

Learner Guide

TAEASS412 Assess competence



Edition 1

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Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we work, study and live, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

We celebrate the stories, culture and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders of all communities who also work, study and live on this land.



About this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide covers the following units of competency:

TAEASS412 Assess competence

Using this Learner Guide

Look for the following throughout this Learner Guide



Activity 1A

Learning Activities

A range of different learning activities are provided throughout this Learner Guide. You may be required to conduct your own research, interpret information, practice something in your own time or reflect on your own experiences and opinions on a topic. You may be asked to provide other students with feedback. It is suggested that you take time to write down your responses to the learning activities.

Chapter 1

Review Questions

At the end of each chapter you will find a series of review questions which will help to assess your knowledge of the content from that chapter before you move onto the next.



QR Codes

<https://scnv.io/b58a>

QR codes and Watch boxes are used throughout to aid in your streamlined use of this Learner Guide.

To use the QR codes, download a QR reader on your smart device from the app store on your device.

Simply scan the QR code by using the camera on your device. The media will be shown on your device. If it is a Watch box it will be a video on YouTube. Other media may include a website, or PDF or so on.

"Learn More" appears throughout, to provide additional information on a topic.



LEARN MORE

Example of the title for the link or article to read for more information:

<https://scnv.io/b58a>



Icons and Information Boxes

You will find the following icons and call out boxes throughout this Learner Guide.



THINK

Encouraging you to think about a topic or idea further.



CASE STUDY

A scenario that puts the content into its practical application and a real life situation. The situation doesn't necessarily have to be based on a real example, but the case study will help you bring life to the content.



EXAMPLE

An example that helps you put the content into context.



NOTE

A tip or useful information that may be particularly important to remember.



WEBSITE

A link to a website that provides additional useful information.



WATCH

A link to a video to watch online with the duration eg <https://scnv.io/b58a>



KEY POINTS

Key points to remember.



READ

Additional reading such as a link to a PDF or relevant website, research article, legislation.



RESOURCE

A useful resource that you may wish to save for your future reference such as a template or guide.

Contents

1. Introduction to Assessment	6	3. Conducting Assessments	60
1.1 What Is Assessment?	7	3.1 Safe and Inclusive Assessment Environments	61
1.2 Competency-Based Assessment	9	3.2 Assessment Preparation	64
1.3 Why, Where and How Do We Assess?	14	3.3 Supporting the Learner	66
1.4 Legislative and Regulatory Requirements	16	3.4 Workplace Health and Safety	67
1.5 The Principles of Assessment	18	3.5 Gathering Quality Evidence	68
1.6 The Rules of Evidence	21	3.6 Checking the Assessment Against Requirements	69
1.7 Assessment Policies and Procedures	23	3.7 Moderating Assessment Outcomes	71
1.8 Recognition of Prior Learning	25	3.8 Determining the Assessment Outcome	72
1.9 Reasonable Adjustment	27	3.9 After the Decision	73
1.10 Building Strong Foundations	30	3.10 Achieving Competency	74
1.11 Assessor Requirements	37	3.11 Recording Results	75
1.12 Industry Experts	38	3.12 Seeking Feedback	78
1.13 Contextualising Assessments	39	Chapter 3 Review Questions	79
Chapter 1 Review Questions	41		
2. Unpacking the Assessment Process	42	Bibliography	80
2.1 The Purpose and Context of Assessment	43		
2.2 The Assessment Framework	48		
2.3 Structure of Assessment Tools	53		
2.4 Assessment Methods	55		
Chapter 2 Review Questions	59		

QualityEd

Training and Assessment

qualityed.eduworks.com.au



Introducing QualityEd!

QualityEd is a simulated Registered Training Organisation (RTO) developed by Eduworks Resources to support you to become workplace ready. QualityEd has its own student portal with a complete set of policies, procedures, forms, and templates. Through a login provided by your RTO, you can access this student portal at any time throughout your study to support your learning and assessment. You may find that QualityEd is referred to in this resource from time to time for examples and case studies.

Who are QualityEd?

QualityEd is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO10001) offering nationally accredited training and assessment options tailored to meet the needs of students and the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector.

QualityEd is passionate about competency based training where the acquisition of knowledge is converted to industry relevant workplace application. Our team delivers outstanding results through a culture of continuous improvement, sustainability, operational excellence, confident leadership and highly skilled and experienced trainers and assessors.

Established in 2002 under the name Ascot Training Services, the family owned and operated RTO was rebranded QualityEd in 2006 to reflect the growing number of courses offered to meet the demands of the Training and Education Industry and the vision and future direction of our organisation. QualityEd is still privately owned and is managed by a respected General Manager with over 25 years industry experience, along with a dedicated operational team.

With a continued focus on compliance, quality outcomes and student needs, you can be assured your study journey with QualityEd will not only provide flexibility and affordability but will be both enjoyable and rewarding, providing you with a qualification you can be proud of.

How to Access QualityEd Simulated Policies and Procedures

There are a range of policies, procedures, forms and templates available within the student portal which will help to provide context to your learning and assessment throughout your studies. These can be accessed in the QualityEd student portal via a login provided by your RTO.

To find the QualityEd website, please go to: **www.qualityed.eduworks.com.au**. There is a range of information about the organisation available in the main menu navigation, which you can access without a login.

In the student portal (accessed with a login provided by your RTO), you will find all the policies, procedures, forms, templates and sample documentation.

To find out more about QualityEd head to our website.



To view all staff and
find out more about
each staff member
head to our website.

