

NSW Mining Statutory  
Positions Training  
Process Improvement  
Review Project

# **Learning Best Practice Guide**

**CANDIDATES**

The NSW Mining Statutory Positions Training Process Improvement Review Project<sup>1</sup> is an industry driven, collaborative response to the low success rate of candidates for the examinations conducted in NSW for Statutory Positions. This issue is a significant contributing factor to the identified skills shortage for Statutory Positions in the Coal Mining, Metalliferous Mining and Quarrying sectors of the Resources & Infrastructure Industry in NSW, putting mine sites and production targets at risk.

This initiative is being carried out with funding provided by the NSW Department of Education and Communities, Industry Programs, through the Skills Enhancement Program with advice from the Project Steering Committee. Contributions have also been made to the project from the NSW Minerals Council, NSW Department of Trade, Investment, Regional Infrastructure & Services and SkillsDMC.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1 provides an overview of the stages of the Project

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# Introduction

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# The NSW Mining Health and Safety legislation requires Certificates of Competence for the following 9 Statutory Position roles, which involve both oral and written exams:

## **two (2) for metalliferous mining/extractive/quarrying operations<sup>2</sup>:**

1. production manager for an above ground mine
2. production manager for an underground mine

## **seven (7) for coal operations<sup>3</sup>:**

1. manager of an open cut mine
2. manager of a mine
3. mine electrical engineer
4. mine mechanical engineer
5. deputy
6. under manager of a mine
7. examiner of an open cut mine

Candidates for these exams have typically successfully completed relevant, and often pre-requisite courses before attempting exams (e.g. a degree or diploma in mining engineering from a university, Diploma of Surface Operations Management or Certificate IV in Underground Coal Operations)<sup>4</sup>. Yet, the success rate for the Statutory Positions exam is quite low, especially for the oral exam, which can only be attempted after success at the written exam.

Even though the exams cover similar knowledge and skills that are addressed in the courses, between 2008 and 2010, only 59% of candidates were successful at both the written and oral exam<sup>5</sup>.

Given the low success rate, the NSW industry is concerned about the resulting shortage of qualified people for these roles and took part in an industry – and government-funded research project to investigate the reasons and ways of improving the success rate of candidates. This project was called the *NSW Mining Statutory Positions Training Process Improvement Review Project*. (abbreviated as the *NSW Statutory Positions Project*)<sup>6</sup>.

2 Clause 109 of the Mine Health and Safety Regulation 2007

3 Clause 162 of the Coal Mine Health and Safety Regulation 2006

4 Information on exam requirements, including pre-requisites can be found at the NSW Department of Trade and Investment website: <http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/consultation/coal-competence-board/qualifications>

5 Calculated from statistics on number of candidates taking exams and number of successful candidates across the 9 positions during the years 2008-2010 as obtained from the NSW Department of Trade and Investment website

6 **Appendix 1** provides an overview of the stages of the Project. A full report of Stages 1 and 2 of the project can be accessed at: [www.skillsdmc.com.au/file\\_manager/NSW\\_Mining\\_Statutory\\_Positions\\_Training\\_Process\\_Improvement\\_Review\\_Project.pdf](http://www.skillsdmc.com.au/file_manager/NSW_Mining_Statutory_Positions_Training_Process_Improvement_Review_Project.pdf)

# Key Factors

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## The *NSW Statutory Positions Project* identified the following factors as key to successful completion of both the pre-requisite courses and the Statutory Position exams:



Based on these four key factors, Learning Best Practice guides have been produced for the three groups having the most impact on success rates – **Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), Employers** and **Candidates**.

This guide has been developed for:

- candidates preparing for Statutory Positions
- potential candidates who are considering a Statutory Official role
- their work colleagues, families and friends.

The guide draws on the experiences of trainers, managers, candidates and examiners, and provides practical tips for dealing with the issues commonly faced by those seeking to become a Statutory Official.

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# Key Factors

## 1.0 Selection and support of candidates

### 1.1 Commitment and Preparation

#### Why is this an Issue?

The most successful candidates are the ones who are clear about:

- their reasons for obtaining a Statutory Official position
- the study and preparation requirements of the qualifications and exams
- Candidates report that study can cause great strain on family/personal life, and rotating rosters/weekend/night shift add to those stresses
- Often candidates have not studied for some time and have significant other calls on their time
- Candidates generally do not understand the level of 'foundation skills' required to complete the qualification and exams (e.g. reading, writing, oral communication, etc.).

A Statutory Position is more than a raise in pay. It involves:

- a commitment to take on the safety and welfare of those working in your team
- being aware of the environment around you
- being ready and able to act if an unplanned event, incident or emergency occurs
- being part of a team, at the same time being able to lead a team
- being able to communicate instructions to team members efficiently and in a way that they can understand
- being able to consult with and involve team members, but being able to make decisions when required.

Most of all, it involves understanding the legislative responsibilities of the position, as well as understanding and applying the practical aspects of mining. All of these are combined to ensure the safety and welfare of those around you.

