



# ***Guide to ESSA for Candidates Emergency Services Skills Assessment (ESSA)***

***“Confidence in Capability”***

## **Abstract**

The Emergency Services Skills Assessment (ESSA) is a structured, practical evaluation designed to benchmark emergency response capabilities against defined industry standards. Endorsed by EMCoP, ESSA provides a consistent, portable, and industry-recognised measure of operational readiness for personnel working in high-risk environments. ESSA forms part of the wider Emergency Response Certification process endorsed by the EMCoP.

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## Definitions

Term	Definition
Candidate	A person who has enrolled and seeking assessment on the pathway to <b>Certification</b>
Certificate	Outcome of successfully completing the <b>ESSA</b>
Certification	An <b>EMCoP</b> initiative to professionalise the Emergency Services within industry sectors
Endorsed	An entity that has meet and been approved by the <b>EMCoP</b>
Entity	Mine, Operator, Business, Company, Client or otherwise that is a <b>PCBU</b>
ESO/ EMO/ ES/ ERT/ ERL	A person performing duties in the emergency services within industry Terms may vary within industry pending the role and/ or requirements of the <b>PCBU</b>
Provider	An entity (Person, Business, <b>RTO</b> ) that has been <b>Endorsed</b> to provide a service on behalf of the <b>EMCoP</b>
Assessor	A person that meets the prerequisites to assess against an <b>EMCoP</b> standard or service

## Abbreviations

Abbr.	Full Name
AIHS	Australian Institute of Health and Safety
DEMIRS	Dept. of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety
EMCoP	Emergency Management Community of Practice Inc.
ESSA	Emergency Services Skills Assessment
ESO	Emergency Services Officer
LGIRS	Dept of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety – Formerly <b>DEMIRS</b>
PCBU	Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking
VoC	Verification of Competency
RTO	Registered Training Organisation

## Purpose and Context of ESSA

Working in Emergency Services within the industrial sector is widely recognised as a high-risk profession. As such, maintaining a high level of skill and competence is critical. The Emergency Services Skills Assessment (ESSA) provides a structured evaluation of an individual's capabilities against defined industry standards. It serves as a point-in-time snapshot of a candidate's ability to perform core functions across emergency services disciplines.

ESSA forms part of the wider Certification process and does not guarantee certification.

ESSA is designed to assess the skill level of Emergency Services professionals to ensure they possess the necessary core skills to perform their roles effectively and safely in high-risk environments, such as the mining sector.

## Important Notices and Distinctions:

The ESSA is modelled in part, on the Performance Evidence specified in the nationally recognised training units; thus, it is not intended or designed to be a complete or wholistic assessment; rather, it focuses on testing practical skills against industry expectations.

The ESSA and/ or Certification does not absolve a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) or Entity (Mine, Operator, Company, Business or otherwise) of their duties under the Work Health Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022, or other relevant Act or Regulation, with regard to; but not limited to:

- Part 3.2 – General Workplace Management, Division 1 - Information, training and instruction.
  - Regulation 39. Provision of information, training and instruction
- Part 10.2 – Managing Risks, Division 6 - Information, Training and Instruction.
  - 675B. Duty to provide information, training and instruction
  - 675BA. Site induction for new workers
  - 675BB. Duty of persons conducting businesses or undertaking to ensure competency of workers
  - 675D. Review of information, training and instruction
  - 675E. Records of training

A training gap analysis will need to be completed by the PCBU (including a PCBU providing a contracted service) to ensure training and competency for the hazards, response requirements and emergency equipment available at the operation, and the training required to close those gaps.

## ESSA vs VoC's

The ESSA is not intended or designed to replace current internal VoC's or those conducted formally by a RTO for the purposes of reissuance of certification against the whole Unit of Competency. Instead, it complements them by providing a standardised, consistent, portable, and industry-recognised validation of core emergency services skills across organisations, that is endorsed by the EMCoP.

Key benefits of the ESSA are summarised in the below table.

