points into training and assessment practices:

- Access and equity considerations in training delivery and assessment
- Examples that reflect gender and cultural diversity in workplace contexts
- Approaches for making reasonable adjustments to accommodate diverse learner needs
- Use of inclusive language, terminology, and visual representation in learning resources.

Attachments

A. Gender-Neutral Alternatives to Gendered Words

Here are a few examples of the types of words that may be common in the forest, paper and wood products industry workplaces, as well as alternatives to use instead.

Common Workplace Term	Inclusive Alternative(s)
He/she	They
Bushman	Field worker, forestry field operator
Woodsman	Forestry worker
Bush foreman	Field supervisor
Chainsaw man	Chainsaw operator
Timberman	Timber worker
Draftsman	Draftsperson, designer
Leading hand	Team leader
Linesman (in sawmills)	Production lie operator
Yardman	Yard worker, yard operator
Businessman	Businessperson, business representative
Chairman/Chairwoman	Chairperson, chair
Foreman	Foreperson
Craftsman	Artisan
Salesman	Salesperson
Handyman	Maintenance person
Weatherman	Meteorologist
Manpower	Workforce, workers
Manned	Crewed
Fireman	Firefighter
Man-made	Synthetic

B. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Australia - Compliance Checklist

1. Perceivable

Ensure users can perceive the information presented.

Requirement	What to Do
Text Alternatives	Provide alternative text for all images, icons, and non-text content.
Time-based Media	Provide captions for videos, transcripts for audio, and audio descriptions for video content.
Content Adaptability	Use semantic HTML to allow content to adapt for assistive technologies.
Contrast Ratio	Ensure text has a contrast ratio of **at least 4.5:1** (normal text) or **3:1** (large text).
Resize Text	Content should be readable when resized up to **200%** without loss of content/functionality.
Images of Text	Avoid using images of text, unless essential.
Orientation	Content should work in both **portrait and landscape** orientation.

2. Operable

Make interface components usable via multiple input methods.

Requirement	What to Do
Keyboard Accessible	Ensure all functions are accessible using a **keyboard only**.
No Keyboard Trap	Keyboard users can move into and out of components easily.
Enough Time	Allow users to extend, adjust, or turn off time limits.
Seizures	Avoid content that flashes more than **3 times per second**.
Navigable	Use clear and consistent navigation, including: • Meaningful page titles • Clear headings and labels • Multiple ways to navigate (search, sitemap, menu)
Visible Focus	Ensure visible keyboard focus indicators (e.g., outlines when tabbing).

3. Understandable

Information and operation should be clear and predictable.

Requirement	What to Do
Readable Language	Use plain English. Avoid jargon or explain it clearly.
Consistent Navigation	Keep navigation in the same location and order on every page.
Input Assistance	Provide helpful labels, instructions, and error messages on forms.
Error Prevention	Confirm or validate important actions (like submitting forms).

4. Robust

Maximise compatibility with current and future technologies.

Requirement	What to Do
Valid Code	Use valid, semantic HTML/CSS and ARIA (Accessible Rich Internet Applications) attributes correctly.
Name, Role, Value	UI components must expose names, roles, and values to assistive tech.
Status Messages	Ensure dynamic content changes (e.g., form errors, updates) are announced by screen readers.[5]

[5] Australian Public Service Academy (2025). *WCAG 2.2 AA Checklist*. [online] Available at: https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/resources/wcag-22-aa-checklist [Accessed 25 Aug. 2025].

C. Checklist for Assessing Diversity and Inclusion Skills

Select a question from the table and comment on the candidate's understanding.

These sample questions are in Section 4 of this Guide. Possible answers and reflections are also provided in this section. See also Section 3 for Forestry and Wood Product Units of Competency (UoC).

