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Healthy Lifestyle Program Registration Guide

Part of the Quality Framework for the
Healthy Workers Initiative

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Introduction

This Healthy Lifestyle Program Registration Guide is for program developers who would like to have their programs assessed against the Quality Framework and to have the program listed on the Healthy Living Network and possibly made available for others to use. It steps through each of the Program Registration criteria and provides further explanation, comments and examples for each. The registration process is comprised of the following domains.

Figure 1: Program Regsitration Components

Program Description	→ Scope and target group → Skills and qualifications	→ Intensity and duration → Assessment and monitoring
Evidence Based	→ Consistent with National Guidelines	→ Underpinned by appropriate evidence
Support Material	→ Comprehensive	→ Able to be customised
Review	→ Evaluation	→ Process for updating

Relationship to the Healthy Communities Quality Framework

For providers registered against the Healthy Communities Quality Framework, this Healthy Workers Program Registration is the same as the Program Registration component of the HCI Quality framework.

Providers are not required to become registered under both QF's, however specific programs will need to be registered under each appropriate scheme, additional information on the program approach will be required to identify how it is different according to the setting.

Becoming Registered

Program developers and providers will need to use the Program Registration criteria to ensure their healthy lifestyle program is comprehensively described.

Those who want to have their program/s registered and listed on the Healthy Living Network must:

• review the Program Registration criteria
• complete the online self assessment, indicating where evidence for each criterion can be found in the program documentation (e.g., page numbers, sections, etc)
• submit the self assessment form, along with a detailed program outline and resource material relevant to the program, to the Healthy Living Network.

The Healthy Living Network will then:

• formally assess applications using an expert group
• communicate with the applicant as required
• list registered programs on the Healthy Living Network.

If program developers are involved in delivering the program (or other relevant services) and would also like to be registered as a Healthy Lifestyle Program Provider, they will need to complete the Healthy Lifestyle Program Registration.

Program developers who train and license/accredit others to deliver programs on their behalf may also need to register as a Healthy Lifestyle Program Provider, depending on the nature of the licence/agreement.

Further clarification can be obtained by contacting the Healthy Living Network.

Program providers are encouraged to use these guidelines to supplement the criteria under Appropriateness and Effectiveness.

If the applicant delivers the program on the ground, each occurrence of the registered program can be listed on the Healthy Living Network by completing the simple online activity listing for each activity. Once listed, the activity will then be searchable under a number of categories such as location, activity type and target group.

If program developers are involved in delivering the program (or other relevant services) and/or train and license others to deliver the program please refer to the Program Provider Registration process.

Program licensees will need to complete Licensee registration, which is a short questionnaire, and uploading of appropriate supporting evidence.

Further clarification can be obtained by contacting the Healthy Living Network.

Support

The Program Registration process has been designed to promote continuous quality improvement. Applicants who demonstrate that their program meets the Program Registration criteria will obtain registration for their program. Applicants that do not meet the criteria will receive support from the Healthy Living Network to enable them to plan the necessary improvements to be eligible for registration.

The Healthy Living Network will:

- provide support to employers, providers and program developers in understanding the intent, benefits, application and registration of programs and providers using the Framework and resource documents
- assess programs and providers against QF
- maintain up-to-date information and resources on the Healthy Living Network
- collate information on application and uptake of the Framework, trends, challenges, responsiveness.

Timeframe for renewal

The life of registration is two years.

In line with the continuous quality improvement approach, registration renewal will be required every two years or sooner if significant amendments to the program occur (including change to program scope, qualifications required and major changes to approach or content).

A note about Evidence Base

The level of evidence to support programs in the healthy living context is emerging. There is work occurring nationally and internationally to strengthen the evidence base. However, in the meantime the extent of robust, rigorous evidence that can be applied to different settings, client groups and contexts may not be available for all programs. This Program Registration will prompt the review of the quality of design and evidence base of programs which will assist in ensuring that best practice is further implemented.