	ESSA	VoC
<b>Purpose</b>	Standardised industry-wide skills assessment	Varying levels of compliance (Internal to a RTO reissuing certificate of competence)
<b>Recognition</b>	Recognised by EMCoP, participating members and industry peers	Internal - Recognised only by that company RTO - Recognised nationally
<b>Assessment Tool</b>	Structured, standardised, reviewed annually and endorsed by industry body (EMCoP)	Varies between provider and level of comprehensiveness or compliance
<b>Assessor Requirements</b>	Endorsed and moderated by EMCoP	Self-regulated, potentially not validated or moderated. Heavily contextualised
<b>Cost</b>	Fixed industry price (\$500)	Price set by provider, client and/ or demand
<b>Certificate Validity</b>	1 year or 3 years* * when in conjunction with certification	Open ended, Self-regulated for renewal Typically, industry suggests 2-3 years
<b>Portability</b>	High. Accepted across EMCoP member organisations and industry bodies	Internal - Low, designed for one site RTO - Moderate, when reissuance occurs
<b>Assessment Scope</b>	Core disciplines identified in consultation with industry and endorsed by EMCoP	Targeted - Focuses on specific tasks, equipment, or site-specific competencies
<b>Outcome Transparency</b>	Validated, Moderated and Standardised including feedback and improvement options	Varies between providers and heavily reliant on internal process and diligence
<b>Governance</b>	Endorsed, Managed and Overseen by EMCoP	Self-regulated, Non-specific, Managed internally by provider to suit client

Table: ESSA vs VoC

## ESSA vs Emergency Response Certification

The Australian Institute of Health & Safety (AIHS) were engaged by the EMCoP to design and develop the Emergency Response Certification Program, similar to their AIHS Certification Levels; Certified OHS Practitioner, Certified OHS Professional and Chartered OHS Professional.

Certification is an initiative to have emergency services, within the industry sectors, recognised as a profession. The Certification is supported by LGIRS, MARS Program and the EMCoP and has received strong industry backing through rigorous industry consultation.

Emergency Response Certification, of which ESSA is but one component, is a **skill validation tool** which is fundamentally different to the AIHS Certification Levels which focus on **career progression and professional recognition framework**.

	ESSA	Emergency Response Certification
<b>Purpose</b>	Practical, point-in-time assessment of core emergency response skills	Formal recognition of professional capacity through logbooks, interview and the ESSA
<b>Scope</b>	Focused on practical operational skills across core disciplines endorsed by EMCoP	Broader framework including leadership, risk management and mental wellbeing
<b>Audience</b>	Emergency Services Officers (ESOs) and Emergency Services Leaders	Emergency Services Officers (ESOs) and Emergency Services Leaders
<b>Recognition</b>	Recognised across EMCoP member organisations and industry bodies	EMCoP endorsed, nationally scalable and aligned with other industry certifications
<b>Timing</b>	Recommended to be completed AFTER gaining logbook evidence for certification	Download information, gather logbook evidence, complete ESSA, Formally apply
<b>Delivery</b>	Only through providers endorsed by EMCoP	Through AIHS with support from DeMIRS, MARS Program and EMCoP

Table: ESSA vs Emergency Response Certification

## Benefits of ESSA

The ESSA has numerous benefits that have been identified and incorporated into the process; these include but are not limited to;

- Standardised Industry Assessment: Ensures consistency and reliability across evaluations.
- Recognised by EMCoP Members: Builds trust and confidence in assessed personnel.
- Improved Benchmarking: Supports the uplift of industry-wide skills and standards.
- Enhanced Confidence: Promotes assurance in workforce readiness and capability.