Skill area	Assessment questions	Examples of means of assessment	Candidates understanding assessment
Cultural Competency	Q1: How does cultural competence influence team collaboration and morale?	A1: Identifies specific ways cultural competence improves communication.	
	Q2: What are some common challenges when working in a diverse team?	A2: Recognises key challenges.	
	Q3: Describe a workplace situation in the forest, paper and wood products industry where two colleagues use active listening to better understand each other. Explain how their diverse backgrounds influence the situation.	A3: Explains how specific skills shape interactions.	

Skill area	Assessment questions	Examples of means of assessment	Candidates understanding assessment
Empathy	Q1: Why is empathy considered a key component of emotional intelligence?	A1: Connects empathy to key emotional intelligence skills.	
	Q2: How can empathy support conflict resolution in the workplace?	A2: Explains how empathetic responses can de-escalate conflict.	
	Q3: Describe a situation within the forest, paper and wood products industry where colleagues from diverse backgrounds successfully navigated a difficult conversation through empathy such as addressing bias, resolving team conflict or rebuilding trust on a job site.	A3: Highlights how empathy was demonstrated.	
Active Listening	Q1: What are the differences between passive hearing and active hearing?	A1: Highlights key features of active listening and demonstrates contrast with passive hearing	

Skill area	Assessment questions	Examples of means of assessment	Candidates understanding assessment
	Q2: How does active listening improve team performance and reduce conflict?	A2: Explains how active listening builds understanding and a cohesive workplace.	
	Q3: Relay a short conversation between two colleagues in the forest, paper and wood products industry – one of whom is a woman in a non-traditional role – where they use active listening to better understand each other's perspective on a workplace challenge.	A3: Reflects on how gender and role dynamics influence the interaction.	
Unconscious Bias Awareness	Q1: What is the impact of unconscious bias on workplace diversity and equity?	A1: Explains how unconscious bias influences decision-making.	
	Q2: What strategies can individuals and organisations use to mitigate unconscious bias?	A2: Identifies practical strategies for mitigating unconscious bias.	

Skill area	Assessment questions	Examples of means of assessment	Candidates understanding assessment
	Q3: Describe a situation when an unconscious bias could adversely impact upon a female working in the forest, paper and wood products industry.	A3: Explains how the unconscious bias negatively impacts the individual.	
Inclusive Communication	Q1: Why is inclusive communication essential for fostering a diverse and respectful workplace?	A1: Effectively explains how inclusive communication promotes diversity and inclusion.	
	Q2: What role does language play in creating either an inclusive or exclusive environment?	A2: Identifies how language can empower or marginalise people.	
	Q3: Give three examples of inclusive communication within the forest, paper and wood products industry aimed at better incorporating women into the workforce.	A3: Provides relevant examples of inclusive communications.	

Skill area	Assessment questions	Examples of means of assessment	Candidates understanding assessment
Conflict Resolution	Q1: What are the key principles of respectful and productive workplace conflict resolution?	A1: Demonstrates understanding of respect and productive workplace relationships.	
	Q2: How can personal differences and biases influence conflict escalation?	A2: Describes how cultural and/or gender differences may affect conflict.	
	Q3: Describe a situation where you successfully managed conflict that began with an unconscious bias against a female colleague in the forest, paper and wood products industry. Describe if and how you would acknowledge the role of the unconscious bias in the conflict.	A3: Demonstrates understating of the role of unconscious bias and presents relevant reasons on why or why not it should be directly confronted.	
Adaptability	Q1: What is the relationship between adaptability and inclusion in rapidly changing work environments?	A1: Explains how adaptability enables inclusive responses to evolving workplaces	

Skill area	Assessment questions	Examples of means of assessment	Candidates understanding assessment
	Q2: Why might people resist change and how can this resistance be managed?	A2: Identifies common reasons for resistance and strategies for managing it.	
	Q3: Give three examples of adapting workplace behaviour and/or processes to better incorporate women into the forest, paper and wood products industry. Why would each of these adaptations positively impact diversity?	A3: Gives examples and effectively demonstrates their relevance.	
Teamwork and Collaboration	Q1: How does diversity enhance team collaboration and innovation?	A1: Demonstrates how diversity can improve teamwork and innovation.	
	Q2: What challenges might diverse teams face and how can they be overcome?	A2: Identifies challenges and reasonable solutions.	

