

Why Nationally Recognised Certificates Are So Important in the Food Industry - Complete Hospitality Training

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Details:

A nationally recognised certificate is portable, permanent and verifiable , and those three properties are what make it the working currency of food safety compliance in Australia.

Two honest qualifications come with that, and both are on this page. There is one jurisdiction where national recognition on its own is not enough. And at food handler level, national recognition is not what makes you lawful at all — which changes what you are actually buying, and makes the case for it sharper rather than weaker.

The architecture, briefly

It helps to know what "nationally recognised" is a property of.

| | | | --- | --- | | Units of competency | Come from a national training package , not from the provider. The unit defines what must be demonstrated | | Registered Training Organisations | The only bodies that may deliver and assess those units, and only within their scope of registration | | Scope of registration | Unit-by-unit and state-by-state. An RTO can hold a unit for one state and not another | | training.gov.au | The National Register. Public, authoritative, and the place to check both the unit and the provider | | The Unique Student Identifier | Identifies reported training. Generally required before issue, unless an applicable exemption applies. | | The document | A Statement of Attainment for units or a skill set; a testamur for a full qualification |

Scale, for a sense of what a registration covers: our own scope carries 17 current qualifications , 81 current skill sets and 579 current units , all at the extent "deliver and assess". See about us .

What national recognition actually gives you

Three properties, and they are worth separating because they do different work.

It travels. The same SITXFSA005 and SITXFSA006 units are the food safety supervisor units in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia alike, and all three accept a Statement of Attainment from any Australian RTO regardless of where that RTO is located. Queensland Health says so explicitly.

It does not expire. A Statement of Attainment records that competency was assessed on a date. It is the state requirement that carries a five-year window — asking whether the certificate was issued within the preceding five years — not the document itself. Nothing is ever taken away from you.

It is verifiable. An RTO's scope and a unit's currency are public records on training.gov.au. An employer, a council officer or an insurer can check rather than trust. That is the property in-house training can never acquire.

An internal food safety briefing, however good, has none of the three. It cannot be verified by a council officer and it does not move with the employee.

Verifying is not the same as recognising the name

One practical wrinkle. An RTO may trade under several business names, and the name on a certificate is not what identifies the issuer — the RTO code is . We have several trading names on the training register (Victorian Bar School, Complete Hospitality Training, Ready Serve Achieve Melbourne, Coffee School by CHT, Alchemy Institute of Australia) plus one retired (Complete Healthcare Training, 24 October 2023 to 19 April 2025).

So an unfamiliar brand on a document is not evidence of a problem, and a familiar one is not evidence of legitimacy. Check the code.

What must actually be printed on the document

The contents of a nationally recognised document are prescribed, not left to the provider's designer. This is what makes the two-minute check below possible.

A Statement of Attainment must carry:

the name, registration code and logo of the issuing organisation

the full title and national code of each unit of competency or module — so SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety appears in full, not as "food safety"

the Nationally Recognised Training logo , used in accordance with the NRT Logo Conditions of Use

the signature of an authorised individual

the organisation's seal, corporate identifier or unique watermark

a statement explaining that a VET statement of attainment is issued when an individual has completed one or more accredited units or modules

where the units form part of a larger qualification, a statement identifying that qualification

where applicable, a language delivery notation

A qualification testamur must carry: the name, registration code and logo of the issuing organisation; the code and title of the qualification; the NRT logo ; an authorised signature; the seal, corporate identifier or unique watermark; a statement recognising the qualification within the Australian Qualifications Framework; and where applicable the industry descriptor, an occupational or functional stream title in brackets, an Australian Apprenticeship statement or a language notation.

The NRT logo has a negative rule too , and on this page it is the sharpest single test. The logo belongs on a qualification or a Statement of Attainment. It must not be used on other testamurs, or on transcripts of results . So an NRT logo on a "Certificate of Food Safety Completion" is not reassurance — it is misuse of the logo, and it is the clearest sign you are looking at something dressed up as a national outcome.

Three rules about timing and identity finish the picture:

An RTO must not issue AQF certification documentation unless the person has been assessed as meeting the training product requirements.

