

Case Study 1: Dimitrio's Supermarket

Dimitrio's is a large urban supermarket that prepares its own meat products. They employ up to four apprentices at different stages in their apprenticeship. The apprentices work with a relatively large group of staff including the meat manager, meat supervisors, meat slicers, cleaners and customer service staff.

Recruitment and sign-up

This supermarket recruits its own staff. Often Dimitrio's is able to recruit staff into a Meat Retailing/Retail Butcher apprenticeship who already have experience in the store. The RTO representative negotiates the sign up with the meat manager and apprentice and drafts up the training plan and block release arrangements.

Training plan

Changing policy in Dimitrio's over the past few years has led to a reduction in the range of workplace training opportunities in Meat Retailing/Retail Butcher, and there is a need to negotiate off-the-job training and assessment arrangements in order for the full range of units contained in the apprenticeship to be completed.

The agreed training plan reflects the workplace functions and details the competencies which can be learned on the job, and those that must be delivered off-the-job.

In Dimitrio's, the off-the-job training is completed through day release arrangements with the RTO.

On-the-job component

Initial on-the-job training is delivered over the first three months using set workbooks which combine national units of competency with Dimitrio's company policy and procedures and cover:

- company induction
- health and safety
- food safety
- customer service
- teamwork and communications
- general meat duties including mincing, packing and wrapping, storage and handling, delivery acceptance, cleaning and traying up cuts of meat.

At the end of the third month, the apprentice is rewarded with a set of butcher's knives and commences on-the-job training in:

- care and maintenance of knives
- simple cuts

- more complex cuts – progression is in line with the apprentice’s proficiency with knives.

No bone cutting is allowed until the third year of the apprenticeship due to Dimitrio’s company health and safety policy.

On-the-job training continues with the apprentice gaining proficiency and productivity over the range of tasks required in the workplace.

Off-the-job component

The off-the-job component is delivered in a simulated workplace environment at the RTO’s premises where apprentices have access to the full range of primary meat products (whole carcasses) and equipment such as bandsaws.

Units of competency are clustered for delivery of the practical meat preparation components that cannot be delivered in the workplace, for example:

- Group 4: Evaluate and break carcasses
 - MTMPR201B Prepare and operate bandsaw
 - MTMR201B Break and cut product using a bandsaw
 - MTMR302B Assess carcase/product quality
 - MTMR320A Locate, identify and assess cuts
 - MTMR319A Break carcasses for retail sale
 - PRSSO206A Provide first aid
 - MTMR303B Calculate yield of carcase or product.

Completion

Given the off-the-job training delivery schedule of four two-week blocks over the first two years, most of Dimitrio’s apprentices can complete the training requirements for their apprenticeship in three years.

Considerations

Dimitrio’s retention rates of apprentices have been poor, possibly due to:

- the RTO’s limited opportunities to support the apprentices in the workplace
- the lack of a mentor/counsellor
- general staff turnover being very high
- lack of opportunities to form trusting relationships with supervisors.

Career opportunities

There is a good opportunity for apprentices to progress in a retail career with Dimitrio’s once they have completed the apprenticeship. The company offers several management cadetships each year, and several of these have been taken up by qualified butchers.

(Based on a Case Study developed by DIIRD, Skills Victoria)

Case Study 2: RPL at Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE, Shepparton, Victoria

The following Case Study was written by Mark Garrard, industry trainer at Goulburn Ovens institute of TAFE.

Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE was approached by two brothers who own and manage a butcher shop and who have varying degrees of background training, skills and knowledge including the previous completion of abattoir qualifications. They wanted to earn their Certificate III in Meat Processing (Meat Retailing) without having to undertake a lengthy apprenticeship. They were well suited to RPL.

I agreed to trial the MINTRAC RPL tool for this exercise. My first impression of this tool was that it is **huge**, and wondered how difficult it was going to be. However, I was promised step-by-step assistance from MINTRAC, and agreed to give it a go. Once Darren went through and explained how the RPL tool works I was pleasantly surprised at how easy this tool is to operate.

Apprentice information and application

By sitting down with the applicants first and completing the application and Self Assessment Questionnaire, I could establish how I was going to best use the tool to meet the needs of the bothers and to see whether any gap training was needed.

The application process gave me information about any prior/current qualifications and relevant personal details. I also collected the details of two professional referees who would be able to testify to the applicants' work capability and skills. By the time the initial interview was finished, I realised we were off to a fantastic start and I could already formulate in my mind where the gaps would be and how I was going to meet the needs of my clients.

Once this information was collected I found that the applicants now had a good understanding of where they stood regarding what they *did* know and what they *didn't* know and how we were going to achieve our target of gaining RPL for prior skills and experience and gaining their Certificate III in Meat Processing (Meat Retailing).

By this stage, we all realised:

- it was not going to be an easy ride to a qualification
- the importance of doing this process properly
- the brothers were remembering things that they possibly haven't used in a while
- that as they were answering the questions, they were refreshing their knowledge and learning at the same time.

Practical tasks

This section of the RPL kit is fairly easy to understand and as I observed my applicants doing the tasks set out in the assessment tool I could plainly see what units the tasks

have covered and which of the performance criteria have been met. This section took away the concerns I had about whether I had collected all of the evidence I needed to have confidence in signing off.

By following the practical tasks I could observe the applicants at work and often I was able to collect far more evidence than needed for the specific task. For example, when I watched them trimming loin lamb chops and displaying them on a tray for the cabinet, I was also able to watch them clean up the work area and get ready to bone chicken.

Post assessment reflection

This RPL tool is by far the best that I have worked with. I feel very comfortable knowing that the evidence I am collecting will meet all the needs of the AQTF and the industry as a whole.

Before Darren introduced me to this tool I was very worried about conducting a full RPL on a complete meat retailing qualification. At the end of the assessments is my signature and I regard this as putting my reputation on the line. I am now completely satisfied that this tool quashes any doubts that I had. I have completed Certificate I and Certificate II so far with the two brothers and I am hoping that over the next month I will have Certificate III completed and be ready to issue my first full RPL certificate.

I estimate that this tool (providing you had the time) could be completed over a two to three week period as long as there was no gap training needed.

Darren and MINTRAC have done a fantastic job on this project and should feel very proud of what they have achieved.

Mark Garrard

Industry Trainer