The first step before undertaking study to become a Statutory Official is to understand the roles and responsibilities of the Position you are seeking.

Your employer can provide you with position descriptions, and other information about the roles and responsibilities of the position. It is also useful to discuss with your manager, human resource manager or safety manager what is involved in the position and your own potential career opportunities, pathways and aspirations.

Some of the most useful information may also come from work colleagues who are already a Statutory Official – by discussing their duties and observing them at work.

Most people say that the process to become a Statutory Official is not easy. Because of the responsibilities of a Statutory Official, the knowledge that this person must have, and the requirement to apply knowledge to practical issues, the examiners have high expectations and will not issue anyone with a Certificate of Competence to be a Statutory Official unless they are satisfied that the person is able to perform the duties and maintain the safety of their area of responsibility.

Successfully completing the course and the exams therefore requires a significant investment in time and effort. The study required may cause great strain on your family/personal life, and rotating rosters/weekend/night shift will only add to those stresses. It is very important that you understand the study commitment involved, and obtain the support of:

- family
- work colleagues
- mine/quarry management
- specialists where appropriate (e.g. HR or Training personnel at your mine/quarry).





*All this is done on our own time. I spend 3-4 hours a night on this, work a 10-hour day, travel 1 hour, cook tea, mow lawn, do the shopping, etc – not much time to sleep, is there?*

#### **Open Cut Examiner candidate**

Support and understanding from family is the most critical of these. The importance of this cannot be over-stated. For example, you may be doing study at times that you normally spend with family, and you may no longer be able to attend weekend family activities such as sport during the time that you are studying.

To make sure that you have time to study and prepare for examinations, you may need to make changes to your daily work and family routine. Developing a study plan and establishing good study habits are useful processes to help make those changes and can help your family to understand the commitment that you are making.

The support of work colleagues who are current Statutory Officials and mine/quarry management is important as well. They will most likely have undertaken study to become a Statutory Official and will understand the challenges you face.

An issue to consider is your study skills. You may not have done this type of study, or if you have, it may have been a long time ago. If you feel you need assistance in this area, this assistance should be available through your employer, through the RTO or your trainer.

It is also important to check that you have the 'foundation skills' needed to complete the qualification and exams and, if required, do something to improve these skills.

To identify your strengths or weakness in a particular 'foundation skills' area, a useful process is to do some form of preliminary training needs assessment:

- basic foundation skills – literacy and numeracy; ability to communicate effectively in writing and orally, computer skills, and/or
- Associated Non-Technical Skills (ANTS<sup>7</sup>) – situation awareness, leadership, teamwork, communication, decision making.

*In the oral exam, I challenge the foundation skills.*

#### **Examiner**

Your employer, your RTO or your trainer can help you to assess your 'foundation skills'. If you need some assistance to upgrade these skills, this can be addressed as part of the training to become a Statutory Official. Modern learning does not involve doing extra training courses to address 'foundation skills'. Good RTOs and trainers can integrate the training and assessment strategies to address these skills into any type of course. But, they can only address the issue if they know about it. Therefore, a preliminary training needs assessment to identify if there is any issue with your 'foundation skills' is a very important process.

#### **Examples of best practice - candidates who:**

1. understand the reasons they are seeking to obtain a Statutory Position
2. understand the commitment needed to complete training and study for the exam
3. are able to maintain a work/study/life balance for themselves and family
4. develop good study habits – e.g. set a time every day to review lessons or complete assessments
5. have a positive attitude – e.g. don't just 'give it a go', go in expecting to excel
6. understand any weakness they may have in foundation skills/ANTS and work to improve them.

<sup>7</sup> The five Associated Non Technical Skills (ANTS) are one of NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council's key tools for delivering the mining industry's 2009 CEO Summit vision to build the capacity of the NSW mining and extractives industry.

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# Key Factors

## 1.0 Selection and support of candidates

Checklist for Candidates – Commitment and Preparation	
Ask yourself:	Things to consider
Why are you seeking to obtain a Statutory Position?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Career pathway</li><li>• Desire to have more autonomy and responsibility in work</li><li>• become more marketable to move to a different workplace</li></ul>
Do I understand the roles and responsibilities of the Statutory Position which I am working to obtain?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legislative responsibilities</li><li>• Production responsibilities</li><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Decision-making</li><li>• Communication and Consultation</li></ul>
What amount of time can I commit to training and study for exam?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family obligations</li><li>• Work rosters</li></ul>
Do I have the support of key people – family, work colleagues, etc?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social activities</li><li>• What have my study habits been in the past?</li></ul>
What changes do I need to make to my current work/life routines?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Study plan</li></ul>
What basic skills do I have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading, writing and numeracy skills</li><li>• Computer skills</li><li>• Ability to communicate effectively - orally and in writing</li><li>• Teamwork</li><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Situation awareness</li><li>• Decision-making</li></ul>
a. Foundation skills?	
b. Associated Non Technical Skills (ANTS)?	
If my basic skills are weak, how can I improve them?	

