

Introduction to the Ministry of Health Equipment and Modification Services accreditation framework for allied health professionals

Information for current specialised assessors – August 2010

The revised accreditation framework is due to go-live from the 30th August 2010. This update provides current specialised assessors with information to assist them to meet transition requirements.

If you are an existing specialised assessor it is important to note that you will automatically be transitioned to the relevant equivalent category on the accreditation framework. This means that you will be able to continue to undertake assessments and submit applications recommending equipment or modifications for your clients. You will however, need to complete requirements within the relevant categories within six months to retain your accreditation status without having to reapply until the re-credentialling requirements fall due.

Enable New Zealand will continue to manage the administration of the accreditation framework. This will include receiving and processing accreditation status applications from assessors and sending reminders to assessors one month prior to the expiry of their accreditation, which is valid for a three year period.

Where credentialling is a new requirement, the Ministry has put in place a number of training opportunities to support specific skill development.

Further information is available from your EMS provider or the Health Improvement and Innovation Resource Centre (HIIRC) website <http://disabilityservices.hiirc.org.nz> will be available from the 30th August 2010. This provides comprehensive information and resources to assist assessors transitioning or applying for accreditation.

The following pages include:

- Frequently asked questions
- Framework overview
- Transition process overview
- Training opportunities

If you have any immediate queries, please contact Christine Howard-Brown, who is leading this work on the Ministry's behalf. Email: chris.hb@paradise.net.nz or phone 021 439 775.

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Frequently asked questions – Accreditation framework

General information

1. What is the difference between an Approved Assessor and a Credentialed Assessor?

An Approved Assessor has demonstrated skill and competence through their initial or post graduate professional training and registration or other qualification or credentialling requirements to make applications for Ministry of Health funded equipment or modifications. For example, without any additional training, registered occupational therapists undertake assessments for personal care and recommend equipment to meet a person's disability related needs.

A Credentialed Assessor has obtained additional skills through a learning and development programme demonstrating competence to undertake specialist assessments. For example, with additional training, an occupational therapist may undertake assessments for wheeled mobility and postural management; and a speech language therapist may undertake assessments for communication assistive technology.

2. Why is there not a non-complex credential?

The EMS accreditation framework recognises EMS Assessors as working at one of four levels – an Approved Assessor, Credentialed Assessor Level 1 or Level 2, or as a member of a service that holds Service Accreditation. Note that Service Accreditation is not due to be implemented until February 2011 as pilots are continuing in Auckland, Counties Manukau, Waitemata and Hutt Valley DHBs.

3. Where do I get more information about the framework?

<http://www.disabilityfunding.co.nz>

<http://www.accessable.co.nz/home.php>

<http://www.moh.govt.nz/disability>

<http://disabilityservices.hiirc.org.nz> (from the 30th August 2010)

Current specialised assessors transitioning to the revised accreditation & credentialling programme

4. Will I still be able to put in applications for equipment and modifications from the 30th August 2010?

Yes, as you will be automatically transitioned to the equivalent accreditation category you have now, but you will need to complete any requirements within 6 months to retain your accreditation status.

5. How do I demonstrate prior learning to get my credential confirmed within 6 months?

Each credential has requirements that need to be completed within 6 months. For all credentials this includes providing a copy of your current Annual Practising Certificate (if you need one to practice) to Enable New Zealand with a declaration from your employer or clinical supervisor that you have demonstrated competencies of the credential concerned. For Communication Assistive Technology & Housing Modifications you will also need to complete a specific learning & development programme.

6. Do I need to reapply in writing to be transferred to an area of assessor accreditation?

You will be automatically transferred but will need to provide the required information within six months to Enable New Zealand.

7. Do I need to do anything if I will be transferred to the revised programme as an approved assessor?

You will need to supply a copy of your Annual Practising Certificate to Enable New Zealand. This can be emailed to assessor.info@enable.co.nz

8. What happened to Level 1, 2 and 3 Seating and Wheelchair accreditations?

You will be automatically transitioned to the revised EMS Accreditation Framework. This means that if you hold a level 1 or level 2 seating accreditation this will be recognised as prior learning for the Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management Level 1 Credential.