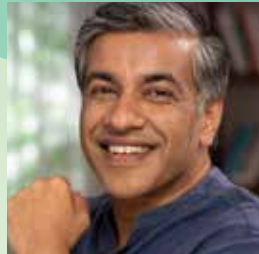
Our team



Meredith Bowles
CEO



Terrence Li
Training Manager



Carlos Ortega
Compliance Manager



Caroline Chatswood
Student Services
Manager



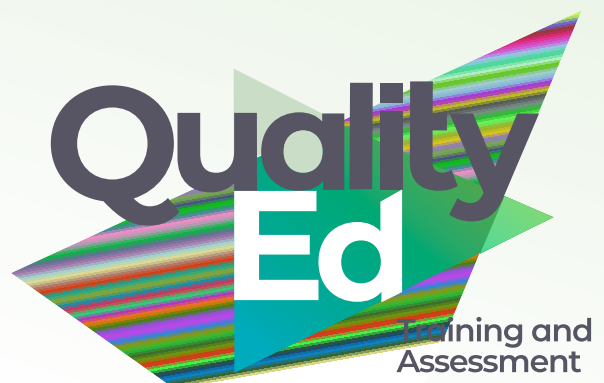
Bronte Guyula
Administration
Officer



Bruce Taylor
Marketing &
Business
Development
Coordinator



Harri Cook
Enrolments Officer



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Chapter 1

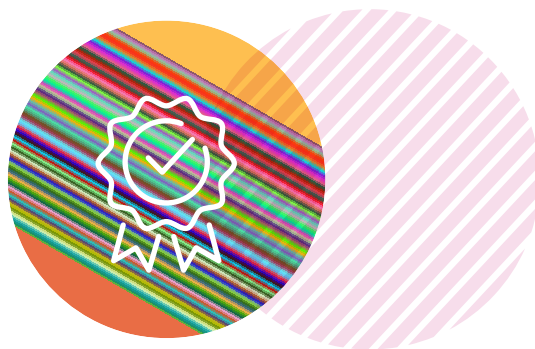
Introduction to Assessment

In this chapter, we will take an overall look at competency-based assessment in the vocational education and training (VET) system in Australia. In particular, we will focus on the underlying principles and regulatory requirements that apply to competency-based assessment.

By the end of this chapter, you will understand:

- ✓ the characteristics of competency-based assessment
- ✓ dimensions of competency
- ✓ the purpose and context of assessment in the VET system
- ✓ the regulatory requirements that pertain to assessment in VET, including the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence
- ✓ assessment policies and procedures





1.1 What Is Assessment?

Assessment is a critical part of all nationally recognised training programs.



Definition

Assessment:

The Users' Guide to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations

(RTOs) 2015 defines 'assessment' as follows:

Assessment means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace, as specified in a training package or VET accredited course.

Successful assessment is when the learner can show that they have absorbed the skills and knowledge required. This is often achieved by application to real-life situations or simulated scenarios, by completing specific projects, by answering questions and so on.

Assessment is best conducted using a range of methods over a period of time to ensure the learner can consistently perform to the standard expected.

The learner's performance is compared to benchmarks (units of competency) to determine whether they can work to the standard required, and across a range of situations and contexts. The assessor needs to determine whether the learner, once they have graduated from the course, will have the skills and knowledge expected by future employers. Can the learner work in industry, or do they need more training and guidance?



Assessment should be a positive experience. It can provide valuable information, for example:

- Learners can use assessment to identify their achievements, diagnose their strengths and weaknesses, gain feedback on their performance, and achieve nationally recognised qualifications that will help with career development.
- Trainers and the training organisation receive valuable feedback on their programs through the assessments. Successful assessment outcomes mean that their training programs are working well. Issues with reassessment and final non-competent outcomes may mean that trainers need to look at the overall learning process and the assessments used. For example:
 - Were learning resources appropriate and sufficient?
 - Was enough support given?
 - Did learners get time for practice?
 - Did learners get to experience a real workplace environment?
 - Were the final assessment activities clear and easy for learners to follow, gather the required evidence, etc.?
- Employers are assured that their employees have the skills and knowledge they need to become a valuable member of the workplace. This includes working with others, competently and consistently performing workplace tasks to standard, and handling problems and contingencies.
- Workplace supervisors (where the learner is workplace based) have access to evaluations of how well their workers are performing key tasks, and of gaps in their workers' skills and knowledge.

Outlined in the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) or the VET Quality Framework are the principles and guidelines for conducting assessment and issuing nationally recognised qualifications based on the outcomes of those assessments. These 'rules' apply to all forms of assessment, including recognition of prior learning (RPL).



Resource

Throughout this unit, we will repeatedly refer to the following documents. It is a great idea to access them now. You might also like to download them.

The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (the Standards) is the regulatory framework that governs the VET sector across Australia. This federal legislation outlines the standards under which RTOs, trainers and assessors in VET must operate:

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

<https://scnv.io/f4kf>



Users' Guide to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)



<https://scnv.io/vRjl>

In Victoria, in addition to the Standards, the VET sector operates under the AQTF Essential Standards for Continuing Registration:

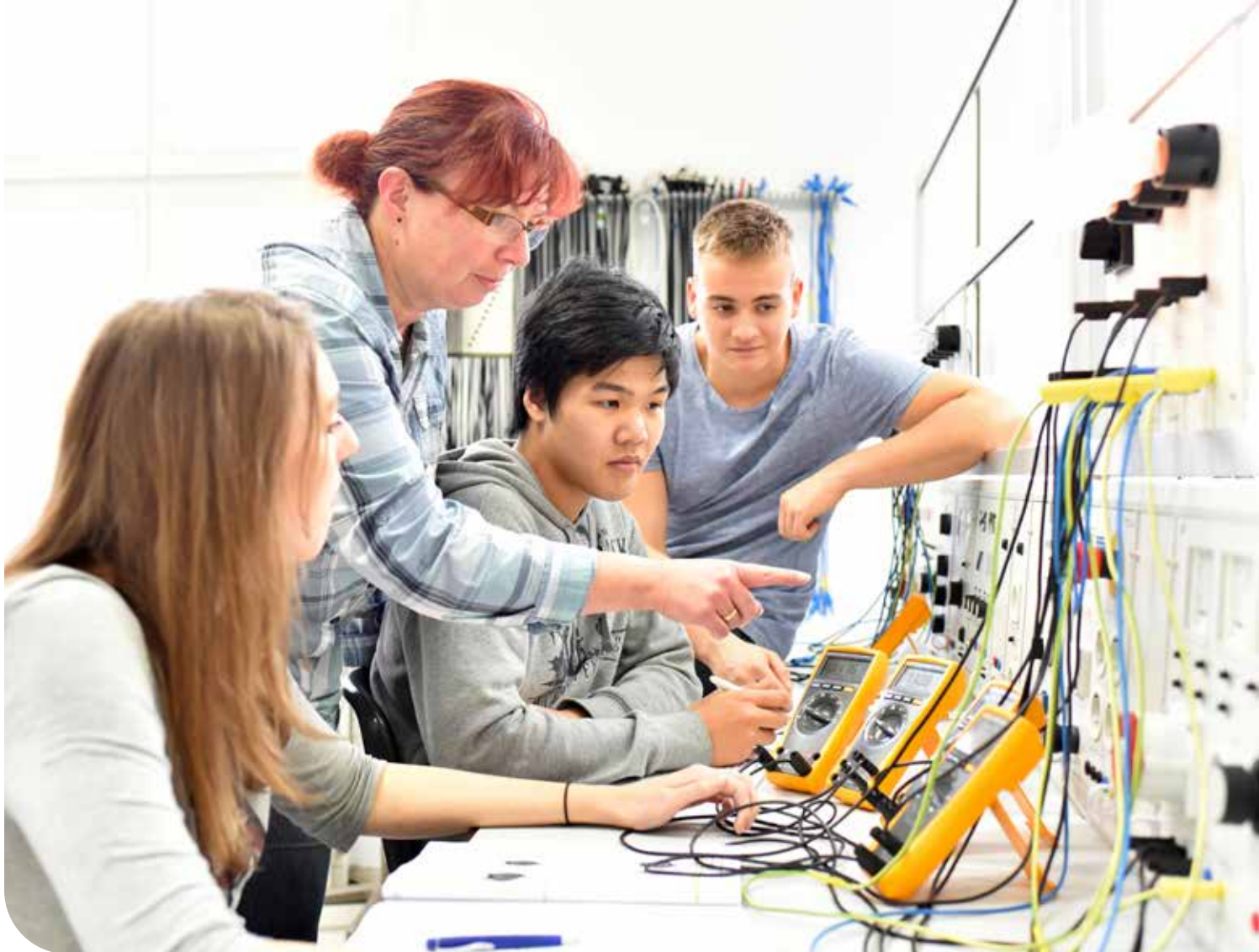
Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration by the AQTF

<https://scnv.io/ll32>



These two regulatory frameworks spell out your responsibilities while assessing learners.





1.2 Competency-Based Assessment



Definition

Competency:

The *Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015* defines 'competency' as the 'consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.'

Reflecting on the concept of competency, we can see it is about much more than getting the answer right or wrong. The achievement of competency is dependent on the answers to questions such as:

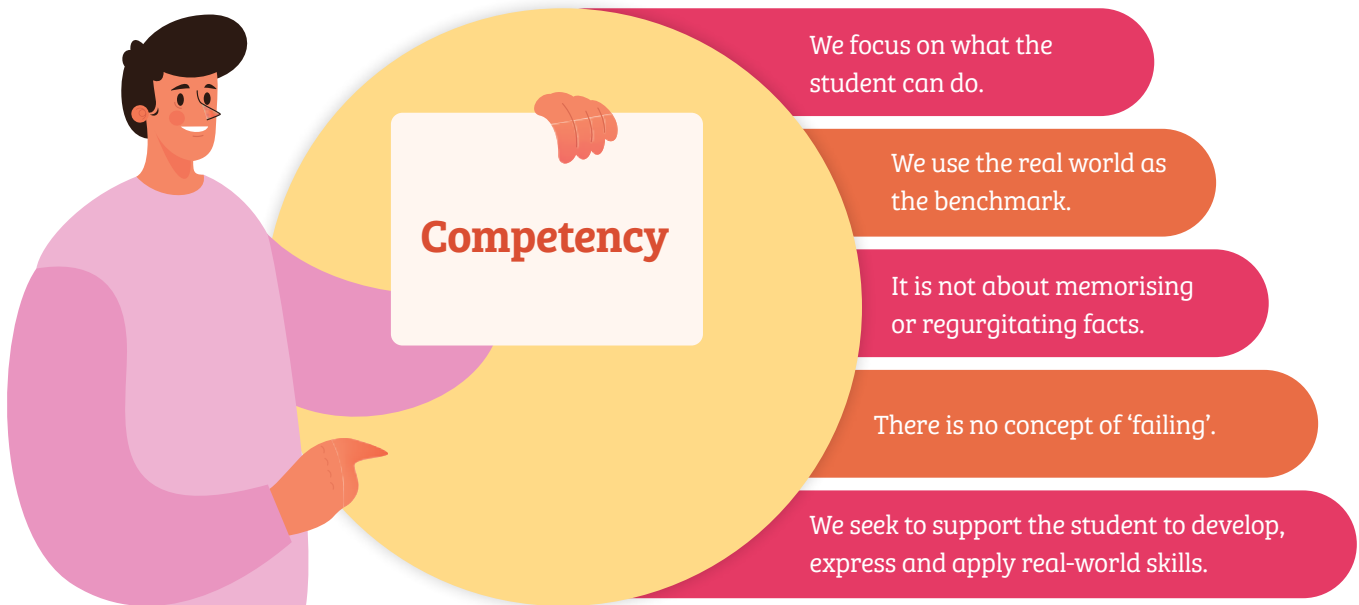
- Can this person use the skills and knowledge they have learned to do this task well in the real world?
- After they have left the classroom, will this learner be able to adapt and use these skills and knowledge as their work role changes?

Here, we can see a fundamental difference between competency-based assessment and other approaches. In competency-based assessment, the benchmark of competency is the question: is this good enough for a real workplace?

To be competent, a learner must demonstrate all aspects of competency to ensure that they can:

- perform consistently in a variety of situations
- perform when things go wrong
- transfer their skills to new environments.

These different aspects of competency are called ‘dimensions of competency’, and all assessment must ensure that these dimensions are demonstrated by the learner.



Competency-Based vs Theory-Based Assessment

Often in the education system, assessment is a theory-based test of the learner’s knowledge. The assessment does not only test the learner’s knowledge, but it also tests a range of irrelevant skills, such as the ability to sit still and be quiet, the ability to memorise facts and regurgitate them later, the skill of reading and writing quickly in a stressful environment without assistance – the list goes on. For many learners, assessment is a stressful event where they may feel under a lot of pressure to memorise answers, regurgitate them and perform.