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## 1.2 Support from Employer

### Why is this an Issue?

- Many employers provide different kinds of support (guidance, mentoring/coaching) and sponsorship (monetary, time off work) to candidates. Work colleagues who have done the exams previously are generally willing to help candidates, and are a good source of support.

Employers are often not aware of:

- the study and exam preparation requirements, and the required interface between classroom and workplace learning
- how candidates are progressing and any problems that they may be experiencing.

As noted earlier, your employer can play a key role in making sure that you are clearly informed about what is involved in the Statutory Position, and supporting you in achieving it. Your employer may be able to help by:

1. providing position descriptions and discussing the requirements of the Statutory Official role and how it may relate to your potential career opportunities, pathways and aspirations
2. providing the opportunity for you to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the position with existing Statutory Officials
3. ensuring that you understand the support/sponsorship that the employer will provide, and any return obligations that you may have
4. helping you to understand the effort required to study for the qualifications and Statutory Position exams, and
5. helping you to understand the required Foundation Skills (e.g. written and oral communication, numeracy, etc) needed to successfully complete the qualifications and exams, and to identify how you can develop those skills during training.

Often employers provide sponsorship or other support. Because obtaining a Statutory Official certificate of competency can be a lengthy and costly process, there are obligations of sponsorship that should be discussed before the process begins. A contract between you and your employer may help prevent misunderstandings and define what each party is responsible to contribute. This may include:

- what the employer will provide – e.g. course costs, time off work for study/examinations, mentorship/coaching, site visits etc.
- what your commitment is – e.g. a time frame for completion of the study and Statutory Position exam, completing course modules or passing exam before being reimbursed for costs, a minimum time that you may be required to work for the employer following successful completion of the exams.

The key to making this work is communication. You should establish a link and keep in regular contact with a specific person (e.g. a HR person, your mentor/coach or your supervisor) to:

- identify issues regarding study and time off
- identify mentoring/coaching gaps
- discuss concerns and address issues before they are a major problem – e.g. coaching with study habits, rosters, family life balance, etc.
- ensure your employer is aware of upcoming exam dates, including planning for time off.

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# Key Factors



## 1.0 Selection and support of candidates

### Examples of best practice – support from employers:

1. A clear understanding of any sponsorship/support provided by the employer, and the obligations of the employer and candidate
2. Regular communication between the candidate and employer to monitor progress and/or solve problems or concerns
3. Mentoring/coaching
4. Time off for study, visits to other mines and/or exams
5. Adjustments to rosters and work roles.

### Checklist for Candidates – Support from Employer

#### Ask yourself:

#### Things to consider

Do I understand the support being provided by my employer?

What are my obligations in return for this support?

- Assistance with:
  - Course fees and/or examination fees?
  - Rosters, work roles?
  - Time off to attend course?
  - Time off to attend exams?
  - Travel and accommodation?
  - Mentoring?
- My obligations?

How do I keep my employer informed of my progress and any issues which may need addressing?

- Study and time off
- Mentoring/coaching gaps
- Coaching with study habits
- Shifts/rosters
- Family life balance
- Upcoming exam dates, including planning for time off

# Key Factors

## 2. Training and assessment strategies



### Why is this an Issue?

- There are often pre-requisite courses/qualifications to be completed prior to undertaking the exams.
- Examiners report that despite having completed these courses, candidates are often not able to demonstrate:
  - the application of knowledge acquired in a course to real life situations likely to be experienced in a mining environment
  - the expected industry knowledge and practical skills (e.g. managing hazards at a range of operations), with classroom training often not integrated with the workplace
  - the required Associated Non Technical Skills (ANTS), such as teamwork, communication
  - adequate understanding and application of legislation and ventilation
  - and decision making.

For a number of the Statutory Positions there is a requirement to complete a pre-requisite course, or specific Units of Competence from a full qualification. The courses/qualifications may be Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses (e.g. a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma), which are delivered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), or a University qualification.

The pre-requisite requirements are outlined in the Exam Rules which are published for each Statutory Position on the NSW Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) website<sup>8</sup>. The RTO and trainer should know the requirements of the Mining Competence Board, to communicate these requirements and to make sure that the pre-requisites for sitting the Statutory Position exams have been met. However, candidates should also take steps to understand these pre-requisites.

Most courses/qualifications offer flexibility in course structure and the modules that can be studied. However, RTOs are usually constrained by:

1. the packaging rules in the Training Package qualification
2. the requirements which the Mining Competence Board may specify for the units of competence required for a qualification to be accepted as meeting the requirements to sit for the Statutory Positions exam
3. the ability of an RTO to offer a wide range of electives, which may mean, if all electives are able to be chosen, having small numbers undertaking some electives.