If you hold a level 3 seating accreditation this will be recognised as prior learning for the Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management Level 2 Credential. There will also be requirements for you to complete in the next six months if you are to retain the credential that you have been transitioned across to. Information about these requirements can be found on the Ministry website: <http://disabilityservices.hiirc.org.nz>

New applicants seeking to be an Approved Assessor

9. Do I need to do any extra training before I can apply?

Yes, you will need to complete the EMS Core Module which is an on-line programme that takes you through information you will need to make applications for equipment or modification services. The on-line EMS Core Module should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

New applicants seeking a credential

10. How do I enrol for a learning and development programme that leads to a credential?

There are programmes available for each credential. Details of the programmes and how to enrol are on the Health Improvement and Innovation Resource Centre (HIIRC) website. <http://disabilityservices.hiirc.org.nz>

11. How long will it take to get a new credential?

You will be able to work at your own pace as each learning and development programme includes completion of tasks and activities to demonstrate competence. It is expected that most people will achieve a credential within 6-12 months of commencing a programme.

12. Can equipment or modification applications be counter-signed by an Approved or Credentialed Assessor if I am not approved or credentialed?

Yes, you can make an application that is counter signed by an existing assessor who is registered on the accreditation framework in the area applicable to the application. The assessor counter-signing the application has that application registered against their name and they remain responsible for that application.

13. What is the credentialling panel?

If you are making an application for a Level 2 credential (other than housing modifications), the application is reviewed by a credentialling panel. This is a “virtual” panel of at least two people with technical skills in the area you are applying for. They review the case study submitted as part of the application process to determine whether competence requirements are demonstrated within the case. They then make a recommendation to approve or decline the application.

14. What happens if I do not agree with a decision made by the credentialling panel?

There is an appeals process available. More information about the credentialling panel and appeals process will be published on the Ministry website once the credentialling panel has been appointed later this year.

15. Who pays for learning and development programmes?

The situation is the same as it is now for assessors wishing to attend learning and development programmes. Either you or your employer will need to pay for the costs to complete a learning and development programme. Some programmes are part funded or sponsored by the Ministry of Health. The programmes currently sponsored (in full) by the Ministry includes the EMS Core Module and the Housing Modification Credential. The Ministry is also part sponsoring the Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management Programme and the Communication Assistive Technology Programme. Further details about these programmes are available from 30th August 2010: www.seatingtogo.co.nz and <http://www.atanz.org.nz/default.aspx>

16. Where do I submit my application to?

Once you have met the requirements and are ready to submit an application, it should be sent by email to Enable New Zealand assessor.info@enable.co.nz

How the programme is managed

17. What happens to my credential if I move employer?

You will need to update your details by completing a new application form with Enable New Zealand. Your existing credential will be unaffected.

<http://www.disabilityfunding.co.nz>

18. What do you mean by “supervision”?

The Ministry of Health Equipment and Modification Accreditation Framework requires assessors to receive supervision for this role. Supervision provides a mentoring role that aims to help the assessor to learn from advice and discussion of casework to progress their expertise while ensuring good service to the client.

Supervision consists of the EMS Assessor meeting regularly with a supervisor to provide advice and discuss casework (recent assessments undertaken) in a structured way.

A supervisor will be an existing EMS Assessor with no less than two years experience. The supervisor does not need to be more senior or of the same professional discipline, but will have at least equivalent expertise and training.

Most employers provide supervision within their regular reporting and supervision. Self-employed assessors usually have a supervisor whom they have appointed to fulfill this function.

19. Does a supervisor have to be of the same profession as myself? For example can a Physiotherapist supervise an Occupational Therapist under the accreditation & credentialling programme?

No, your supervisor can be from another discipline if you consider that the person has the appropriate skills and experience.

20. Are there still professional standards monitors (PSM)?

No, your employer is now responsible for monitoring the standard of assessments and applications made for equipment and modification services.

21. What happens if Accessable or Enable New Zealand has a concern about my competence they have identified from an equipment or modification application being made?

In the first instance you will be contacted directly to discuss the concern. If this concern cannot be easily resolved or is an on-going problem, then your employer or supervisor will also be contacted to discuss how improvements can be made.

22. What if I am self employed?

You will need to ensure you have a supervisor who meets the requirements of the accreditation framework.

23. How long is my assessor status valid for?

You will need to apply for a renewal of your approved or credentialed status every three years.

24. If I have an Annual Practising Certificate (APC) do I need to provide a copy of this to Enable New Zealand every year?

No, you only need to provide a copy with your first application for registration on the accreditation framework. Enable New Zealand will continue to verify this on an annual basis electronically with your registration body.