Once assessed, it must issue within 30 calendar days of completion of the assessment , provided the student completed the qualification — or the units they subsequently withdrew from — and paid all agreed fees. Thirty days is the outer limit, not a target.

Your USI must not be printed on either document, and the RTO must ask the Registrar to verify that a student identifier belongs to you before using it for any purpose .

And the reason a lost certificate is recoverable: an RTO must produce a copy of certification documentation on request , and must retain records of all AQF certification documentation for thirty

years . A council officer asking about a supervisor who trained in 2009 is asking about a record that still exists.

The honest limit: at handler level it is not legally required

This is the part usually left out, and leaving it out makes the argument worse.

For food handlers , Standard 3.2.2A requires training covering four topics — safe handling of food, food contamination, cleaning and sanitising of premises and equipment, personal hygiene — or that the handler possess skills and knowledge commensurate with the activity. It does not require a nationally recognised unit, mandates no refresher period , and does not require the business to keep records of handler training.

So a free, non-accredited course satisfies the law for a handler. Relevant industry experience can too.

What the accredited unit buys at handler level is therefore proof and portability, not permission :

a permanent record on your national training transcript against your USI

movement between employers and states without re-explaining anything

credit transfer into a qualification — SITXFSA005 is a core unit in SIT30722 and one of two options in the compulsory Group A of SIT40422 , where it also unlocks food and beverage electives that list it as a prerequisite

a one-line answer when an environmental health officer asks how you know your handlers are trained

The Food Safety Supervisor level is the opposite. There the certificate is mandatory, must come from an RTO or an organisation the state recognises, and must be current within five years. National recognition is load-bearing at that level in a way it is not at handler level.

The line the regulator draws around the word "recognised"

Because the handler-level distinction above is genuinely subtle, the marketing of it is regulated — and this is precisely the failure ASQA names.

All information an RTO or any third party acting for it gives you must be clear, accurate and current . Among the risks the regulator names by name is not clearly distinguishing Nationally Recognised Training from non-accredited training . That is the exact line this page is about. A non-accredited food safety course is lawful, useful and sometimes free; describing it in language that implies a national outcome is not a marketing flourish but a named compliance failure, and it may also breach Australian Consumer Law .

The other named risks in the same list are worth carrying with you when you compare food safety courses: false or misleading marketing of a course or of the delivery and assessment itself; marketing unrealistically short courses ; promoting easier paths to a qualification through inappropriately short duration or inadequate RPL; not remaining aware of all marketing material in circulation , including old material and agents' material; and using images that do not accurately depict the facilities or resources actually used — which, for a food safety course advertised over a photograph of a commercial kitchen nobody trains in, is not a hypothetical.

Duration has a measurable floor behind it. The AQF sets a volume of learning for each level, independent of delivery mode: Certificate II 0.5 to 1 year , Certificate III 1 to 2 years , Certificate IV 0.5 to 2 years , Diploma 1 to 2 years , with the volume required to be sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes . Single units such as SITXFSA005 are not qualifications and carry no such range — but they do carry their own assessment volumes, set out below, and "accelerating or shortening training without allowing students sufficient time for skill development and knowledge application" is a named risk at every level.

The distinction that catches people out

There are two different documents that get called a food safety supervisor qualification, and conflating them is the most common compliance error in the country.

| | The nationally recognised artefact | The state-issued FSS certificate | | --- | --- | --- | | What it is | Statement of Attainment for the units | A certificate that the holder is an FSS for the purposes of that state's Act | | Who may issue it | Any RTO with the units on scope | In NSW, only an RTO approved by the NSW Food Authority , s 106H | | Legal basis | National VET law and the training package | The state food Act | | Where required | Everywhere, as evidence of competency | New South Wales only , of the four states compared here | | Expiry | None | Five years from date of issue, statutory | | Interstate recognition | VIC, QLD, WA accept any Australian RTO | NSW accepts no interstate certificate |

Standard 3.2.2A permits both routes. Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia use the RTO route and stop there. New South Wales builds a further scheme on top: approved RTOs, approved trainers and assessors, four mandatory state key focus areas — allergen management, cleaning and sanitising, safe egg handling and Food Act offences — a capped issuing fee of \$30 , and a public register of approved providers.