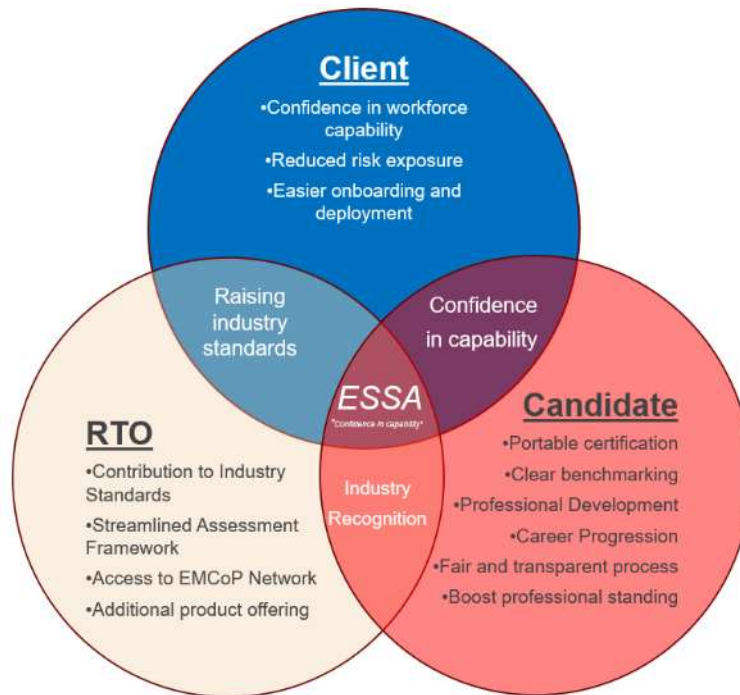


Diagram: Benefits of ESSA

## Process

The Emergency Services Skills Assessment (ESSA) is conducted by an EMCoP-approved Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and follows a structured, standardised process to evaluate core emergency response disciplines. Candidates participate in a 3-hour practical session covering disciplines such as medical response, technical rescue, breathing apparatus operations, firefighting, and road crash rescue. These disciplines may change year on year to ensure currency with industry expectations.

Each discipline is broken down into practical tasks that are designed to capture evidence of the Candidates skills, knowledge and experience in a practical setting to permit an 'assessment' in a condensed timeframe. A comprehensive Observation Tool has been designed and developed to standardize and support this process. Upon completion, the Assessor provides a detailed debrief to Candidate explaining the outcome. The booking client may also receive a copy of the outcome, who may then communicate this to the Candidate's employer. Candidates who successfully complete the ESSA are awarded a co-branded ESSA Certificate.

## Joining Instructions

As Providers have different enrolment and joining instructions, please refer to those in the first instance.

Typically, these should cover as a minimum;

- Where and how to book your ESSA.
- Ability to provide evidence of prerequisites; Your Cert III and Cert IV.
- Assessment process, possible outcomes and how best to prepare.
- Venue, Registration process, Arrival time, What to bring, What to expect and a Schedule.
- Health and Safety requirements and any pre-requisite or access process.
- Payment, Scheduling and/ or Cancellation conditions.
- Appeals and feedback processes.