Skill area	Assessment questions	Examples of means of assessment	Candidates understanding assessment
	Q3: Relay two examples of how teamwork can be used to facilitate greater gender diversity within forest, paper and wood products industry. Take one example from a manually laborious task and one from a managerial task.	A3: Provides relevant examples and demonstrates understanding of the benefits of teamwork.	
Leadership Differences	Q1: What qualities define an inclusive leader and why are they important in diverse environments?	A1: Identifies qualities of inclusive leadership and how they are linked to a positive work environment.	
	Q2: How can leaders ensure equity in decision-making and team development?	A2: Identifies key ways leaders can make equitable decisions	
	Q3: Imagine you are leading a diverse team in the forest, paper and wood products industry. How would you ensure that everyone's perspective is	A3: Provides relevant examples and strategies for creating an inclusive environment.	

Skill area	Assessment questions	Examples of means of assessment	Candidates understanding assessment
	heard and valued during a team discussion?		
Emotional Intelligence	Q1: How does emotional intelligence contribute to effective communication and leadership?	A1: Identifies links between emotional intelligence and effective communication and leadership.	
	Q2: What are two core elements of emotional intelligence and how do they impact workplace relationships?	A2: Identifies relevant examples and links them to workplace relationships.	
	Q3: Provide an example of when emotional intelligence would help manage an interpersonal issue in the forest, paper and wood products industry.	A3: Provides relevant examples and demonstrates understanding of the impact of emotional intelligence.	

D. Summary of Standards and Policies for Inclusive Training Package Design

Overview

This attachment summarises key national standards and policies relevant to gender and diversity inclusion in training packages.

The interrelationship between equity principles and vocational education and training (VET) standards are addressed in the Training Package Assurance Submission Compliance Guide, which discusses Quality Principles and all of the standards and the Training Package Products Policy (TPPP).

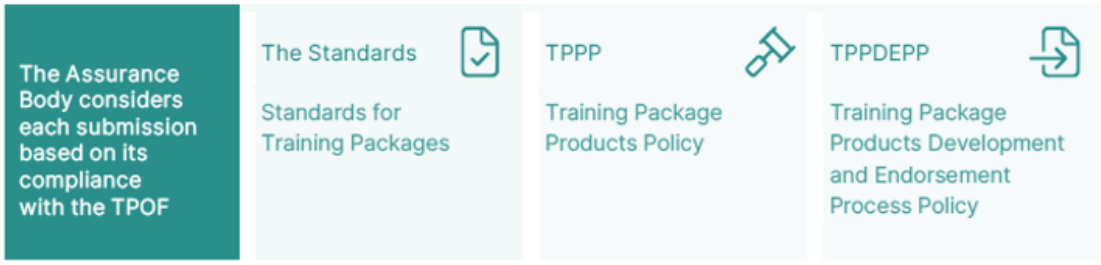
The Training Product Submission (the submission) information described at Section 7: step 5.1 Submission of draft training products to the Assurance Body in the Training Package Products Development and Endorsement Process Policy (TPPDEPP) outlines the necessary information required by the Assurance Body to assess and determine compliance with the Training Package Organising Framework (TPOF).

This Compliance Guide (Guide) provides Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) with information about how the Assurance Body will review the submission. JSCs may use this Guide when preparing a submission, noting that the examples of evidence provided are only a guide and not intended to be an exhaustive list. Each submission will be different depending on the scope of the activity, the depth and breadth of consultation activities, and the number and type of products being submitted for assurance. The submission is an opportunity for JSCs to describe the processes that were applied to develop the products and how the products themselves comply with the requirements of the TPOF.[6]

[6] Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2025). *Training Package Assurance – Approach to Assurance*. [online] Available at: https://www.dewr.gov.au/training-package-assurance/resources/training-package-assurance-approach-assurance [Accessed 25 Aug. 2025].