In New South Wales the approved RTO issues two documents: the Statement of Attainment and , separately, the NSW FSS certificate, within 10 working days. A business keeping only the Statement of Attainment on the premises has not met its obligation under s 106G, which carries penalties of 25 and 50 penalty units.

We are not on the NSW Food Authority's approved provider list and cannot issue a NSW Food Safety Supervisor certificate — verified by reading that list in full on 1 September 2026. A business needing one must obtain it from a provider on that register.

Three other places national recognition stops

NSW food safety is the clearest case, but the pattern repeats.

The health and community services sector. In New South Wales and Queensland , HLTFS001 , HLTFS005 and HLTFS007 are mandatory for that sector's supervisor. A hospitality FSS certificate, however nationally recognised, does not qualify someone in an aged care kitchen there.

An RSA Statement of Attainment is a national training record, but permission to serve alcohol depends on the destination's rules. NSW permits eligible temporary interstate workers; permanent movers and security or RSA marshal roles must meet NSW training and competency-card requirements, using bridging where eligible. Victoria offers bridging to eligible interstate holders. SA applies approved-provider rules to training from 1 November 2020, with earlier training not required to be repeated solely for that change. QLD and WA require suitable national RSA evidence. Tasmania distinguishes staff from licence holders; the ACT and NT have local currency and refresher requirements. Check the regulator before your first shift. See RSA recognition by jurisdiction , NSW's rules and SA's rules .

Renewal. Even where the credential is recognised, the renewal pathway is not uniform. Victoria actively encourages RPL and accepts superseded course codes; Queensland expressly excludes RPL for the five-yearly FSS recertification; NSW confines it to an approved RTO within 90 days of expiry.

The honest summary: the unit is national, and almost everything attached to it is not.

What sits behind the document

A certificate is only worth the assessment that produced it, and that assessment is governed rather than left to the provider.

Before you enrol: the pre-training review. Every learner completes one under Standard 2.2 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs — and it is worth naming the instrument, because the National Code 2018 has a different Standard 2.2 about an overseas student's English and entry qualifications. The review must consider your language, literacy and numeracy, your digital literacy, and your individual requirements including physical skills, prior experience and any prerequisites or entry requirements, and it must inform whether you are appropriately placed in the training product. For food safety units that last point is not trivial: within the food and beverage stream SITXFSA005 is a prerequisite to nine units — SITHFAB022, SITHFAB023, SITHFAB024, SITHFAB025, SITHFAB026, SITHFAB027, SITHFAB030, SITHFAB034 and SITHFAB035 — so where it sits in your sequence matters. Keep that figure of nine attached to the stream; the same unit also stands in front of cookery, patisserie and kitchen units elsewhere in the SIT package, which is a different set and a different number. RSA SITHFAB021 gates nine units of its own inside the stream, so the two are usually sequenced together, and four of the stream's units carry two or more prerequisites: SITHFAB023 and SITHFAB034 two each, SITHFAB030 and SITHFAB039 three each — which makes those last two a chain three and four units deep rather than a single gate.

During: four Principles of Assessment.

Fairness — your needs are accommodated, reasonable adjustment is available, and reassessment is allowed where necessary.

Flexibility — assessment suits the context, the training product and you, and assesses your skills regardless of how or where you acquired them. This is the principle recognition of prior learning rests on, and it is why kitchen experience is worth declaring.

Validity — assessment includes practical application components. Food safety competence is demonstrated by doing, not by answering questions about doing.

Reliability — evidence is interpreted consistently, so the outcome is comparable irrespective of which assessor you get.

And four Rules of Evidence, which is what a supervisor's signature on a workplace log is actually for: evidence must be valid; sufficient, meaning its quality, quantity and relevance enable an informed judgement; authentic, genuinely your own work; and current, demonstrating skills and knowledge you hold now.