Accreditation Framework overview

The framework¹ has three levels of accreditation for access to Ministry funded equipment and modification services. These levels are:

Approved Assessors – allied health professionals (for example occupational therapists and physiotherapists) whose existing graduate level training is considered sufficient to assess for and recommend Ministry of Health funded equipment (for example commode chairs, walking frames, household management items) and basic housing modification services. Approved Assessors will also include other support personnel such as service coordinators working for organisations supporting people who have sensory loss.

Credentialed Assessors – specific service areas where additional training requirements will be necessary before clinicians can recommend Ministry of Health funded equipment and modification services. These service areas will include wheeled mobility and postural management, communication assistive technology, housing modifications, and vehicle purchase and modifications.

Service Accreditation - specific service areas, primarily community health services, can be accredited to allow District Health Board staff to undertake assessments for certain equipment items (for example low cost, low risk, high volume equipment such as shower stools and over toilet frames) thereby reducing duplication of assessments and streamlining equipment provision. Service accreditation is expected to be available to District Health Boards who were not part of the service accreditation pilot project in early 2011. Further information about service accreditation will be available towards the end of 2010.

Employer Responsibility

When making an application for an Approved Assessor area, such as Hearing Assistive Technology, the assessor will need to complete a declaration that their employer supports the application, providing contact details for the employer.

Meeting accreditation requirements

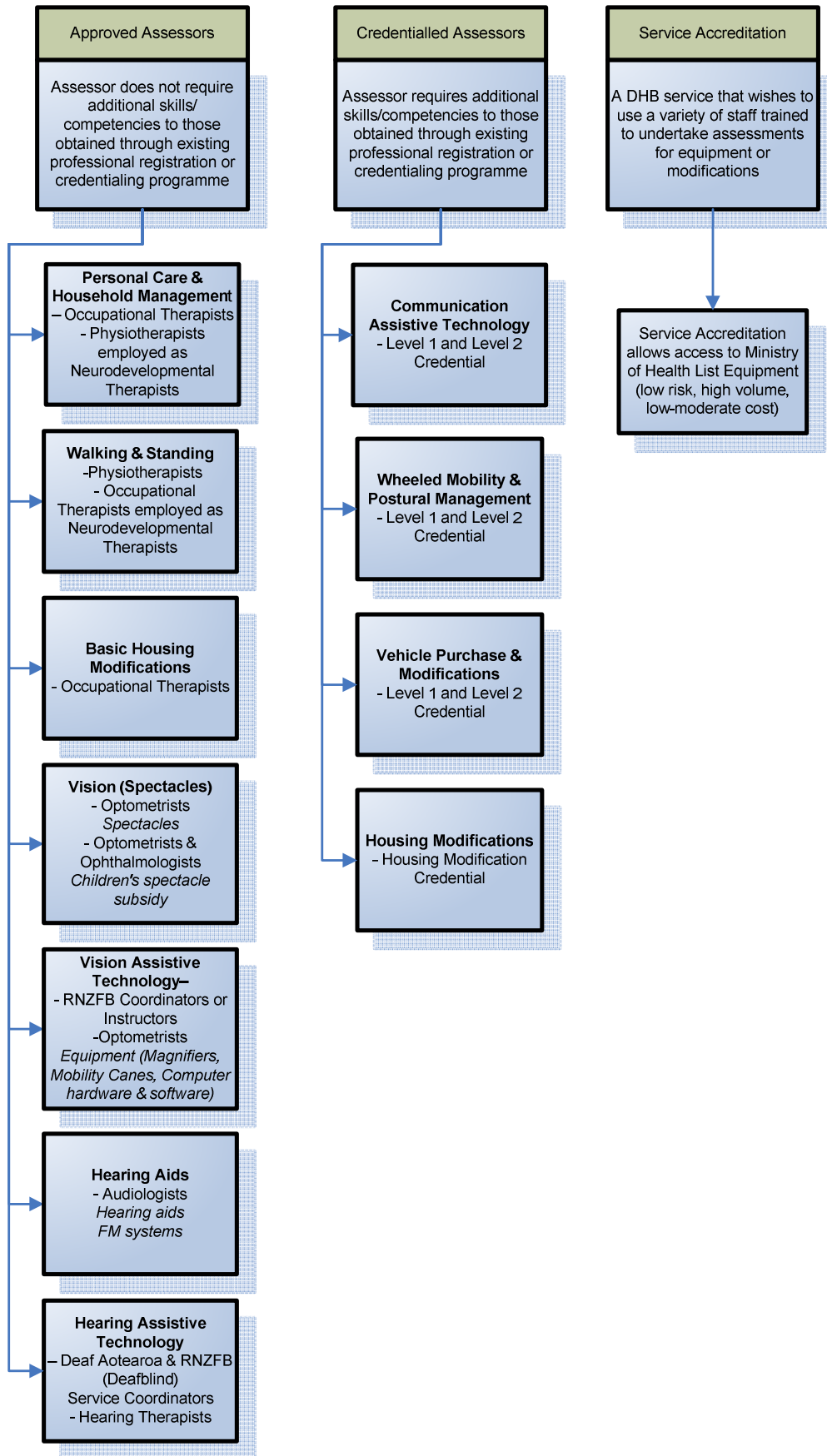
Before making an application for a credentialed area, assessors will need to successfully complete learning and development requirements, depending on the particular credentialling area concerned. In all cases, the employer² is expected to endorse the application and monitor the ongoing competence of the assessor.