> **Resources**
>
> For those wanting to know more about assessing and using evidence, the following resources may be useful:
>
> - Lewis, J., Spencer, L., Dillon L. 2003. 'Appraising quality in qualitative evaluations: approaches and challenges' in Popay, J. (ed). Moving beyond effectiveness in evidence synthesis. Methodological Issues in the Synthesis of Diverse Sources of Evidence. London: National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence. www.nice.org.uk/niceMedia/docs/Moving_beyond_effectiveness_in_evidence_synthesis2.pdf
> - Latest work by the NHMRC on evidence base for guidelines www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines
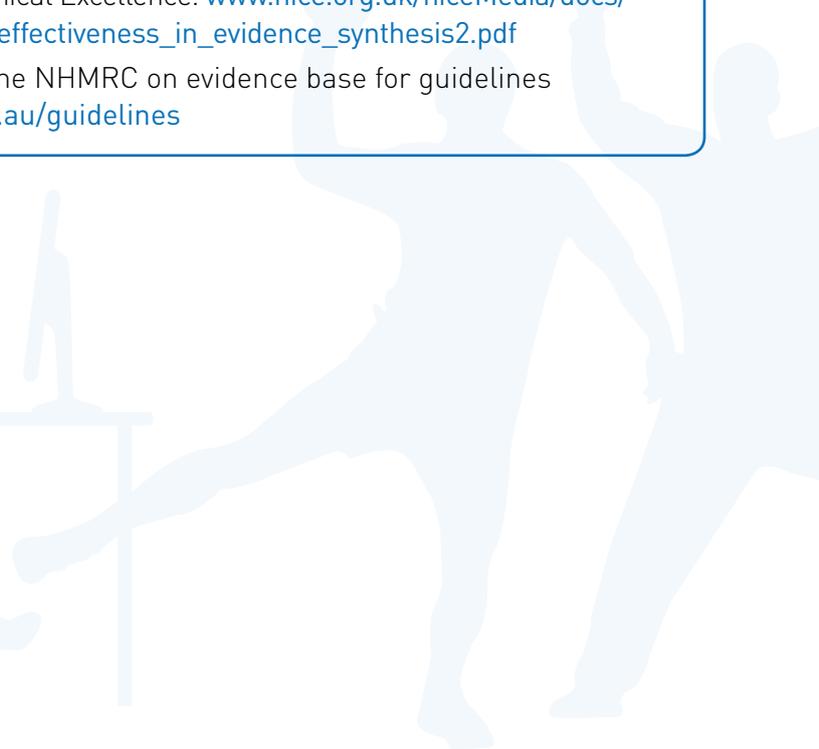
Program Registration criteria

Explanation of each criteria is provided following the checklist.

Program Registration Criteria	Evidence provided?			Description of evidence provided or justification for why a criterion is not applicable. Indicate where evidence for each criterion can be found in the program outline or attached documents (e.g., page numbers, sections, etc).
	Yes	No	N/A	
The program adequately describes:				
• Scope and target				
• Skills and qualifications required to implement				
• Duration (including frequency)				
• Goal setting				
• Monitoring outcomes				
• Exercise intensity (if applicable)				
• Risk screening / assessment requirements				
• Risk management				
• Communication and marketing messages				
The program is consistent with the national guidelines for adult physical activity, healthy eating, healthy weight and obesity prevention, smoking cessation and alcohol reduction (where available and applicable).				
The program is underpinned by appropriate evidence.				
The program has been developed with appropriate multidisciplinary / specialist input.				
The program has been tested with its target group and adjusted accordingly.				
The program allows sufficient flexibility to take account of differences in target populations, geographical and workplace settings, resources, and employee values and preferences whilst maintaining program goals.				
There is adequate and appropriate support material for quality implementation.				
An appropriate approach to program evaluation is described.				
A review mechanism / timeframe for the program is specified.				

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Guide to completing
Program Registration

Scope and target

The healthy lifestyle program documentation must include a description of the scope and target of the program.

Describing the scope and target of a program is one of the most important parts of program definition and planning processes. It sets the broad parameters for what a program will do, and boundaries around what it won't do.

A succinct and well defined program scope is required. The scope and target will include a definition of the:

- intended objectives (the reasons for doing the program and what is hoped to be achieved)
- intended target groups (the people or groups that are the focus of a particular program or service)
- intended environments in which the program is applied. This may include the:
  – physical environment
  – organisational environment (e.g., is it running in conjunction with any other organisation/program?)
  – social environment or culture within which the program interacts or targets
- excluded target groups and environments (details of the people/groups and environments that a program is not suitable for)
- program approach (what is done, in what order, how it is done and who does it).

Skills and qualifications required to implement

The healthy lifestyle program documentation will need to include a description of and justification for the type and level of skill and/or qualifications required in order to deliver the specified program. This may be the requirement to hold certain nationally recognised qualifications such as a First Aid Certificate or Certificate 3 in Fitness, a professional background such as a dietitian, registered nurse, a minimum number of years' experience, or simply the attendance at a specific training course.

Wherever possible and relevant, any specifications for skills and qualifications should be:

- linked to nationally recognised qualification or units of competency such as the Australian Qualifications Framework
- determined by taking into account the safety, quality and access requirements of the program
- not higher than can be reasonably justified as relevant for the program — for example, not specifying a university qualification if the program can be appropriately delivered by an instructor with a certificate-level qualification.

When setting qualification and skill levels consideration should be given to the availability of such people in rural and regional areas. Consideration may also be given as to how the program can be appropriately supported in the absence of such qualifications. For example through a train the trainer approach or web/telephone coaching/mentoring of a local provider.