Those rules have teeth in this field, because the units set their own volumes. SITXFSA005 requires four hygiene practices demonstrated on at least three occasions each. SITXFSA006 requires hazard control at nine critical control points plus temperature probe calibration. A course that issues either after a short online quiz has not collected sufficient evidence, whatever the certificate says.

Afterwards: two separate recourse processes. Complaints sit under Standard 2.7 — procedural fairness, timeframes the RTO sets, publicly available procedures and escalation avenues if a matter is unresolved, with informal complaints such as a verbal conversation with a trainer expressly required to be captured. Appeals against decisions, including assessment decisions, sit under Standard 2.8, require procedural fairness and clear timeframes, and must provide independent review at no or low cost, with all avenues for independent review disclosed to you. If you believe a food safety assessment was decided wrongly, that is an appeal, and it is a right rather than a favour.

How to verify a certificate in under two minutes

Read the unit codes on the document. SITXFSA005 for handler, SITXFSA005 + SITXFSA006 for supervisor. No codes means no national units.

Find the RTO number and search it on training.gov.au. We are RTO 3722. The trading name may differ from the one you expect — the code is what identifies the issuer.

Check the units are on the RTO's national scope, then confirm delivery in your state directly. The National Register scope record has no state or territory field.

Check the document type. A Statement of Attainment or a testamur is a national outcome, and it will carry the NRT logo, the registration code and the full unit titles. A "Certificate of Achievement" or "Certificate of Completion" with no unit code is not — and if it carries an NRT logo anyway, that logo is being misused.

Check the issue date against the five-year window, if it is a supervisor certificate.

If NSW, check the provider is on the Food Authority's list — ASQA registration is not the same thing.

Ask for the USI transcript if you need independent confirmation rather than a piece of paper.

A plausibility check helps too. SITXFSA005 requires four hygiene practices demonstrated on at least three occasions each; SITXFSA006 requires hazard control at nine critical control points plus temperature probe calibration. A course that issues either after a short quiz is not delivering what the unit requires.

Why the certificate matters beyond compliance

A nationally recognised credential is also evidence in an employment sense, and this is where it converts into money.

Three of the four awards covering hospitality premises carry the same provision. An employee has the appropriate level of training if they have completed a relevant qualification or the relevant units of competency — and the note attached to that definition sets a floor:

The minimum classification level for an employee who has completed AQF Certificate III or higher qualifications relevant to the classification in which they are employed and who makes use of skills and knowledge derived from Certificate III competencies relevant to the work undertaken is Level 4.

| Award | Level 4 floor | Rate clause | | --- | --- | --- | | MA000009 Hospitality Industry (General) | Yes | cl 18.1 Adult rates | | MA000119 Restaurant Industry | Yes | cl 18.1 Adult rates | | MA000058 Registered and Licensed Clubs | Yes | cl 18.3 | | MA000003 Fast Food Industry | No equivalent provision | — |

Formal assessment converts capability into an entitlement; informal training does not. And for a cook the floor lands somewhere specific: under MA000119, Schedule A defines Level 4 as Cook grade 3 (tradesperson), and the award's own "standard rate" is the Level 4 rate. A relevant Certificate III used at work is an explicit route to a tradesperson grade without serving an apprenticeship — which is the sharpest possible answer to "why does the accredited version matter if the free course is legal".

Which award covers you

Decided by the premises, not the job title. Each award covers its industry "to the exclusion of any other modern award", so exactly one applies.

| Award | Code | Premises | | --- | --- | --- | | Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2020 | MA000009 | Hotels, pubs, taverns, motels, resorts, casinos, caterers, accommodation | | Registered and Licensed Clubs Award 2020 | MA000058 | Registered not-for-profit clubs — RSL, bowls, golf, sporting, community | | Restaurant Industry Award 2020 | MA000119 | Standalone restaurants, cafes, night clubs, reception centres, roadhouses | | Fast Food Industry Award 2010 | MA000003 | Food sold mainly to be eaten away from the counter, food courts |

Two boundaries are commonly got wrong. A registered club is not covered by MA000009 — clause 4.4(d)(i) expressly excludes "clubs registered or recognised under State or Territory legislation", and clause 4.3 of MA000058 requires the club to be registered under a liquor, gaming, associations incorporation or corporations statute and to operate not-for-profit for its members and the community. And a night club is not a club for award purposes, being commercial: that is MA000119.