Purpose of Reporting Against the Quality Principles

The TPOF is made up of three intersecting and complementary standards and policy documents that support the development of quality training package products.



The Training Package Quality Principles (Quality Principles), described in Section 5 of the TPPDEPP, set out the purpose of training package products and their role in meeting the needs of industry, learners and the economy. The submission form is mapped to one or more of the six Quality Principles and their associated Key Features.

In turn, each Quality Principle and the evidence required to demonstrate compliance has been mapped to The Standards and the TPPP. This ensures that the Assurance Body's determination of compliance against the Quality Principles finds compliance against the TPOF in its entirety.

Assurance Body Anti-Discrimination Assessment

The Assurance Body will look at the anti-discrimination assessment provided to ensure the products have been assessed against anti-discrimination legislation, and associated standards and regulations.

The anti-discrimination assessment will be examined to determine the process used to complete the assessment, the expertise of those involved in the assessment, any consultation undertaken in conducting the assessment and how feedback was incorporated into the draft products submitted.

What This Means for JSC Products

The JSC needs to assess the draft training package products to ensure the products are consistent with anti-discrimination legislation. The process taken to complete the assessment, detail about the person or people who completed the assessment (including an outline of their skills and experience), and the outcome of the assessment needs to be documented and provided to the Assurance Body in the submission.

During the initial design and development of a training package product, it is important that the JSC considers inclusiveness and the needs of diverse learners and does not directly or indirectly discriminate against certain groups, including those with disability. Indirect

discrimination is where a person is disadvantaged or must comply with a condition, requirement or practice but they are not able to, or it is not reasonable to.

The products should incorporate contemporary language, for example, people/person with a disability, rather than special or additional needs, consider how the delivery of training may be supported through reasonable adjustments when creating assessment requirements, particularly performance evidence, and consider what terms are appropriate for their sector i.e., client, person, individual.

The anti-discrimination assessment should address how the training package products have been reviewed against the Age Discrimination Act 2004, Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Disability Standards for Education 2005, Racial Discrimination Act 1975, and Sex Discrimination Act 1984. The protected attributes broadly cover discrimination including race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, relationship status, religion, age and disability (physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disability).[7]

[7] Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2025). *Training Package Assurance – Approach to Assurance*. [online] Available at: https://www.dewr.gov.au/training-package-assurance/resources/training-package-assurance-approach-assurance [Accessed 25 Aug. 2025].

Training Packages – Products Standards

The purpose of the Standards for Training Packages is to ensure Training Packages are of high quality and meet the workforce development needs of industry, enterprises and individuals.

The Standards for Training Packages apply to the design and development of Training Packages for endorsement consideration by Skills Ministers.

Training Packages: Standard 1

Standard 1: Training Packages consist of the following Skills Ministers endorsed components:

- Units of competency
- Assessment requirements (associated with each unit of competency)
- Qualifications and
- Credit arrangements.

Non-endorsed components which include one or more quality assured companion volume implementation guides and skill sets.

Training Packages Policy: Standards 2 and 3

- **Standard 2**: Training Package developers comply with the *Training Package Products Policy*.
- **Standard 3**: Training Package developers comply with the Training Package Products Development and Endorsement Process Policy.

Training Packages Components Units of Competency: Standards 4 and 5

- **Standard 4**: Units of competency specify the standards of performance required in the workplace.
- **Standard 5**: The structure of units of competency complies with the unit of competency template.

Assessment Requirements: Standards 6 and 7

- **Standard 6**: Assessment requirements specify the evidence and required conditions for assessment.