Individual Assessor Responsibility

All assessors will need to successfully complete an on-line core module of approximately 20-40 minutes duration that is aimed at ensuring familiarity with the Ministry's Equipment and Modification Services' eligibility and application requirements. Applicants who require an annual practising certificate to practice in New Zealand will need to provide a copy of this to Enable New Zealand.

¹ Refer to attached *Accreditation Framework*, for further information

² Note the professional standards monitor role has been disestablished under the new accreditation framework. Where a person is self-employed, they will be required to have a supervisor.



Transition overview

Existing Status		New Status	Requirements – complete within 6 months ³ :
Household Management	Approved Assessor	Personal Care & Household Management	Core Module
Personal Care		Personal Care & Household Management	Core Module
Walking		Walking & Standing	Core Module
Standing Frames		Walking & Standing	Core Module
Vision Assistive Technology		Vision Assistive Technology	Core Module
Hearing Assessment		Hearing Assessment	Core Module
Hearing Assistive Technology		Hearing Assistive Technology	Core Module and Annual Course
Accessible Region ⁴ Household Management & Personal Care Assessors undertaking Basic Housing Modification Assessments		Basic Housing Modification	Core Module (must be an Occupational Therapist)
Housing Modification Assessment (Enable New Zealand) and Accessable Region Household Management & Personal Care Assessors undertaking Complex Housing Modification Assessments	Credentialled Assessor	Housing Modification Assessment	Core Module and On-Line Housing Modification Programme
Communication Assistive Technology - Face to face - Written		Communication Assistive Technology Level 1	Core Module and Communication Assistive Technology Programme
Seating Level 1		Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management Level 1	Core Module and Review Assessment and Employer Declaration
Seating Level 2		Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management Level 1	Core Module and Review Assessment and Employer Declaration
Seating Level 3		Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management Level 2	Core Module and Case Study and Employer Declaration
Lying		Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management Level 1	Core Module and Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management Programme within six months
Vehicle Purchase & Modifications Assessment		Vehicle Purchase & Modifications Assessment Level 2	Core Module and Competence Checklist and Employer Declaration
Wheelchair		No equivalent – will need to apply for Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management ⁵	

³ Must also provide a copy of your Annual Practicing Certificate where applicable

⁴ Includes Auckland and Northland

⁵ Note those current specialised assessors who hold a seating registration will be transitioned to wheeled mobility & postural management

Learning and Development Programmes

The Ministry has confirmed funding for the following learning and development programmes in the 2010/11 year:

- An on-line *Equipment and Modification Services Assessors Core Module*
- A series of *Non-Complex Wheeled Mobility and Postural Management Programmes* provided by Seating to Go
- A series of *Complex Wheeled Mobility and Postural Management Programmes* provided by Seating to Go
- A series of *Communication Assistive Technology Programmes* provided by Assistive Technology Alliance New Zealand (ATANZ) Trust
- An *On-Line Housing Modification Credentialing Programme*
- Annual *Hearing Assistive Technology Programme* facilitated by Life Unlimited Hearing Therapy Services

Note not all programmes are fully funded but all the above programmes receive some sponsorship from the Ministry.

On-line learning and development programmes will be published on the Ministry of Health Innovation website along with more detailed information about other learning and development programmes and the framework.

Notifications will be sent to individual specialised assessors who are named on the Enable New Zealand data base in the coming week.