Competency-based assessment as it is used in the VET system is a completely different approach to theory-based assessment. Competency-based assessment is practical rather than abstract. The focus is on checking whether the learner can apply their skills and knowledge well enough to perform in the real world yet or not. The benchmark for competency-based assessment is always the standard of performance required in the real world of the workplace.

The word ‘yet’ is a very important aspect of competency-based assessment in VET. If a learner is not able to competently demonstrate a skill during the assessment, this does not mean they failed. It means they have not demonstrated competency yet. The role of the assessor is then to ask: what other training or support might this learner need to develop their skills and knowledge to the point required to demonstrate competency?

In competency-based assessment, the concept of failing does not exist. The focus is always on collecting evidence of what the learner can do. We are motivated to train learners to perform in the real world and to reflect their skills and competency in evidence, collected through assessing. We understand that different learners may need more time or extra opportunities to demonstrate their competency.



Watch

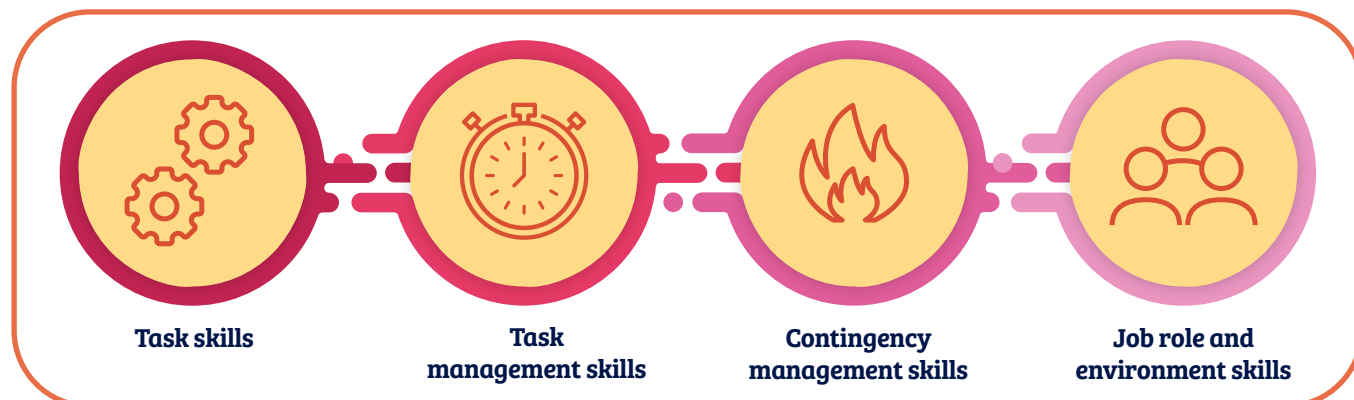
The following video discusses the fundamental principles of competency-based assessment:

<https://scnv.io/aDE6>



The Four Dimensions of Competency

There are four dimensions of competency:



Dimensions of Competency	Explanation
Task skills	The ability to perform specific workplace tasks. For example, for a barista, one task might be: make a flat white.
Task management skills	The ability to manage several different tasks to complete a whole work procedure or activity. This might include planning the sequence of tasks to successfully achieve the outcome. For example, a barista making a flat white would need to turn on the coffee machine; check that it is working properly; fill all of the consumables (water, coffee beans); communicate with the customer to take an order; and apply all of the skills required to make a coffee well, in the right order, in a timely manner.
Contingency management skills	The ability to respond appropriately to problems or unexpected events when undertaking workplace activities. Such events might include: • interruptions • breakdowns of equipment • challenging behaviour, complaints or dissatisfied customers • changes to routine • unexpected outcomes or results.
Job role and environment skills	The ability to deal with responsibilities and expectations of the work environment and their role while undertaking workplace activities. This might include: • working with colleagues • liaising with clients or customers • complying with policies and procedures.



When you are assessing a learner, you should be considering whether they have demonstrated all four dimensions of competency. While many units of competency and modules cover the dimensions in the requirements of the standard, it is important for you to consider the dimensions of competency during every assessment to ensure that the learner can apply their skills and knowledge in evolving real-world situations.



Watch

The following video discusses the dimensions of competency and how to assess them:



<https://scnv.io/v5zK>



Case study

Dimensions of Competency

For five years, Harriet has been a trainer and assessor for QualityEd, an RTO that offers students VET courses. She is the assigned assessor for a group of learners studying Certificate IV in Hospitality. The assessment will take place in a simulated workplace environment, where the learners will be required to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in various hospitality-related tasks.

Dimension 1: Task skills

Harriet has developed a detailed assessment plan that includes a variety of tasks that will allow the learners to demonstrate their skills in different hospitality areas. For example, they must prepare and serve various dishes, set up tables and chairs for multiple events, and handle customer complaints. Harriet has designed each task to reflect the skills and knowledge required for Certificate IV in Hospitality.

Dimension 2: Task management skills

In addition to assessing the learners' task skills, Harriet will also evaluate their task management skills, which include their ability to plan and organise work, manage time effectively and work collaboratively. Harriet will observe the learners as they work, looking for evidence that they can manage their tasks in a way that meets the needs of the simulated workplace environment.

Dimension 3: Contingency management skills

Harriet recognises that the hospitality industry can be unpredictable and that learners must respond quickly and effectively to unexpected situations. As such, she has included a range of contingency scenarios in the assessment, such as a sudden increase in customer demand or a power outage. Harriet will seek evidence that the learners can adapt their approach to the task and respond appropriately to any unexpected situations.

Dimension 4: Job role environment skills

Finally, Harriet will assess the learners' job role environment skills, which include their ability to work safely and hygienically, follow workplace procedures and communicate effectively with others. Harriet will observe the learners as they work, looking for evidence that they can work safely and efficiently in a simulated workplace environment.