- **Standard 7**: Every unit of competency has associated assessment requirements. The structure of assessment requirements complies with the assessment requirements template.

Qualifications: Standards 8 and 9

- **Standard 8**: Qualifications comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework specification for that qualification type.
- **Standard 9**: The structure of the information for the Australian Qualifications Framework qualification complies with the qualification template.

Credit Arrangements: Standard 10

Standard 10: Credit arrangements existing between Training Package qualifications and Higher Education qualifications are listed in a format that complies with the credit arrangements template.

Companion Volumes: Standards 11 and 12

- **Standard 11**: A quality assured companion volume implementation guide produced by the Training Package developer is available at the time of endorsement and complies with the companion volume implementation guide template.
- **Standard 12**: Training Package developers produce other quality assured companion volumes to meet the needs of their stakeholders as required.

Best practices and Recommendations Against Training Package Standards

Training Packages: Standard 1

- Units of competency, assessment requirements, qualifications and credit arrangements that are non-discriminatory, flexible and apply to a range of workplace performance requirements
- Non-endorsed components which include one or more quality assured companion volume implementation guides that provide more industry specific contextualized information about equity principles.

Training Packages Policy: Standards 2 and 3

Reflect national agreement about core transferable skills and core job specific skills for roles identified by the industry in a non-discriminatory manner.

Training Packages Components: Standards 4 and 5

Units of Competency specify the standards of performance required in the workplace in a manner that is non-discriminatory and encapsulates flexible delivery and transferability principles.

Assessment Requirements: Standards 6 and 7

Assessment requirements specify the evidence and required conditions for assessment in a manner that doesn't impose barriers, is non-discriminatory and encapsulates flexible delivery and transferability principles.

Qualifications: Standards 8 and 9

Qualifications comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework specification for that qualification type and are specified in a manner that doesn't impose barriers, is non-discriminatory and encapsulates flexible delivery and transferability principles.

Credit Arrangements: Standard 10

Wherever possible highlight credit arrangements that exist between Training Package qualifications and Higher Education qualifications.

Companion Volumes: Standards 11 and 12

Non-endorsed components which include one or more quality assured companion volume implementation guides that provide more industry specific contextualised information about equity principles.

Jobs and Skills Australia Gender Framework

The Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) Gender Framework is a guide for is an agency driven labour market and skills framework to embed and build capability in gendered and intersectional analysis. The framework has five principles with priority projects to ensure practical implementation.[8]

Source: Gender Framework Australian Government Jobs and Skills Australia March 2024

JSA plays an important role within the national skills system, providing data and analysis and advice that supports and elicits policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. There are also high public expectations that Government data, analysis and policymaking consider the diversity of the Australian public and incorporates gendered analysis including the impact of any new policy on different cohorts. Indeed, more robust intersectional analysis is now expected from our tripartite stakeholders in industry, academia, and policymaking. The timing is right for JSA to lead intersectional analysis and explore more diverse labour market methodologies, indicators, and approaches. For example, looking at the gender pay gaps over the life course or strengthening qualitative research into supply-side drivers. JSA's

[8] Jobs and Skills Australia (2024). *Gender Framework*. [online] Available at: https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-03/gender_framework.pdf [Accessed 25 Aug. 2025].

intersectional analysis will strengthen work under way across various portfolios to advance gender equality and in turn make our economy stronger, more inclusive and more sustainable.[9]

Access and Equity Considerations in Vocational Education and Training

An individual's access to training and assessment should not be adversely affected by restrictions placed on the location or context beyond the requirements specified in the training package. Training and assessment must be bias-free.

The flexibilities offered by the forest, paper and wood products qualifications and units of competency should enhance opportunities and potential outcomes for all people.

