

Communication Assistive Technology Competency Framework

July 2014

Introduction

The Communication Assistive Technology Credential, Levels One and Two, recognises that EMS Assessors undertaking assessments for people who have communication impairments and submitting Service Requests for Ministry of Health communication assistive technology equipment require specialist knowledge and training. This knowledge allows the EMS Assessor to provide appropriate advice and recommendations related to the communication process, the range of potential interventions available and the most appropriate intervention to meet their needs.

This Communication Assistive Technology Framework is a component of the overall Equipment and Modification Services Assessor Accreditation Framework.

Level One Credential

Assessments may be undertaken and Service Requests submitted by an EMS Assessor who has a Level 1 Credential when they are working with people:

- where their sole disability-related need is complex communication or they are an emergent communicator, and
- who may benefit from low to mid technology communication solutions, such as:
 - static display devices
 - keyboard devices that do not require complex programming
 - tablet devices where:
 - the person is able to “direct access” (i.e., not via a switch or eye-gaze system)
 - there are no complex environmental factors that may affect the use of the tablet
 - the proposed Service Request has been discussed with the Ministry’s Specialist Assessment Service (Communication Assistive Technology) before being submitted to the EMS Provider and this consultation has been recorded on the EMS Assessor Section of the EMS Prioritisation Tool.

Level 2 Credential

Assessments may be undertaken and Service Requests submitted by an EMS Assessor who has a Level 2 Credential when they are working with people:

- who have complex communication needs in addition to other disability-related needs (cognitive, physical, sensory etc) which requires a multi-disciplinary team approach
- who spend a significant amount of their time in environments that require a high level of collaboration between team members

- who may benefit from more complex communication solutions including follow-up or ongoing support
- where successful implementation requires highly specialist knowledge of products and processes.

Examples of situations where the Level Two credential may apply:

- Trial or implementation of highly complex equipment that requires specialist technical knowledge and support
- School students who require joint assessments according to the Therapy and Assistive Technology/Equipment Operational Protocols between the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education because communication assistive technology is being considered to meet both their face-to-face communication needs and to remove barriers to their educational achievement.
- People living with others in a community residential support setting or in residential care.
- People who have deteriorating conditions where their needs are changing over time and they may require solutions that will continue to meet their changing needs.

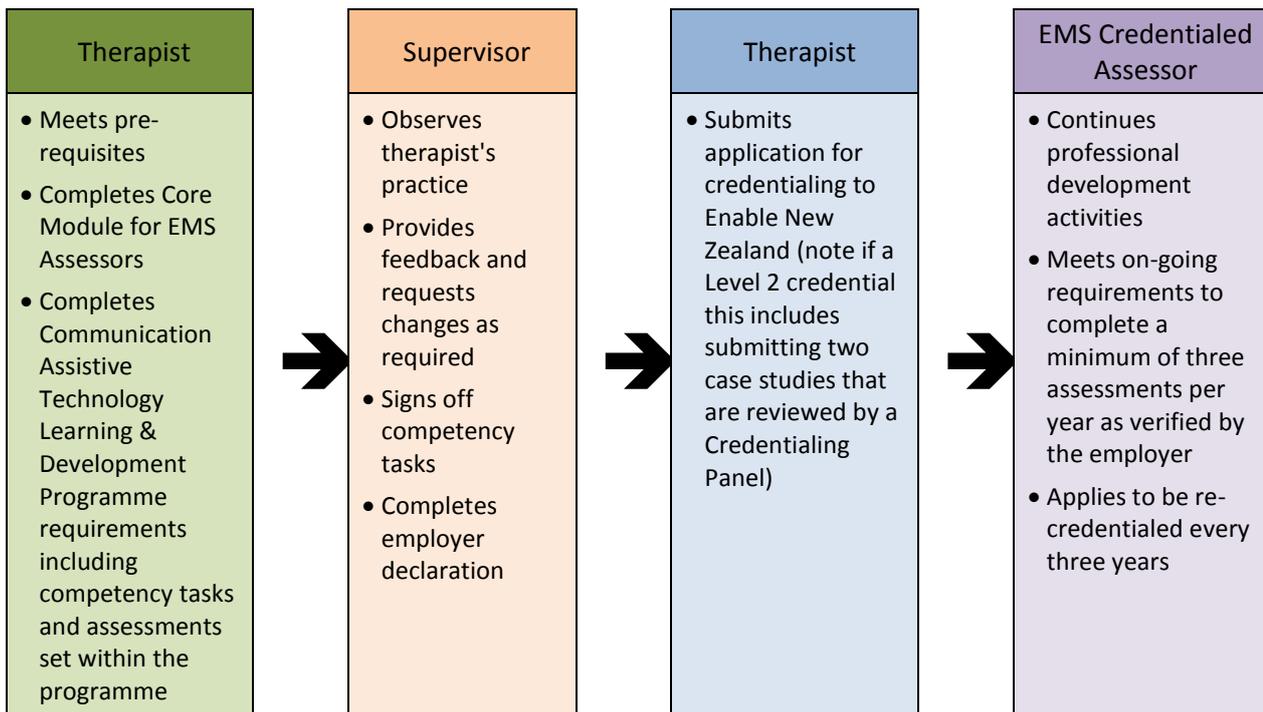
Requirements for Communication Assistive Technology Credentials