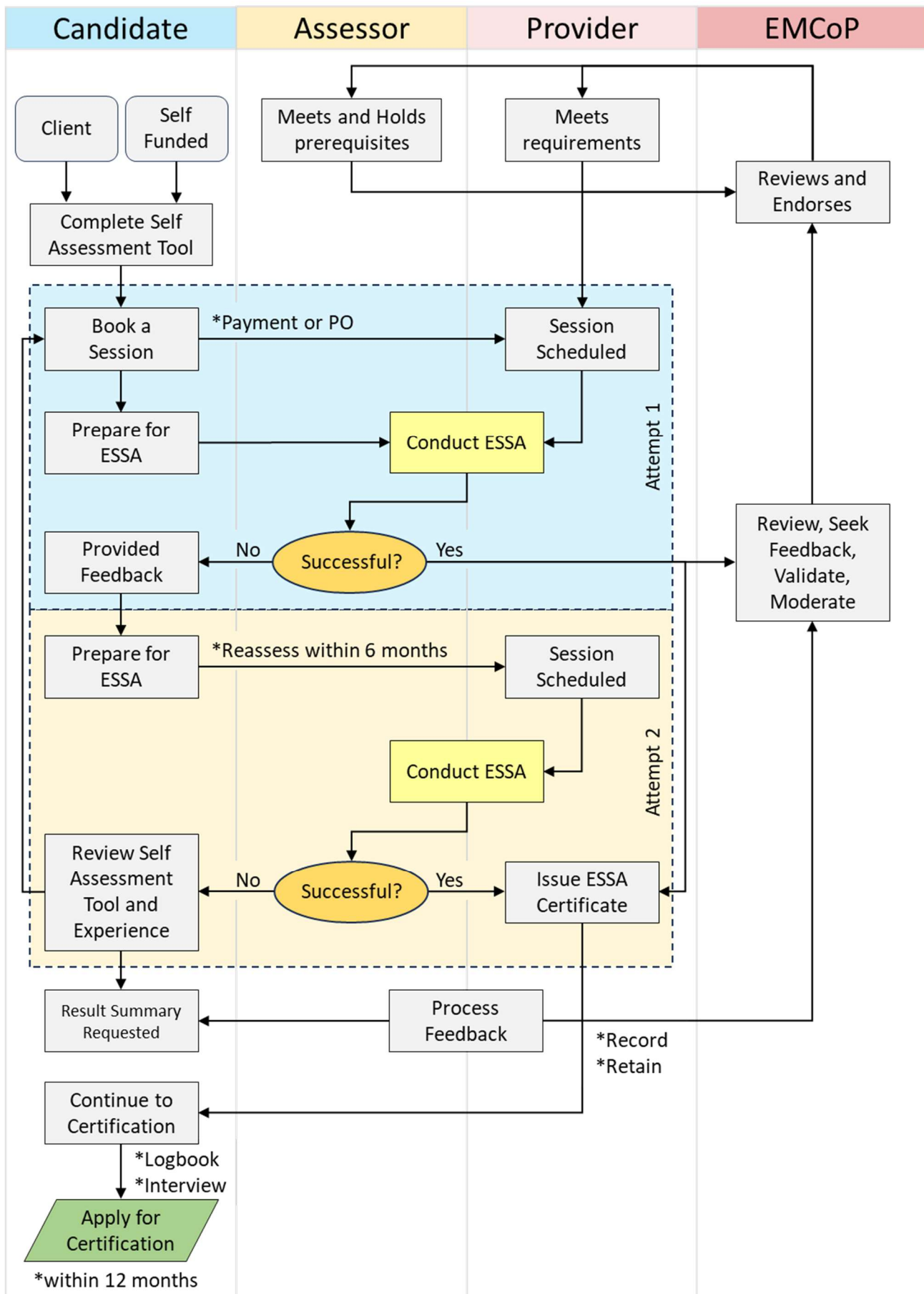


Figure: ESSA Process Flowchart



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) - General

### 1. What is the ESSA?

The Emergency Services Skills Assessment (ESSA) is a structured, practical evaluation of your emergency response capabilities, benchmarked against defined industry standards.

### 2. What is the purpose of the ESSA?

ESSA provides a consistent, industry-recognised assessment for emergency services personnel working in high-risk environments. It ensures a baseline of competence across the recognised core disciplines.

### 3. Is the ESSA mandatory?

No, ESSA is not mandatory—but it is strongly recommended. It's a respected benchmark of operational readiness and professional capability.

### 4. How long is the ESSA certificate valid?

The ESSA Certificate is valid for 3 year.

Note: Emergency Response Certification will only accept an ESSA Certificate within 12 months.

This rewards those who complete process, including interviews, referees and logbook hours.

It subsequently maintains Certification integrity by ESSA expiry if Candidate doesn't complete process.

### 5. What is the cost of the ESSA?

The fixed, industry-agreed price is \$500, payable directly to the Provider.

### 6. Where does the \$500 fee go?

The full fee is retained by the Provider to cover assessment delivery, assessor time, recordkeeping and certificate costs. EMCoP does not receive any portion of this fee.

### 7. Does the ESSA fee cover the full Certification?

No. There will be a fee to complete the Certification process. This covers the administrative time, effort and expenses incurred by AIHS to ensure all the additional requirements for Certification are upheld.

### 8. Can I do the ESSA remotely or on-site?

ESSA must be conducted by an Endorsed Assessor. The venue can be at a third-party Provider or site.