*Candidates must be able to describe the statutory or legislative framework in which NSW coal mines are operated. Some candidates could not apply this in scenarios presented, e.g. the requirements for dealing with certain notifiable incidents.*  
**Undermanager examination panel report – May 2011**

A common criticism from examiners is that candidates lack the ability to apply what they have learnt to real-life situations. Whatever course is taken, or qualification is gained, the critical issue is that the course needs to be developing the skills that are being assessed in the exams – i.e. practical application of knowledge to real life situations. Good trainers understand that good quality training shouldn't be all "chalk and talk". Learning methods such as problem-solving scenarios, simulations, role plays, projects, etc., can help to develop practical skills in areas such as:

- a. detecting changes and interpreting the meaning of those changes
- b. analysing a situation and developing an appropriate response
- c. involving team members in hazard identification and control
- d. taking into account legal and operational factors
- e. identifying hazards and prioritising risk
- f. developing and communicating a clear plan, and
- g. organising people in a crisis.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/about-mine-safety>

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# Key Factors

## 1.0 Selection and support of candidates

These are some of the skills that examiners are assessing. Examiners state clearly that candidates who cannot demonstrate these skills will not become Statutory Officials. You should encourage/insist on practical training that helps develop and demonstrate practical skills and application of complex knowledge to specific work scenarios.

*Examiners will typically aim to assess a candidate's ability to solve a workplace-based problem.*  
**Examination Guide – Certificate of Competence to be a Manager of an Open Cut Mine – p 8**

While the RTO is overall in charge of training and assessment, you have an important part to play by being an active learner. You can do this by:

- knowing what good practice training and assessment looks like and asking for it (you will probably have seen good and bad examples in training you have received at your mine)
- bringing in real life scenarios to classroom
- sharing your experience and resources with class-mates
- encouraging trainers to discuss how content/concepts apply in daily work
- asking trainers to integrate exam preparation into training and assessment if they are not already – e.g. by making past exam questions part of the assessment tasks.

- demonstrating leadership and taking some responsibility for learning, e.g. organising a study group, organising simulations, mine visits, guest speakers, practise mock orals.

Examiners report that candidates are generally unable to apply knowledge and skills in two specific technical areas:

1. legislation, and
2. mine ventilation principles (for underground Statutory Positions).

*Training in legislation subject should be better linked to real life requirements.*

### **Open Cut Examiner candidate**

There are different ways in which RTOs address legislative requirements, with some covering the issues in one module whereas others integrate it throughout the course. Most people have difficulty in learning and applying legislation to specific scenarios. Effective RTOs make sure there is a strong focus throughout the course on explaining the legislation and the obligations of statutory officials, and using specific scenarios to develop candidates' skills in analysing and applying legislation to a wide range of different situations.

For some Statutory Positions (e.g. Deputy, Undermanager) knowledge and application of mine ventilation principles is a critical component of the role, and is therefore a key component of the exam. Consistent comments from recent past examination reports indicate that candidates are inadequately prepared in:

- principles and practices involved in ventilation, and
- the application to practical real-life situations – e.g. de-gassing using either auxiliary fans and/or brattice ventilation.

*A significant proportion of candidates who failed the oral examination were once again found to be not yet competent in relation to de-gassing using either auxiliary fans and/or brattice ventilation, and the principles and practices involved in ventilation generally. Without a strong grasp of the fundamentals of ventilation, particularly in reference to ventilation within a panel, candidates cannot be expected to be deemed competent.*

**Deputy examination panel report May 2011**



A key resource for candidates is the trainer delivering the pre-requisite qualification for sitting the Statutory Position exam. These trainers have a large amount of industry experience, and are an important source of knowledge, information and guidance during the learning and examination processes.

Your trainer and RTO should help you with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This is the process of recognising the training that you may have already done, and not repeating areas where you already have skills/competencies. An example of this is where employers have programs in place which provide candidates with ANTS competencies. You may have completed an internal supervisor skills development program, or attendance at a course such as a Frontline Management Program.

In summary, candidates should make sure that they meet the expectations of examiners, by learning, applying and developing:

- knowledge of all the 'technical' areas
- skills in the application of the 'technical' area knowledge to real life situations
- knowledge and skills in application of legislation
- knowledge and skills in the 5 Associated Non Technical Skills (ANTS):
  - Situation awareness
  - Leadership
  - Teamwork
  - Communication, and
  - Decision making.

A Training Plan is an effective way to ensure a strong link between both classroom and on-the-job learning and that all required aspects of the course are covered. The Training Plan sets out:

1. how and what training is delivered
2. the on-the-job application of classroom training
3. liaison arrangements between trainers and workplace mentors/coaches
4. how candidates are prepared for the exams, and
5. any learning issues and how they will be addressed.

The Training Plan needs to be developed by the RTO with your input and that of your employer and mentor/coach. Each party should be provided with a copy and use the Plan to monitor progress.