The *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* require RTOs to adhere to common principles of access and equity. For implementation of the forest, paper and wood products qualifications and units of competency, it is important that:

- Learners have access to accurate and current information about qualifications and job outcomes in industry
- Training and assessment are customised to individuals' current employment or employment prospects in their region, including access to elective units of competency to achieve relevant job outcomes, and training and assessment activities that are directly related to their work
- For equity in assessment, conditions for training and assessment should not exceed those specified in the Assessment Requirements for each unit of competency
- Learners have access to accurate and current information about their rights during training and assessment, including an efficient and effective complaints and appeals process
- Training assessment and support services meet individual needs, including the reasonable adjustment of assessments.

RTOs minimise barriers to access and participation in training and assessment that might result from a learner's age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation, language, literacy or numeracy skill level, employment status, or geographical location

RTOs respond to the individual needs of learners and provide sufficient educational and support services for the individual learner to meet the requirements of the specified training package outcomes.

[9] Ibid

Approaches that can assist learners to participate in training and assessment, meet training package requirements and achieve meaningful outcomes include:

- Providing modified equipment, assistive or adaptive technologies, or assistance to increase access for learners with special circumstances, including those with disability
- Customising instructions for training and assessment activities so that it is specific to what the individual will experience in the workplace
- Providing language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) programs to increase ability to the level required by units of competency and the workplace
- Scheduling assessment events or adjusting to account for cultural beliefs, traditional practices and religious observations.

E. The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and Its Interplay with the State and Territory Acts

The Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect at Work) Act 2022, which commenced on 12 December 2022, introduced several key reforms.

- **Positive Duty on Employers:** Employers are now legally required to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, as far as possible. This proactive obligation aims to shift the focus from reactive responses to prevention.
- **Hostile Work Environment Prohibition**: The Act created a new provision prohibiting conduct that subjects another person to a hostile workplace environment on the ground of sex.
- **Class Actions**: The Act allows representative bodies, such as unions, to make representative applications in the Federal Courts on behalf of individuals who have experienced unlawful discrimination.

These amendments build upon earlier reforms introduced by the Sex Discrimination and Fair Work (Respect at Work) Amendment Act 2021, which expanded the Fair Work Commission's jurisdiction to make orders to stop sexual harassment and clarified that sexual harassment can be a valid reason for dismissal.[10]

Key Updates:

- **Federal Level:** The Australian Government has committed to stronger protections against workplace discrimination, adverse action, and harassment under the Fair Work Act 2009.
- **Religious Discrimination:** The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) has been reviewing laws related to religious educational institutions and their ability to discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and marital status.
- **Disability Standards:** Regular reviews of disability standards for public transport, education, and building access are being conducted to improve accessibility.
- **State & Territory Reforms:** Various states and territories are updating their anti-discrimination laws to align with federal protections and address emerging issues such as gender identity, political belief, and workplace harassment.[11]

[10] Fair Work Ombudsman (2021). *Respect at Work*. [online] Available at: https://www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/workplace-laws/legislation-changes/respect-at-work [Accessed 25 Aug. 2025].

[11] Ibid

If there is a conflict between state and federal laws, Commonwealth law overrides state/territory law.

Here are some recent developments in anti-discrimination laws across Australian states and territories:

Federal-Level Reforms

The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) has been reviewing laws related to religious educational institutions, aiming to prevent discrimination against students and staff based on sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or pregnancy.

Victoria

Victoria's Equal Opportunity Act addresses many of the same issues as the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, it's important to note that the state law applies specifically within Victoria, and individuals may have to navigate both state and federal systems depending on the nature of the discrimination. If a case involves discrimination that crosses state lines or is under federal jurisdiction (e.g., federal employment law), the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 would apply. But if it is within Victoria, then the Equal Opportunity Act would be more relevant.[12]

New South Wales

While the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW) applies to state matters, the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) applies in areas of federal jurisdiction, such as federal employment or interstate matters. Individuals in NSW may have access to both state and federal legal avenues, depending on the nature of the discrimination (e.g., if it involves federal workplaces, Australian Government agencies, or services).[13]

Queensland

While Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Act operates at the state level, it often works in tandem with the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), which covers areas of federal jurisdiction. This means that:

- Federal laws may apply to interstate matters or where individuals are employed by federal government agencies or organisations.
- State laws apply within Queensland and cover issues such as state government agencies, private employers, education institutions, and public services.