Level 1 Credential	Level 2 Credential
Speech Language Therapist; or Occupational Therapist with a current Annual Practising Certificate	Speech Language Therapist; or Occupational Therapist with a current Annual Practising Certificate
Professional membership with Assistive Technology Alliance New Zealand Trust (ATANZ)	Professional membership with Assistive Technology Alliance New Zealand Trust (ATANZ)
Completed EMS Core Module	Holds a Level 1 Credential in Communication Assistive Technology
Successful completion of the Assistive Technology Learning & Development on-line Programme as offered by ATANZ	A minimum of one year's experience working with a specific focus on the provision of communication assistive technology
Employer declaration supports achievement of competencies	Employer declaration supports achievement of competencies
	Successful completion of two case studies reviewed by the Credentialing Panel

Supervisor

Each EMS Assessor will be required to nominate a Supervisor under the EMS Assessor Accreditation Framework. If your employer cannot provide a suitable Supervisor or you are self-employed, TalkLink (<http://www.talklink.org.nz>) may be able to provide you with a recommendation.

Therapists seeking to be credentialed for the first time or after a three year gap in practice will follow the process as outlined in the following diagram:



Communication Assistive Technology Level 1 Credential

Competencies Required:

1. Understands the communication process and pathway/vision for client and works within a collaborative assessment process framework.

Knowledge:

- Aware that there is a communication process that every client will follow and understands when Assistive Technology should be considered alongside other possible interventions.
- Understands the communication process and assessor role in the process.
- Identifies the communication process specific to individual client need.
- Knowledge of when to refer people who have more complex needs on to an appropriately skilled EMS Assessor who has a Level 2 credential in Communication Assistive Technology.

Skill:

- Gathers all relevant information.
- Identifies specific team members who need to be involved in the client assessment process.
- Identifies a pathway for clients and a range of interventions and potential outcomes within a collaborative framework.

2. Recognises and demonstrates the need for on-going individual professional development and maintaining knowledge of communication assistive technologies.

Knowledge:

- Knowledge of low to mid tech solutions.
- Understands where to source current, relevant information around product and/or practice.

Skill:

- Can set-up low to mid tech solutions to meet trial/setup/training goals
- Recognise own scope of knowledge and skills
- Demonstrates application of relevant skills acquired through courses.