# Key Factors



## 2. Training and assessment strategies

Checklist for Candidates – Training and assessment strategies	
Ask yourself:	Things to consider
What kind of training is required for the statutory position?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• pre-requisites:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– VET courses (Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma)?</li><li>– specific competencies?</li><li>– university qualification?</li></ul></li><li>• training needs assessment to work out strengths/RPL and gaps?</li></ul>
Does the chosen RTO/trainer focus on the exam as well as course requirements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Competent Trainer with current industry experience</li><li>• Electives specified by the Mining Competence Board to meet the requirement to sit for the exam</li><li>• Appropriate training and assessment methods to develop the practical skills required</li><li>• Enough focus on legislation and ventilation</li><li>• Arrangements for mine site visits</li><li>• Training plan</li></ul>
What information should I be receiving from visiting other mine site?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use log book in Examination Guide on NSW Trade &amp; investment (Mine Safety) web-site</li><li>• Objectives of the visit</li><li>• Activity during the visit</li><li>• Who you met and what was discussed</li><li>• What you learned through observation</li></ul>
Am I applying classroom knowledge to the workplace?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refer to Training Plan</li><li>• Communicate with mentor/coach</li><li>• Role play situations with mentor/coach – what would I do in this situation?</li><li>• Assess ANTS skills as part of the training</li></ul>
How can I apply legislative concepts to the workplace?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtain access to workplace safety management system and hazard management plans and determine how they comply with legislation</li><li>• Communicate with mentor/coach</li></ul>



# Key Factors

## 3. Mentoring/coaching support



### Why is this an Issue?

- Mentoring/coaching is consistently identified (by candidates, trainers, examiners) as the critical factor in success at the Statutory Position examinations.
- Yet, trainers typically have little if any contact with workplace coaches or mentors involved in preparation of candidates for the Statutory Position exams.
- Workplace mentoring/coaching is:
  - generally unstructured
  - often organised by the candidate, utilising the time and goodwill of work colleagues
  - sometimes organised and coordinated by the employer
  - rarely organised or coordinated by the RTO.

The terms Mentoring and Coaching are used interchangeably in the mining/extractive industries, but do have different meanings:

- **Mentoring** focuses on the person, their career and support for individual growth and maturity.
- **Coaching** tends to be job-focused and performance oriented.

*Coaching/mentoring  
“...takes away the fear”  
“...is very critical”*

#### Candidates

Because these two terms are used interchangeably and in different ways, this Guide will use the term mentoring/coaching.

Most candidates say that having a good mentor/coach as the most important factor in success at the Statutory Position exams in helping you to:

1. apply the theory to practical application in the workplace, and
2. prepare for the exams.

*Without coaching most candidates will have difficulties passing the exams.*

#### Examiner

In most cases your employer is responsible for liaising with the RTO and trainer to identify and appoint a mentor/coach for you. If you are studying without employer sponsorship or support, you may have to find your own mentor/coach. If you need to do find your own mentor/coach, they could be:

- a. someone who is a Statutory Official in your workplace
- b. your trainer who is delivering the Statutory Position course, or
- c. some other external person – e.g. an experienced senior Statutory Official, or a past examiner.

*Coaching focuses on the exam rather than them having to fit it in with work and personal commitments.*

#### RTO Trainer

The most effective form of mentoring/coaching is where the mentor/coach:

1. is located at your workplace
2. has available time to help you
3. has regular communication with your trainer, and
4. is able to relate the classroom training to the practical application on the job.

# Key Factors

## 3. Mentoring/coaching



Your mentor/coach needs to:

1. be aware of your shift and roster requirements and their availability to fit in with those shifts and roster
2. ensure there is allocation of regular time to provide the help you need
3. identify issues you are having problems with, or the need for any additional individual support
4. follow the Training Plan provided by your trainer, and keep a log book of areas where mentoring assistance was sought/provided
5. keep in regular contact with your trainer, so that he/she understands what is being covered in the classroom, and can help you apply classroom theory to practical application on the job
6. have a good understanding of the Statutory Position that you are studying for, and the requirements of the Statutory Position exams.

To get the most from your mentor/coach, you should:

- identify the assistance that a mentor/coach can provide
- communicate with your mentor/coach at an early stage, and establish a "plan" with:
  - guidelines and expectations
  - times each week
  - additional time when preparing for exams
- ensure that your mentor/coach liaises with your trainer, so that classroom and on-the-job learning are integrated.

### Examples of best practice Mentoring/Coaching:

- A senior Statutory Official at a mine performing the role of workplace mentor/coach, as part of their accountability to develop employees
- Employers hiring an external past examiner to perform the role of mentor/coach
- Regular communication between the trainer and mentor/coach.