Activity 1A

Dimensions of Competency

For this activity, choose a unit of competency from a training package you intend to deliver and assess in the future. Consider how the dimensions of competency are expressed in the unit and in the performance of the skills in the real world.

List examples of each of the following dimensions of competency as they are expressed in the elements, performance criteria and knowledge evidence of the unit:

- task skills
- task management skills
- contingency management skills
- job role and environment skills.

Explain your answers.



1.3 Why, Where and How Do We Assess?

There are many reasons and advantages for assessment in the vocational education and training sector.

Assessment may be carried out to:

- determine the achievement of competence against nationally recognised qualifications and accredited courses
- encourage learning and provide feedback to the learner about how they have progressed and areas that need improving
- ensure that learning is taking place and that the learner has reached a certain standard (e.g. being able to perform a task independently)
- determine gaps in skills and training
- recognise learning that has been gained through work and life experience – RPL
- assess suitability for career progression
- meet licensing and regulatory requirements
- provide feedback and acknowledgement to the learner.



In VET, assessment may be carried out in a range of contexts. Our aim is always to reflect the real-world conditions of the workplace as closely as possible. The context of assessment in VET should be selected to ensure that it offers a valid and fair opportunity for learners to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. We select and create the context that reflects real-life scenarios and best allows learners to demonstrate the skills and knowledge of the specific unit.

Examples include the following:

- **Practical observations of workplace tasks**
Observations could cover, for example, installing an air-conditioning unit, implementing soil amendments, poaching an egg or blow-drying a client's hair.
- **Computer-based assessments**
Assessments could cover, for example, updating a database, conducting a customer feedback survey, implementing a file management system or creating a web page.
- **Role plays and communicative scenarios**
Role plays and scenarios could cover, for example, organising and holding team meetings, or demonstrating how you would show communication skills with a client or colleague.
- **Workplace observations**
The assessor visits the client in their workplace with the agreement of their supervisor and observes them actually doing the task in real life.
- **Case studies**
Learners are given all of the relevant information they need about a situation to show how they could use their skills and knowledge to respond.

The list of possibilities is almost endless. As an assessor, it is your role to consider the unit of competency and what it is preparing learners to do in the real world, and then design an assessment strategy that reflects this real-world quality as closely as possible.

Activity 1B

Thinking About Assessment Context

The assessment context is determined by the requirements of the unit of competency. Let us take a look at three units and think about the allowable contexts for assessment.

Go to the training.gov.au website:

<https://scnv.io/cHus>

Using each unit's code, look up the following units of competency:

- RIIMPO315E Conduct Tractor Operations
- SITXCCS014 Provide Service to Customers
- RGRHBR303 Assist With Artificial Insemination of Mares.

For each of these units of competency, read the section titled 'Application'. Next, read the section 'Assessment Conditions'. Then read the 'Performance Evidence' requirements, the 'Elements and Performance Criteria' and the 'Knowledge Evidence' requirements.

Answer the following questions:

1. Could you assess this unit in a simulated environment (e.g. on campus)? If so, under what conditions could you assess this unit in a simulated environment?
2. Could you assess this unit using a role play where a person uses props to 'act out' the skill with an assessor?
3. How many times does the learner need to be assessed performing the skills?



1.4 Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

Assessment forms the cornerstone of fairness, quality and consistency in the VET system in Australia. The main regulation that governs the VET sector is the Standards for RTOs 2015. This is not just a vague set of guidelines – it is Commonwealth Government legislation. In effect, this means that sloppy assessing in VET is not just bad business practice, it is illegal and can result in your RTO being deregistered.

In the Standards, regulations governing training and assessing are in Standard 1:

The RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices are responsive to industry and learner needs and meet the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses.

It is necessary for an RTO to have implemented strategies that ensure the provision of high-quality training and assessment throughout all aspects of its operations.

This includes the following requirements:

- A continuous improvement approach to training and assessment.
- Assessment strategies that meet the requirements of the relevant training package or accredited course, and the specific unit of competency.
- Systematic industry consultation to ensure that training and assessment fit with the current needs and trends in industry.
- Assessment strategies that fit the training requirements of the specific individual learner. This means that someone with five years' experience on the job would be assessed differently than someone who has just started studying, with no experience in the field.
- A clear risk assessment approach that manages the risk from assessments by ensuring they are safe and valid.
- Qualified staff, facilities, equipment and materials consistent with the requirements of the training package or accredited course. This means that staff who assess the unit must meet the requirements for assessors stipulated in the 'Assessment Conditions' section in the unit of competency.
- A comprehensive plan where assessment tools are systematically reviewed, validated and improved.
- Procedures to ensure that assessment meets workplace and regulatory requirements.



It is also a requirement that all assessments are conducted in line with the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence.



LEARN MORE

Read Chapter 3 and 4 of the Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015 to learn more about Standard 1:

Chapter 3

<https://scnv.io/GPNM>



Chapter 4

<https://scnv.io/JI9w>



Activity 1C

AQTF and the VET Quality Framework

Download the standards relevant to your registering body, either:

Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015

<https://scnv.io/vRjl>



AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration (Vic)

<https://scnv.io/I132>



Review Standard 1 and familiarise yourself with the trainer and assessor requirements.

1.5 The Principles of Assessment

As discussed previously, following the Principles of Assessment is a regulatory requirement across the VET sector in Australia.

When assessment processes, methods and tools are developed, the assessor and the RTO have a shared role in ensuring that the Principles of Assessment are met.



Note

The Principles of Assessment are covered in the Standards for RTOs 2015 in Clause 1.8.

The Principles of Assessment are that assessment must be:



Validity

Assessment is *valid* when it:

- covers the broad range of skills and knowledge described by the unit of competency or accredited module
- ensures that skills and knowledge are integrated with practical situations
- ensures the collection of sufficient evidence.

To contribute to the validity of assessment, ensure that assessment:

- reflects industry standards, dimensions of competency, Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level and language, literacy and numeracy requirements
- is conducted in a workplace environment or appropriately simulated environment
- includes evidence of the ability to transfer skills to new situations
- uses multiple approaches and methods of assessment.

Reliability

Assessment is *reliable* when it:

- uses methods and tools that ensure consistent interpretation each time they are used, no matter what the context
- ensures different assessors can make the same decision.