So the same cook doing the same work sits under a different instrument depending on whether the kitchen is inside a pub, a standalone restaurant, an RSL club or a food court — and the classification argument fails in the food court , because MA000003 has no equivalent provision. That is a genuinely useful thing to know before taking a job.

Three caveats. Under MA000009 and MA000119 the qualification must be relevant to your classification and you must make use of the skills — it is not automatic on completion. MA000058 omits the "or higher" and lets the Fair Work Commission require the employee to demonstrate they utilise the relevant skills. And disputes go to clause 40 of MA000009, clause 34 of MA000119, or referral to the Commission under MA000058.

No pay rates are published here. Award rates re-set every 1 July, so use the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay and Conditions Tool with your award code.

And partial completion is not wasted: a Statement of Attainment for the units achieved stays on your national transcript and credit-transfers at any RTO in Australia under Standard 1.7 , without reassessment. We verify evidence of equivalent prior completion, check the training-product requirements and any licensing or regulatory restrictions, and document the decision before granting credit. See ASQA's credit-transfer guidance .

About us

We are Complete Hospitality Training , RTO 3722, CRICOS 04242E. Level 3, 28 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, and 410 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010. Contact melbourne@cht.edu.au or +61 3 9654 1554 .

See also what food safety certificate do I need , why there are so many certificates and regulations , Food Safety Supervisor , about us and all courses .

We link to the relevant course and regulatory sources in this guide. Check those sources for current requirements, and confirm course availability, delivery, fees and entry requirements with us before enrolling.

Does a Statement of Attainment expire?

No. The five-year window belongs to the state requirement, which asks that the certificate have been issued within the preceding five years.

Do food handlers legally need a nationally recognised certificate?

No. A non-accredited course covering the four required topics satisfies Standard 3.2.2A, and no refresher is mandated. The accredited unit gives you proof and portability.

Then why does it matter?

Because proof and portability are worth real money — verifiable in one line, permanent on your transcript, credit-transferable into a qualification, and it supports a higher award classification. It is also the only version that satisfies a prerequisite, and within the food and beverage stream SITXFSA005 stands in front of nine units.

Can any RTO issue food safety units?

Only one with those units on its scope of registration, for your state. Scope is a public record on training.gov.au.

What should be printed on a genuine document?

A Statement of Attainment must carry the issuing organisation's name, registration code and logo, the full title and national code of every unit, the NRT logo, an authorised signature, a seal, corporate

identifier or unique watermark, and the statement that a VET statement of attainment is issued when someone has completed one or more accredited units. A testamur adds the qualification code and title and a statement recognising it within the AQF. Your USI must not be printed on either.

A food safety course shows the NRT logo. Is that enough?

No — check it alongside the unit code and the RTO registration code. The NRT logo may be used only on a qualification or a Statement of Attainment; it must not appear on other testamurs or on transcripts of results. On a "certificate of completion" it is a misuse of the logo, not a credential.

How quickly should the certificate arrive?

Within 30 calendar days of completion of the assessment, once you have been assessed as meeting the training product requirements and have paid all agreed fees. In NSW the separate state FSS certificate has its own timeframe of 10 working days from an approved provider.

The trading name on my certificate is not one I recognise. Is it fake?

Not necessarily. An RTO may hold several registered trading names, and the RTO code identifies the issuer, not the brand. Check the code on training.gov.au before concluding anything.

Is a NSW certificate needed to work in Victoria?

No. Victoria uses the RTO route and runs no state certificate scheme.

Is a Victorian certificate enough in NSW?

Not for the supervisor role. NSW requires its own certificate from an approved provider and does not recognise interstate certificates.

How can a certificate be checked?