Duration

The healthy lifestyle program documentation should describe the amount of time and/or time intervals (frequency) required for program participation.

In some cases it may be more appropriate to define the duration based on client outcomes if the program is not set around a specific number of attendances, hours or length of time.

Keep in mind adult learning principles when setting duration and give consideration to flexibility and recognition of prior learning.

Goal setting

The healthy lifestyle program documentation will need to include a description of the way goals are set for the program and how participants are consulted during this process.

Goal setting is the process of identifying what an individual wants. Understanding and setting goals enables:

- clear understanding of the target/s to be reached or outcomes to be achieved
- a sense of direction and purpose for both the program provider and the participants
- identification of the steps required to reach the desired outcome or target
- the inspiration to achieve goals and reach performance expectations.

The program may have overarching goals applicable to all participants or there may be a defined process whereby goals are set by and for individuals. The program outline will need to include how these goals will be assessed. The goals will ideally be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited (SMART).

Monitoring outcomes

The healthy lifestyle program documentation will need to provide a description of the:

- types of outcomes to be measured
- frequency of measurement
- process to monitor/measure outcomes, including how this will be documented and communicated as necessary.

Where relevant, monitoring of outcomes will need to occur at two levels – at the individual and at the group level.

At the individual level a process should be defined to monitor whether the individual is making sufficient progress towards their agreed individual or program goals.

At the group level processes should be established to monitor trends in group attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and intentions to change behaviour before, during and/or after the intervention.

Exercise intensity (if applicable)

If the healthy lifestyle program contains a physical activity component, a description of the exercise intensity of the program is sought in the program documentation. The combination of heart rate, breathing, temperature and perspiration provides a measure of the level of exercise intensity and an indication of how hard the body will be working during physical activity.

It is important that the program documentation demonstrates an understanding and awareness of the relevance of intensity of exercise in a program in order to:

• help to determine if a person has an appropriate level of existing fitness to participate in a program taking into account medical conditions, medications, etc. This allows potential risks to be identified and strategies to be employed to reduce the risk prior to program participation

• provide guidance to ensure that a person exercises at the right intensity to achieve the desired health benefit

• identify the skills, knowledge and fitness level requirements of the workforce needed to deliver the program.

Risk screening / assessment requirements

The healthy lifestyle program documentation will need to include a description of the risk screening and assessment requirements of the program.

Observation, screening and assessment form a continuous process through which an individual's strengths and needs are identified and inform the plan of intervention/action.

Risk screening provides a mechanism to:

• identify an individual's characteristics and needs

• trigger a more in-depth assessment, such as a medical review, if necessary

• identify if the participant is suitable for the program

• identify if the participant requires a modified program.

The program documentation will need to define a consistent approach to how risk screening and assessment is undertaken (who, how, when) and should include risk screening and assessment templates and flowcharts/decision trees as appropriate.

Risk management

The healthy lifestyle program documentation will need to include a description of the risk management processes and considerations for the program.

Risk management involves the identification, assessment, and prioritisation of risks (positive or negative) with a coordinated application of strategies and resources to minimise, monitor and control the occurrence or impact of events.

The program's risk management processes will need to include:

• a description of the way risks are identified, assessed and prioritised (who, how, when)

• a description of the way common risks are managed or mitigated

• a risk register (a register of identified risks and their mitigation strategies)

• a description of the way risks are communicated in the program.

The level of risk for any given program will depend on the scope and target of the program. The level of risk identified for the program can then determine what mitigation strategies can be applied. These may include (but not be limited to):

• the level of qualifications required by the person/s delivering the program
• participant selection criteria, screening and exclusion criteria
• modification of the program or program environment.

Where the program involves potentially risky interventions such as cooking, the use of exercise equipment, and swimming pools, the program outline should include standard risk statements and mitigation strategies for providers to incorporate into their risk processes.

Communication and marketing messages

The healthy lifestyle program documentation will need to outline a description of the communication and marketing messages of a program.

The common messages and related media to be used to communicate about the program should be clearly defined to ensure consistency of message delivery, 'look and feel' and branding of a program throughout marketing and delivery.

Where possible logos, style formats, brochures, forms, etc., should be supplied in template form and available to program providers electronically.

The program outline should define which aspects of the communication strategies can be customised to local settings and include strict guidelines on the use of any branding information.

The program is consistent with national guidelines

All programs must be consistent with national guidelines for adult physical activity, healthy eating, healthy weight and obesity prevention, smoking cessation and alcohol reduction guidelines (where available and where applicable).

The healthy lifestyle program documentation must make specific reference to relevant guidelines as appropriate. Any deviation must be noted and justified for consideration by the Healthy Living Network.