### Checklist for candidates – Mentors/Coaches

Ask yourself:	Things to consider
<p>Has your employer arranged a mentor/coach?</p> <p>If no, do you need to find your own mentor/coach?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor/Coach has available time</li> <li>• Any shift requirements and availability of mentors/coaches "off-shift"</li> <li>• Ensure there is allocation of regular time to apply theory to practical experiences</li> <li>• Mentor/Coach should be knowledgeable in:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– examination processes, materials and methodologies</li> <li>– the role and responsibilities of a Statutory Official</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>What is my responsibility in the mentoring/coaching process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the assistance that a mentor/coach can provide</li> <li>• Communicate with your mentor/coach at an early stage, and establish a "plan"</li> <li>• Ensure that your mentor/coach liaises with your trainer</li> </ul>

# Key Factors

## 4. Preparation for Statutory Position Examinations



### Why is this an Issue?

- Some RTOs focus only on delivery of the VET qualification, and do not provide examination preparation.
- Examiners have strongly expressed the view that RTOs and their trainers need to provide preparation for the examinations (both written and oral).
- During examination preparation, there is generally no link between the trainer, the employer and workplace mentor/coach.
- Candidates who attend the Examiners Information Sessions find them very useful in clarifying the requirements of the exams and how to prepare for them.

*(the trainer) provided a whole range of information electronically throughout the course as well as advice on exam techniques and how to set out your answers and make the most of the time you have.*

### Deputy candidate

Most trainers understand the expectations of candidates and take it upon themselves to prepare candidates for the Statutory Positions exams, generally using their own resources, or publicly available resources such as past written exam papers and examiners reports. However, many RTOs are largely leaving this to individual trainers, rather than developing training and assessment materials specifically for exam preparation.

Candidates need to be aware of the resources that are available to them (e.g. Exam Guides, past exam papers, Safety Bulletins, Safety Alerts, etc.) These resources (and others) are available on-line at the 'Mine Safety' section of the NSW Trade & Investment website<sup>9</sup>. These resources are not only valuable tools for candidates to study for exams, they are also valuable sources of information for all current Statutory Officials. Past exam papers are a good source of study material. While the answers are not generally posted for the written exam, reading the Examiner's comments on the results can be helpful. Past exam papers and Examiner Reports are available on-line<sup>10</sup>.

*There must be a component of exam preparation in course modules.*

### Employer sponsoring candidates

Another valuable source of information is the hazard management plans and safety management plans of the workplace. By comparing these plans with the legislative requirements, you should be able to apply legislation to mine processes, making the learning of legislation much easier.

*Examiners will typically aim to assess a candidate's ability to solve a workplace-based problem.*  
**Examination Guide – Certificate of Competence to be a Manager of an Open Cut Mine – p 8**

Examiners will focus on your breadth of industry knowledge and that may well extend beyond your workplace, so it is crucial that you visit mine sites that deal with different hazards from your workplace. When visiting other mines, it is important to make some notes about the visit (there is a log book located on the DTI website in the Certificate of Competence Examination Guide for each Statutory Position<sup>11</sup>). Logging the visit not only gives you evidence for the oral exam, it also allows you to plan what you need to be observing on the visit, and provides you with useful revision notes when you are preparing for the exam.

Mentor/coaches play a large role in helping candidates to apply classroom training to real life scenarios and prepare for exams. Mentors/coaches should have a formal Training Plan or check sheet of areas to be covered during the mentoring process targeted to key areas identified for an individual or across the qualification.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/about-mine-safety>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/consultation/coal-competence-board/qualifications/coal/coal>

<sup>11</sup> A sample log book is included in each of the Examination Guides.

These can be accessed at: <http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/consultation/coal-competence-board/qualifications/coal/coal>

# Key Factors

## 4. Preparation for Statutory Position Examinations

A log book of areas where mentoring assistance was sought/provided should be used to document mentoring. By keeping a log book, the mentor ensures that all areas are covered and time is not wasted repeating information. Log book can also be used to develop strategies to close gaps in knowledge and evaluate amount of actual time spent in the mentoring process to aid future candidates.

*Undermanager's Certificate of Competence Information Sessions conducted by the DTI have to be the best start to preparation as it gives a clear expectation of what the examiners are looking for*  
**Undermanager candidate**

Prior to most Statutory Position exams, the examiners conduct an Information Session, which provides information on their expectations, and feedback on past exams. This is useful to candidates, and others involved in preparing candidates, including:

- trainers, and
- mentors/coaches.

Details of these Information Sessions are sent to all candidates who have applied to undertake the exams, as well as RTOs delivering pre-requisite courses.

Candidates often form a study group, which can be very useful during your course and when preparing for the exams. This could be done with others at your mine or in your area and can involve activities such as:

- sharing information identified when studying and researching
- sharing mine management plans and similar information
- practising mock oral exams.

In summary, candidates should:

1. obtain all available information on the scope and content of the exam by:
  - attending the Examiners Information Sessions held prior to the exams
  - accessing information published on the DTI website
    - e.g. prior exam papers and examiners' reports
  - seeking information from previous candidates.
2. as part of preparing for exams:
  - participate in role plays that allow them to practice responses to specific scenarios that allow them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills
  - do trial written exams to practise skills in explaining the requirements of the legislation and its application
  - arrange visits to other mine sites, and review what was learned and observed
  - read about recent significant mining/extractive industry incidents and discuss how the lessons learnt may be applied to their site and other sites.