### 9. How often and who reviews the ESSA content and process?

EMCoP oversees the content and process, with feedback loops in place from Providers, Candidates and industry experts and stakeholders to ensure continuous improvement.

### 10. How can a Candidate's skills in a technical discipline be adequately assessed in time allowed?

While the time limits set may seem brief, it has been validated and moderated and proven to be more than sufficient when the assessment is structured, focused, and delivered by experienced professionals. Assessors should be qualified but also actively engaged in delivering emergency services training and assessment on a regular basis. They should know exactly what to look for and how to evaluate performance efficiently and fairly.

Each 20-minute session is designed to simulate real-world conditions where responders must act safely, quickly, and competently. The goal isn't to rush Candidates—it's to observe how they apply their skills under realistic (perceived) pressure, using clearly defined criteria aligned with industry standards. This approach ensures that assessments are consistent, credible, and respectful of candidates' time, while still maintaining the integrity and rigour expected in high-risk environments.



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) - Candidate

### 1. What are the prerequisites for undertaking an ESSA?

To be eligible, you'll need: (Superseded versions may be accepted with evidence of currency)

- Certificate III in Emergency Response and Rescue (RII30719), equivalent or higher, and
- Certificate IV in Health Care (HLT41120), equivalent or higher.
- It is recommended you do not attempt ESSA within 1 year post issue of above qualifications.

### 2. What does the assessment involve?

You'll complete practical evaluations in the recognised core disciplines:

These are aligned with the Performance Evidence identified in the National Unit of Competency.

A Self-Assessment Tool has been provided that details all that is required to prepare for the ESSA.

### 3. How is the assessment scored?

There are three (3) possible outcomes.

A certificate is issued on outcome of Satisfactory or Seasoned results in all disciplines.

- Seasoned: This Candidate has been able to demonstrate a more in-depth, intimate and/ or breadth of knowledge, skills and/ or experience in that discipline.
- Satisfactory: This Candidate has been able to demonstrate a passable or minimum level of knowledge, skills and/ or experience in that discipline.
- Developing: This Candidate has not been able to demonstrate a passable or minimum expected level of knowledge, skills and/ or experience in that discipline.

### 4. What will I receive before the assessment?

You'll receive:

- Joining instructions
- Schedule and venue details
- What to bring (PPE, ID, certificates)
- A link to the Self-Assessment Tool and any preparation video

### 5. How will I receive my results?

Your Assessor will inform you and the booking client (if applicable),

Certificates may be issued in digital, physical, or both formats, depending on the Provider.

### 6. What happens if I am unsuccessful?

That's okay—this is part of the learning journey. Your assessor will debrief you, explain the outcome, and outline next steps.

- The client will be notified (if applicable)
- You may be offered feedback and options for further training or a re-sit
- Your result remains confidential and is only shared with your employer or client (if applicable)

### 7. Can I appeal the outcome?

Yes. You can follow the Provider's appeals process, which is outlined in your joining instructions.

### 8. I've just completed my emergency services courses—do I still need to complete the ESSA?

Yes. It's recommended to complete ESSA around 12 months post-course to validate your field readiness and consolidate your learning.

**9. Can I still work in the industry without a valid ESSA and/ or Certification?**

Yes, you can. However, ESSA and Certification is strongly recommended as it enhances your credibility, supports mobility, and may be preferred by employers.

**10. What happens if I need to reschedule?**

Just notify the Provider at least 48 hours in advance. Late cancellations may incur a fee or forfeiture of one of your attempts unless there are extenuating circumstances approved in writing from the EMCoP.

**11. What if I have a medical condition or require adjustments?**

We're here to support you. Please inform your Provider or assessor ahead of time—reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure accessibility and safety.

**12. Can I use my ESSA certificate across different sites or employers?**

Absolutely. The ESSA certificate is portable and recognised across EMCoP member organisations.

**13. Why is the ESSA considered confidential?**

Confidentiality ensures fairness and consistency for all candidates. By keeping the assessment content secure, we maintain the integrity of the process and ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.