The following websites outline some useful resources:

• Physical Activity Guidelines

  National guidelines for adult physical activity:
  www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines

  Physical Activity Recommendations for Older Australians (Recommendations and Discussion Document):
  www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-physical-rec-older

- Healthy Eating Guidelines

  NHMRC Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults:
  www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/dietsyn.htm

  Australian Guide to Healthy Eating: Background Information for
  Nutrition Educators:
  www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/FD699468D52
  A5A2ECA256F19000406D6/$File/fdeduc.pdf

  Australian Guide to Healthy Eating: Background Information for Consumers:
  www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/E384CFA588B
  74377CA256F190004059B/$File/fd-cons.pdf

- Healthy Weight Guidelines

  Healthy Weight for Adults and Older Australians:
  www.healthyactive.gov.au/internet/healthyactive/publishing.nsf/
  Content/healthy_weight06_10.pdf/$File/healthy_weight06_10.pdf

- Alcohol Guidelines

  Alcohol guidelines: reducing the risk
  www.nhmrc.gov.au/your-health/alcohol-guidelines

Evidence

The program documentation must contain details of the evidence that underpins the program (development, implementation, evaluation).

Basing a program on contemporary, reliable information (evidence based or best available industry endorsed practice) increases the potential effectiveness of the intervention, and decreases the risk of interventions that are ineffective or even harmful.

When reviewing the evidence consider:

- How well the study/ies was conducted – were the sample size, interventions, and measures appropriate?
- How relevant is the evidence to this target group?
- How relevant is the evidence to this setting?
- How credible are the findings? Are the findings supported by other studies, the literature?

References to evidence will need to be described in the program documentation.

Stakeholder input into development

The program documentation (or a separate attachment) will need to provide evidence of stakeholder input into the development of the program.

Consumer and community involvement in program development helps to ensure that programs are acceptable, accessible and meet the needs of the specific target group.

Evidence of stakeholder involvement will need to include position/discipline of those involved, whether or not these stakeholders were internal or external stakeholders, and how they were involved.

Testing with target group

The program documentation will need to outline a description of the testing conducted on the program, including outcomes of that testing.

Program testing, including evaluation of pilot projects, is a valuable means of identifying improvements to program effectiveness.

The evidence can be forwarded as an attachment and will need to include any pilots conducted, their format, design, outcome and changes made to the final program as a result.

Program Flexibility

Access to programs can be affected by a range of barriers, including cultural, transport, financial, literacy and language, physical access and disability.

The program outline must include information on how a program can be adapted to manage barriers and/or differences across target populations, geographical and facility settings, resources, and client values, whilst maintaining the program integrity.

Support material

Copies of support material will need to be provided to the Healthy Living Network.

This refers to any information or materials that will support the person/s delivering the program to implement the program safely and effectively. This may include resources such as:

• facilitator manuals

• templates

• participant manuals, handouts, etc.

• guidance on equipment procurement, venue selection, etc.

Program evaluation

A description of the approach to evaluation of the program is to be specified in the program documentation and should include details on:

• what will be measured

• the method, including:
  – who is involved
  – frequency of measurement
  – techniques/processes for data collection
  – processes for analysis and review

• data collection and storage

• reporting processes, including suggested formats

• any benchmarks or performance indicators that may be relevant.

Review processes and timeframe

Program documentation must include information on how and when a formal program review will be undertaken.

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Glossary

The following terms are used within the Healthy Workers Initiative Quality Framework Guides.

Activity
A specific occurrence where a program or a collection of occurrences of the program is implemented. i.e. Small walking group.

Criteria
A subset of a standard describing an element of how the standard can be achieved.

Employee
Potential participant – employee of healthy workplace organisation.

Framework
The Quality Framework for the Healthy Workers Initiative comprising the three components: Healthy Lifestyle Program Provider Registration, Program Registration, and Guidelines for Healthy Workplaces.

Group
People coming together with common needs for a program.

Healthy Living Network (HLN)
The Healthy Living Network is a registration website that provides a list of quality registered activities, providers and programs that have met the quality standards of the Healthy Communities Quality Framework and /or the Healthy Workers Quality Framework.

HCI
Healthy Communities Initiative.

Licensee
Person or organisation with an approved license and/or formal recognition to deliver a program or activity developed by a 3rd party. i.e. Walking Group leader.

Participants
People engaged in a program.

Program
A formal approach or intervention/s to assist individuals, groups, employees achieve improvements in their healthy living.

Service
Businesses, organisations, sole providers providing healthy living programs to individuals, groups and communities.

Service Provider
As for service.

Staff / workforce
Paid and unpaid workers assisting providers to implement Programs. Workforce includes those who are licensed to deliver a program through a 'train the trainer' or similar. It does not refer to employees in a client's organisation.

Standard
An overarching statement of quality.

The Department
The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

Notes

Notes

Quality pathways to healthier workplaces

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