There are several different ways to make sure that assessments are reliable, for example:

- distributing assessment guides for learners and assessors
- ensuring that assessors are accredited
- validating assessment tools and results
- checking assessment results for consistency.

Flexibility

Assessment is *flexible* when it:

- can be customised to suit different learners and contexts
- considers the individual needs and situation of each learner
- provides for recognition of competency no matter how, where or when it was acquired
- draws on a range of methods appropriate to the context, competency and the learner.

To create flexible assessments:

- Build flexibility into the assessment plan.
- Ensure that assessors are flexible enough to make sure the individual needs of the learner are met while still maintaining integrity of the assessment process.

Fairness

Assessment is *fair* when it:

- ensures that every learner has the same opportunity to succeed, regardless of cultural background, language and literacy skills, and other individual needs that learners might have
- involves clear communication between the assessor and the learner to ensure the learner is fully informed and understands the assessment process
- provides the opportunity for the learner to challenge the result of the assessment and to be reassessed if necessary.

To ensure fairness:

- Write assessment instructions in plain, simple English and ensure they cannot be misinterpreted.
- Accommodate any special needs of the learner by adjusting the assessment procedure, methods or types of evidence used in the assessment. For example, you could supply an interpreter so that assessment can be completed in another language; or use verbal questioning rather than written questions for someone who is unable to write due to a learning difficulty, low literacy, an injury or a disability.



LEARN MORE

Read Clause 1.8 of the Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015 to learn more about the Principles of Assessment:

<https://scnv.io/bnMO>





Activity 1D

Principles of Assessment

Consider each of the following scenarios. In each case, which Principle of Assessment is not being followed?

Scenario 1:

Dodgy Brothers Vocational Five Star Academy trains students in the Certificate III in Hospitality. A key component of the course is customer service. Today, the students are participating in role plays to assess their skills and knowledge in the unit SITXCCS006 Provide Service to Customers.

As a requirement of the role-play script, each student must engage the customer in conversation about the Australian cricket team, because the Cricket World Cup is happening on TV and the assessor thinks this is a good example of engaging customers.

Diego is an excellent hospitality student and is very warm with customers. He migrated to Australia from Argentina two years earlier and has no interest in cricket at all. Although he serves the customer in a friendly and efficient way, his assessor fails him in the role play because he does not understand the customer's comments about cricket (from the role-play script).

Scenario 2:

Dodgy Brothers Vocational Five Star Academy teaches the Certificate III in Hospitality during two sessions – the morning session (8 a.m. – 12 p.m.) and the evening session (4 p.m. – 8 p.m.) – five days a week. When the assessor runs the role-play assessments for the unit SITXCCS006 Provide Service to Customers, they decide it would just be easier to get all the students assessed in one long session from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.

They give each student an allotted time to attend college to participate in the role play. Diego, who works day shifts at a cafe in town and studies at Dodgy Brothers in the evenings, is given an assessment slot of 1:30 p.m. He is unable to make it because he is working. His assessor marks him as Not Yet Competent in the unit due to non-attendance.

Scenario 3:

After completing all the role plays for SITXCCS006 Provide Service to Customers, the course assessors have a chat. They decide it is too much work and takes too long to run assessments such as role plays and workplace observations. They decide to assess the next unit, SITXWHS001 Participate in Safe Work Practices, using only true/false self-marking quizzes on Moodle.

Scenario 4:

When Dodgy Brothers Vocational Five Star Academy assesses the unit SITXCCS006 Provide Service to Customers, the assessors must run 76 role plays to assess each student individually. Three assessors complete the assessing in three different classrooms, which are set up to look like cafes.

In two of the assessment groups, most students get a Competent result in the assessment. In the other assessment group, most of the students are deemed to be Not Yet Competent by the assessor, who had a collision in their car on the way to work and has a horrendous migraine. Dodgy Brothers does not record any role plays or run any assessment moderation afterwards.

1.6 The Rules of Evidence

Assessment is all about the collection of evidence. All assessments must ensure that the evidence, on which a judgment of competence is made, satisfies the Rules of Evidence.



Note

The Rules of Evidence are covered in Clause 1.8 in the Standards for RTOs 2015.

The Rules of Evidence are as follows:



Validity



Authenticity



Currency



Sufficiency

When considering *each piece of evidence* used in an assessment, the assessor must consider the first *three* of these rules.

Is each piece of evidence:

Valid

Does the evidence cover the broad range of skills and knowledge required by the Standard (unit of competency or module)?

Does the evidence demonstrate that skills and knowledge can be applied to a practical situation?

Authentic

Is the evidence the learner's own work?

Current

Is the evidence provided current?

When considering *all the evidence used* in the assessment, the assessor must consider the quality and quantity of the pool of evidence to determine sufficiency.

Is all the evidence:

Sufficient

Is there enough evidence to ensure that all requirements of the Standard have been met?

Is there enough evidence to demonstrate that the learner can perform consistently?

Has the evidence been gathered on several occasions and in a range of contexts, using different assessment methods?