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[12] Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (n.d.). *How Victoria's Equal Opportunity Act Has Changed Over Time*. [online] Available at: https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/about-us/our-history/equal-opportunity-timeline/ [Accessed 25 Aug. 2025].

[13] NSW Government (2023). *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 No 48*. [online] Available at: https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-1977-048 [Accessed 25 Aug. 2025].

However, individuals who experience sex discrimination in Queensland have the option of pursuing their case under either the state law (through the QHRC) or the federal law (through the Australian Human Rights Commission or other relevant bodies), depending on the situation.[14]

The Queensland Government had planned to introduce stronger workplace sexual harassment protections and expand protected attributes to include domestic violence survivors, homelessness, and irrelevant criminal or medical records.[15]

However, the rollout of these changes has been paused indefinitely, with concerns raised about unintended consequences, particularly regarding criminal record protections.

Tasmania

Tasmania's Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 operates alongside Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws. Additional Protections: Tasmania's law covers extra grounds of discrimination beyond federal laws, such as gender identity, irrelevant criminal record, and family responsibilities.

Employers and organisations in Tasmania must comply with both state and federal laws. If a complaint falls under both jurisdictions, it may be handled by either the Equal Opportunity Tasmania or the Australian Human Rights Commission.[16]

South Australia

South Australia's Equal Opportunity Act 1984 and federal discrimination laws share similarities, but they also have key differences in scope and application. South Australian law covers additional grounds of discrimination beyond federal laws, such as religious belief, political opinion, and association with a child. Legal Precedence: If there is a conflict between state and federal laws, federal law overrides state law.[17]

Western Australia

[14] State of Queensland (2025). *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*. [online] Available at: https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/inforce/2025-05-19/act-1991-085 [Accessed 25 Aug. 2025].

[15] Sasphire Legal (2024). *Queensland Introduces Stronger Anti-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Laws | Sasphire Legal*. [online] Available at: https://sasphire.com.au/queensland-introduces-stronger-anti-discrimination-and-sexual-harassment-laws/ [Accessed 25 Aug. 2025].

[16] Hobart Community Legal Service (2017). *The Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 - Hobart Community Legal Service*. [online] Available at: https://www.hobartlegal.org.au/handbook/rights-disability-and-access/discrimination/the-tasmanian-anti-discrimination-framework/the-tasmanian-anti-discrimination-act-1998/ [Accessed 25 Aug. 2025].

[17] Equal Opportunity (2021). *Australian discrimination laws*. [online] Available at: https://www.equalopportunity.sa.gov.au/discrimination/discrimination-laws/interstate-discrimination-laws [Accessed 25 Aug. 2025].

Employers and organisations in WA must comply with both state and federal laws. If a complaint falls under both jurisdictions, it may be handled by either the Equal Opportunity Commission (WA) or the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Additional Protections: WA law covers extra grounds of discrimination beyond federal laws, such as gender history, religious or political conviction, and family responsibility.[18]

Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory

The NT Government is facing pressure over proposed changes to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1992, which could remove protections against vilification and allow religious schools to discriminate based on sexuality, marital status, or gender identity.

If these amendments proceed, NT will become the only jurisdiction in Australia without legal protection from vilification.[19]

Overlap & Compliance: Employers and organisations in ACT and NT must comply with both state/territory and federal laws. Complaints may be handled by either the ACT Human Rights Commission, NT Anti-Discrimination Commission, or the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Commonwealth Additional Protections: ACT and NT laws may cover extra grounds of discrimination beyond federal laws, such as political belief, employment status, and association with a child.[20]

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