Unit codes on the document, the RTO's scope on training.gov.au, and the USI transcript for independent confirmation.

What does a worthless certificate look like?

No unit code, no RTO number, and a title like "Certificate of Completion". For a handler it may still satisfy the law; it will not satisfy an employer checking a transcript, and it will not satisfy a regulator for a supervisor.

Is it legal to advertise a non-accredited food safety course?

Yes — but not as though it were nationally recognised. Not clearly distinguishing Nationally Recognised Training from non-accredited training is a risk the regulator names by name, alongside false or misleading marketing of a course or of its delivery and assessment, marketing unrealistically short courses, promoting easier paths through inadequate RPL, not remaining aware of all marketing material in circulation, using images that do not depict the facilities actually used, and failing to comply with Australian Consumer Law.

How is a food safety assessment supposed to be judged?

Against four Principles of Assessment — fairness, flexibility, validity, reliability — and four Rules of Evidence — validity, sufficiency, authenticity, currency. Validity requires practical application components, and the units set volumes: four hygiene practices on at least three occasions each for SITXFSA005, nine critical control points plus probe calibration for SITXFSA006. A quiz alone is not sufficient evidence.

Does my aged care kitchen supervisor need different units?

In NSW and Queensland, yes — the three HLTFS units are mandatory for that sector.

Does my RSA travel?

An RSA Statement of Attainment is a national training record, but permission to serve alcohol depends on the destination's rules. NSW permits eligible temporary interstate workers; permanent movers and security or RSA marshal roles must meet NSW training and competency-card requirements, using bridging where eligible. Victoria offers bridging to eligible interstate holders. SA applies approved-provider rules to training from 1 November 2020, with earlier training not required to be repeated solely for that change. QLD and WA require suitable national RSA evidence. Tasmania distinguishes staff from licence holders; the ACT and NT have local currency and refresher requirements. Check the regulator before your first shift. See RSA recognition by jurisdiction ([/rsa/](#)), NSW's rules (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/business-and-economy/liquor-and-gaming/training/rsa-bridging>) and SA's rules (<https://www.cbs.sa.gov.au/sections/LGL/RSA-approved-providers>). Inside the training package RSA also does more work than its licensing role suggests: SITHFAB021 is a prerequisite to nine units in the food and beverage stream, the same number the food safety unit gates.

Which award gives me the Level 4 floor?

MA000009, MA000119 and MA000058 all do. The fast food award, MA000003, has no equivalent provision — so the same qualification carries a classification entitlement in a pub, restaurant or registered club and none at a food-court counter.

I work in a registered club. Is that the hospitality award?

No — MA000058. MA000009 clause 4.4(d)(i) expressly excludes clubs registered or recognised under state or territory legislation, and the club must also operate not-for-profit for its members.

Can I use RPL to get the credential?

Yes — it is a genuine assessment against the same evidence requirements, and RTOs must offer it under Standard 1.6. It rests on the flexibility principle: your skills are assessed regardless of how or where you acquired them. Raise it at the pre-training review before enrolling, under Standard 2.2 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs. If you already hold the unit from another RTO, that is credit transfer under Standard 1.7 instead, and needs no reassessment. We first verify the evidence and equivalence, check that the units fit your training product, and check for licensing or regulatory restrictions before granting credit. See ASQA's credit-transfer guidance (<https://www.asqa.gov.au/for-providers/standards-for-RTOs/practice-guides/quality-area-1-training-and-assessment/RPL-and-credit-transfer-practice-guide>).

What if something goes wrong with the training or the result?

Two processes. Complaints under Standard 2.7 require procedural fairness, set timeframes, publicly available procedures and escalation avenues, and informal complaints such as a conversation with a trainer must be captured. Appeals under Standard 2.8 cover decisions including assessment decisions and must provide independent review at no or low cost, with all avenues for independent review disclosed. See policies ([/policies/](#)).

What if I lose the paper?

Your USI transcript holds the record and the issuing RTO can reissue — it must be able to produce a copy on request, and it retains records of AQF certification documentation for thirty years. Recover an existing USI rather than creating a second.