Here are a couple of key points which may be helpful in preparing for the exam (note – these are not intended to be complete – see the DTI website for the Examination Guide for each Statutory Position for a more comprehensive guide to exam requirements):

1. it is critical that you answer questions based on the position for which you are sitting, not as the position you currently hold

2. the oral examination is partly based on an individual's experience and knowledge
3. the examiners at the oral exam may focus on areas that you were weak on in your written examination, and expect you to have knowledge of recent industry incidents.

### **Best practice: Preparation for Statutory Examinations – for Candidates:**

1. keep in close contact with your mentor and use their knowledge and experience
2. keep a log book of mentoring/coaching to ensure that all areas are covered
3. be proactive and seek out helpful resources
4. visit other mine sites and use the log book from the Examination Guide from the DTI website
5. form a study group with others at you mine or in your area and practise mock oral exams –
6. attend the Examiners Information Sessions – times and dates are posted on the DTI website.



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## Checklist for Candidates – Examinations

### Ask yourself:

### Things to consider

Where can I access information and resources to aid in studying for the exams?

- DTI website
- Other Statutory Officials in workplace
- Trainers
- Mentors/coaches
- Workplace safety management system and hazard management plans.

Do I understand the scope and content of the exams (written and oral)?

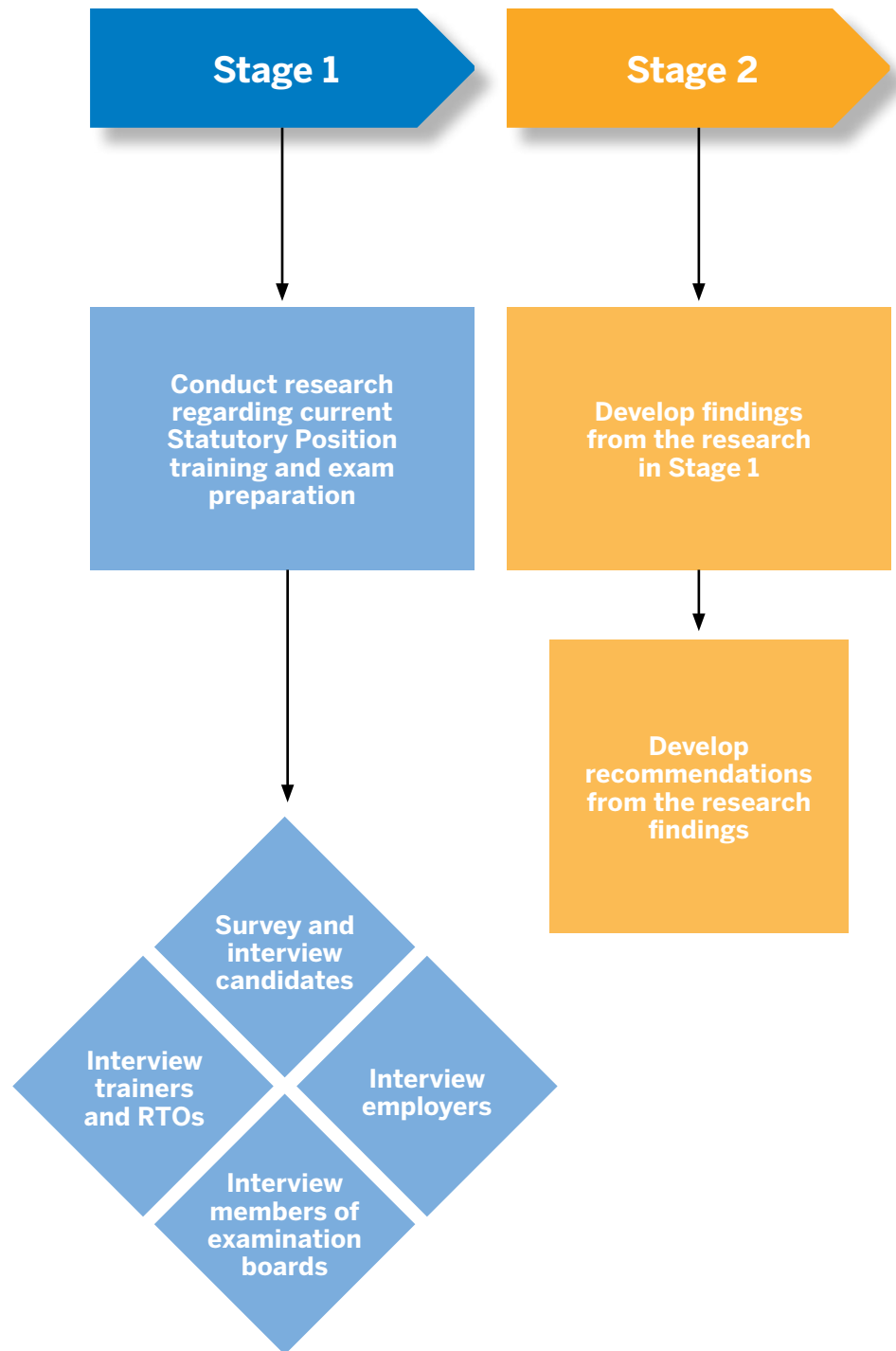
- DTI website
- Other Statutory Officials in the workplace
- Trainers
- Mentors/coaches
- Examiner information sessions.