3. Understands and identifies current good practice models in the Communication Assistive Technology process:

- Data gathering
- Referral information
- Identification of outcomes
- Consideration of trial options
- Trial goals/tasks
- Implementation of trial
- Review of the trial outcome
- Decision making process
- Ministry of Health funding guidelines and processes, including EMS Prioritisation Tool
- Training Plan: Short – long term goals
- Implementation of training plan

Knowledge:

- Identifies and is able to demonstrate systems for gathering team knowledge.
- Demonstrates operational knowledge of a wide range of low to mid tech devices.
- Understands how team knowledge can be imbedded within the Communication Assistive Technology assessment framework.
- Understands and can convey the philosophy, skills and knowledge of environments the person operates in and the impact these environments may have on the introduction of communication assistive technology with the client.

Skill:

- Gathers relevant information and identifies key issues.
- Identifies communication goals using Communication Assistive Technology.

1. Understands and measures the identified functional communication outcomes for clients.**Knowledge:**

Review: Demonstrates process for identifying when changes are required.

Demonstrated By:

Completion of On-line CAT learning and development Module ([hyperlink](#))

Communication Assistive Technology - Level 2 Credential

Competencies Required:

Has attained the competencies required for Level 1, and in addition:

1. Understands the communication process and pathway/vision for clients and works within a collaborative assessment process framework.

Knowledge:

- Demonstrates a knowledge of a variety of clients who have a wide range of communication needs.
- Demonstrates the knowledge that many factors influence/impact on communication.
- Understands the trans-disciplinary approach to the Communication Assistive Technology process, including the knowledge of individual team members and their specific role within the team.

Skill:

- Integrates various aspects of the communication process into a meaningful whole.
- Uses specialist skills to contribute to the team to promote best communication outcomes for clients
- Leads team around communication needs and acknowledges and utilises all team members
- Can make adaptations to the process to meet individual communication needs and achieve positive outcomes.

2. Recognises and demonstrates the need for on-going individual professional development and maintaining knowledge of communication assistive technologies.

Knowledge:

- Demonstrates knowledge of current high tech solutions, their configurations, and limitations within assessor's specific area of practice.
- Demonstrates knowledge of relevant models within assessor's area of practice.

Skill:

- Can set up high tech solutions to meet goals for trial, implementation training.

3. Understands and identifies current good practice models in the Communication Assistive Technology process, including:

- Data gathering
- Referral information
- Identification of outcomes
- Consideration of options for trial
- Trial goals and tasks
- Implementation of trial
- Review of the trial outcome
- Decision making process
- Ministry of Health funding guidelines and processes, including EMS Prioritisation Tool

- Training Plan; short and long term goals
- Implementation of training plan.

Knowledge:

- Demonstrates operational knowledge of complex high tech devices.
- Understands implementation models – the differences between teaching children and adults.

Skill:

- Provides and presents clear direction.
- Considers intervention options: match between skills/strengths/environments/ outcomes.
- Demonstrates a wide knowledge of potential solutions.
- Provides clear expectations of teams' roles and on-going input.
- Identification and use of relevant implementation models.
- Demonstrates a process which conveys clinical reasoning of above to all team members.

Demonstrated By:

Either:

- One year's experience working for at least 20 hours per week in communication assistive technology;

Or

- two years' experience working with communication assistive technology as part of a general caseload.

Completes two case studies from caseload (maybe retrospective) that illustrates:

- a collaborative assessment following a framework such as SETT¹
- a person's multiple needs, not just communication related needs
- changes over time where current and future needs for clients are identified
- a Service Request submitted to the relevant funder(s) for at least one of the case studies.

Case studies as described above will illustrate:

- A knowledge of a range of Assistive Technology options low to high tech
- Trial goals and the monitoring of trial goals
- The decision making process to arrive at final recommendation(s)
- Training plan and results of the implementation of the plan
- Adult teaching methods
- Reflective practice

The following documents will be maintained:

- A Professional Development Plan
- A Reflective Practice Log using work place framework e.g. peer mentoring and feedback from team members.

¹ Joy Zabala, 2004