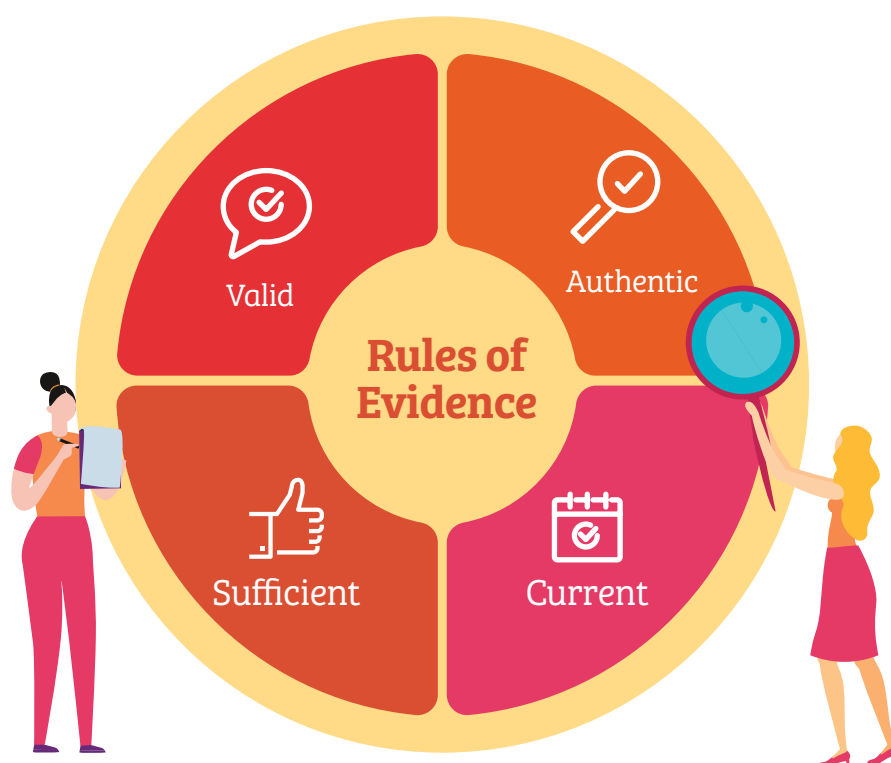


LEARN MORE

Read Clause 1.8 in the Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015 to learn more about the Rules of Evidence:

<https://scnv.io/bnMO>





Case study

Using the Rules of Evidence and Principles of Assessment

Harriet is a trainer and assessor for QualityEd. One of the courses that QualityEd offers is the CHCDIV001 course, which is about working with diverse people.

Harriet has been tasked with assessing the written questions for the CHCDIV001 course. She must use the Rules of Evidence and the Principles of Assessment to ensure that the assessments are valid, reliable, fair and flexible.

To begin the assessment process, Harriet reviews the assessment materials and ensures they align with the course outcomes and meet the training package requirements. She checks that the questions are clear, concise and relevant to the course content. Harriet also ensures that the assessment criteria are specific and measurable, and that the assessment methods used are appropriate for the type of assessment. For example, performance evidence is not assessed with written questions.

Next, Harriet assesses the written responses using the benchmark answers provided and the Rules of Evidence. She checks that the proof is valid, authentic, sufficient and current. She ensures that the evidence is relevant to the assessment criteria and meets the competency standards.

Harriet also applies the Principles of Assessment to ensure that the assessment is fair and flexible. She considers the needs of the learners and makes reasonable adjustments to accommodate any special needs or circumstances. She also ensures that the assessment process is transparent and that the learners understand the assessment criteria and expectations.

After assessing the written responses, Harriet provides feedback to the learners. She identifies their strengths and areas for improvement, and provides them with guidance on improving their performance. Harriet also allows them to resubmit their work if they still need to meet the competency standards in line with the RTO's policy and procedure.

1.7 Assessment Policies and Procedures

In addition to the requirements found in the Standards for RTOs 2015, you will need to follow your workplace's policies and procedures around assessing. These may include:

Assessment Validation Policy and Procedure

According to the Standards, every registered RTO must have a clear assessment validation strategy in place. This includes systematic validation of assessment tools and learner results to ensure fairness, consistency and quality. At a minimum, ASQA requires that every training item (including assessment tools) is validated by a team of qualified people at least every five years. This team should include a minimum of one qualified person with relevant industry experience who is not directly involved in assessing the unit of competency.



Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedure

When several assessors at an RTO assess the same unit of competency to different learners, they may be required to participate in assessment moderation. Assessment moderation is a process whereby assessors make sure they are using the same standards to judge competency. These standards should be based on the training package, the AQF levels of the unit and the requirements of the unit of competency.

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure

Under the Standards, RTOs must offer a pathway for learners with industry experience to apply for recognition of prior learning. This means that, rather than complete the training and assessment for every unit of competency in the qualification, learners may apply to have their experience recognised and get credit for certain units. Assessors may be required to conduct RPL assessments.



Reasonable Adjustment Policy and Procedure

RTOs must offer reasonable adjustment to ensure that learners facing barriers are able to participate in assessments with equitable opportunity to demonstrate competency. Reasonable adjustment applies in a range of situations where learners are experiencing barriers, which may include learning difficulties, literacy and numeracy issues, disability, health issues, or not being fluent in written or spoken English.

Assessors may be required to analyse the assessment instrument and the specific needs of the learner, and adapt the assessment tool so that the learner has an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their competency.



Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure

Assessments, as with all other aspects of the RTO–learner relationship, are subject to privacy and confidentiality policies and procedures. Be mindful that the following information is strictly private and confidential:

- details about a learner’s performance in an assessment, including whether they were present or not
- a learner’s assessment results
- details of any reasonable adjustment offered
- details of reassessment and feedback given to the learner.

This information can be recorded and shared with only RTO colleagues and data collection systems, such as the learning management system (LMS) at the RTO and the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS).



Read

Access QualityEd’s website for the following policies and procedures:

<https://scnv.io/jADF>



- | | |
|------|--|
| TA2 | Training and Assessment Policy and Procedure |
| TA6 | Assessment Validation Policy and Procedure |
| TA11 | Assessment Tool Development Policy and Procedure |

1.8 Recognition of Prior Learning

The purpose of RPL is to take the evidence from the candidate's work and life experience, in situations where they may already have the skills and knowledge being assessed in one or more unit of competency. The process for assessment in an RPL situation may differ from candidate to candidate, as it needs to concentrate on the collection of evidence relevant to the experience of each candidate.



Note

RPL is covered under the Standards for RTOs 2015 in Clause 1.12.



Definition

Recognition of prior learning:

ASQA defines 'recognition of prior learning' as follows:

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process that assesses your competency—acquired through formal and informal learning—to determine if you meet the requirements for a unit of study.

You can use a variety of documentation to apply for RPL. This includes, but is not limited to:

- *records of completed training*
- *assessment items*
- *assessment records*
- *declarations from your employer, and/or*
- *a copy of your student records provided by ASQA.*

Each provider has its own RPL process, so when you are accepted by a new provider, speak to your new provider for assistance with applying for RPL.

RPL is a process that recognises the knowledge and skills the candidate already has.