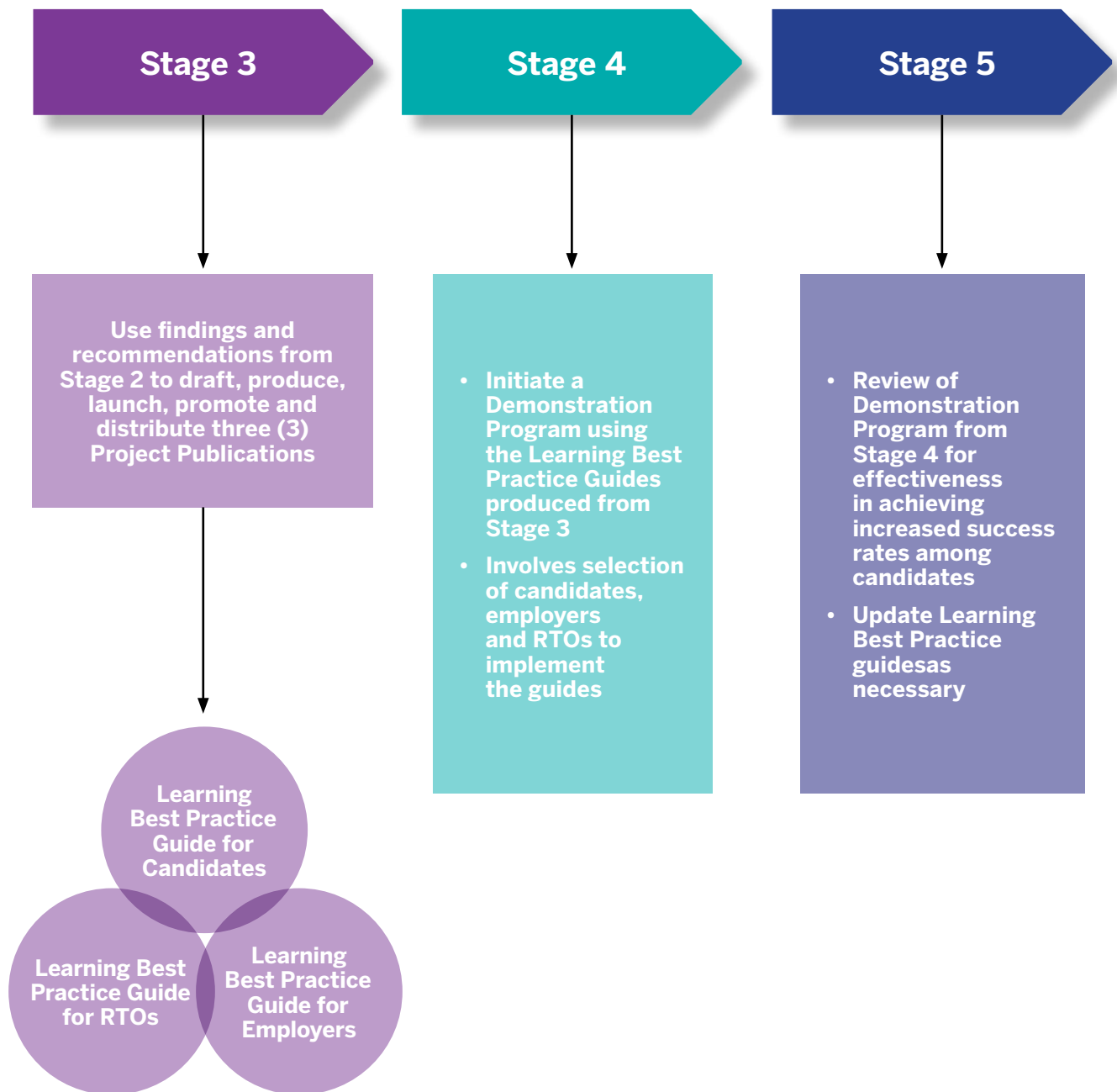
How best can I prepare for the exams (written and oral)?

- Study group
- Access resources on the DTI website – e.g. Exam Guides, past exam papers, Safety Bulletins, Safety Alerts, etc.
- Trial written exams
- Access and understand all hazard management plans and safety management plans of your mine
- Have current knowledge of significant mining/extractive industry incidents
- Visits to other mine sites
- Role plays to practise the oral exam (mock orals)
- Attend the Examiners Information Sessions.

# Appendix 1

## Overview of NSW Statutory Positions Project







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