Therefore, an RPL process should be based on the candidate's ability to demonstrate that they currently hold the level of skill and knowledge outlined in each unit of competency. They must be able to demonstrate this practically to receive RPL for a given unit.

For the candidate, best practice RPL models should be a guided and supported process that relies on the candidate's ability to demonstrate their competence. This is done with the support of an assessor to provide guidance on evidence requirements.

Evidence can be provided by answering verbal questions during a 'competency conversation', providing references, a curriculum vitae (CV) and job descriptions; and, where possible, assessing practical skills in the workplace or simulated environment. Supplementary evidence such as photos or workplace documents can be provided to support the assessment decision. However, the RPL process does not need to focus on the paper-based evidence types. RPL models of the past relied mostly, and sometimes entirely, on written evidence, and so RPL was often an administrative burden and, in some cases, took a longer time to complete than the training program itself.

Common forms of evidence used in an RPL assessment are like those used in a non-RPL assessment; however, the focus might be different. For example, competency may be demonstrated through combinations of any or all of the following:

- being directly observed by an assessor while demonstrating a range of practical skills
- responding to verbal questioning from an assessor
- providing a folio of written evidence, including a statement from an employer.

Written evidence may include the following:

- **Testimonials** – Usually from those who have been senior to the candidate in the workplace, confirming the candidate's experience and level of skill, and the senior person's observations of the candidate's performance.
- **Reflective papers** – Journals or portfolios that relate past learning to the competency requirements of the unit.
- **Examples** – Examples of work collected from the workplace or other setting in which the candidate has applied their learning, skill or competence.
- **Participation** – Participating in the same or modified versions of assessments from the non-RPL course.

The following diagram outlines the typical RPL process:





1.9 Reasonable Adjustment

Fairness is a key principle that underlies assessment practices in the VET sector. With a commitment to engage, train and graduate a diverse population of learners, we have a commitment to ensure that each learner has an equitable opportunity to participate in assessment.

Reasonable adjustment is an important policy and procedure in VET. In fact, it is a legislative requirement under the Standards for RTOs 2015 that RTOs will offer equitable access to all learners, which means offering reasonable adjustment for learners when required.



Definition

Reasonable adjustment:

'Reasonable adjustment' is any measure or action taken by the RTO, trainer and assessor to ensure that students facing barriers can participate fully in training and assessment, with equitable opportunities.



Note

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Education Standards) are legal standards that apply to the VET sector. The Education Standards require *reasonable adjustment*.

Reasonable adjustment may be applied in cases where learners experience barriers that mean an assessment task would be more difficult for them than another learner, without this difficulty being an intrinsic requirement of the unit of competency.

Situations in which reasonable adjustment would be applied include where the learner has:

- a disability
- a learning difficulty
- barriers regarding language, literacy or numeracy that do not impact on the learner's performance of the essential requirements of the unit of competency
- a mental illness
- any other health issue that impacts on their education.

Reasonable adjustment could include:

- ensuring training and assessments occur in accessible classrooms or locations
- offering assessment material in alternate formats (e.g. electronic, large print, Braille)
- allowing learners with a learning difficulty or disability to use a laptop for assessments
- allowing extra time or extensions for assessments
- designing alternative assessment tasks
- arranging a support person to scribe the learner's answers in a written assessment.



Read

Read the fact sheet below to learn about providing quality training and assessment services to students with disability:

<https://scnv.io/DFw5>



Implementing Reasonable Adjustment

When we become aware that a learner is experiencing a barrier, we should immediately reflect on the following questions:

Will the learner have an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in this assessment as compared to a learner without this barrier?



How can I alter the assessment strategy in a way that accommodates the learner but does not compromise the inherent requirements for performance and knowledge evidence as stipulated in the unit of competency?



Example

Imagine you are assessing the unit TLIC3035 Manage the Operation of a Tow Truck. Part of the unit requires the learners to demonstrate their knowledge about causes and effects of fatigue on drivers. Currently, this knowledge is assessed in a written question-and-answer assessment.

A learner undertaking the class has low literacy levels but has writing skills sufficient to fill in simple forms such as a vehicle log, but not to write paragraphs about the cause and effect of fatigue on drivers. A reasonable adjustment would be to allow the learner to verbally discuss the causes and effects of fatigue, rather than writing about them. In this case, the learner's lack of confidence with writing does not impact their capacity to fulfill the requirements of the unit, specifically to operate a tow truck. Therefore, it is possible to adjust the assessment strategy without compromising the essential requirements of the unit.

However, if the same learner were to also undertake a Certificate IV in Business and studied the unit BSBESB401 Research and Develop Business Plans, then it would not be possible to remove the requirement for the learner to write complex text, because writing a business plan is an essential requirement of the unit.

In these two examples, we can see the parameters of the concept of reasonable adjustment. Wherever possible we should seek to adjust training and assessment to prevent or remove barriers for learners, if the essential requirements of the unit of competency are still met.



Watch

The following video discusses supporting students with disability in VET:

<https://scnv.io/zyqJ>





Activity 1E

Is It Reasonable?

For each of the following examples, consider whether the reasonable adjustment strategy is possible *without compromising the essential requirements of the unit*.

Go to the training.gov.au website and refer to the relevant unit of competency to guide you:



<https://scnv.io/cHus>

1. A learner doing the unit AHCCCF419 Present Proposed Courses of Action at a Meeting suffers from a mental illness. They experience extreme anxiety when speaking to groups of people. They ask whether they can be assessed for this unit by writing a report or having a one-on-one discussion with only you present (the assessor).
2. A learner doing the unit BSBESB401 Research and Develop Business Plans is diagnosed with dyspraxia. They have difficulty performing coordinated movements and would like to complete all assessment for the unit verbally, through interviews and presentations.
3. A learner doing the unit CPCPCM2053 Weld Using Metal Arc Welding Equipment has very limited literacy skills. They ask you whether it would be possible to complete the knowledge quiz through a verbal question-and-answer interview, rather than a written quiz.



1.10 Building Strong Foundations

As an assessor, it is critical that you understand the terminology and the makeup of foundation skills. 'Foundation skills' is the main term given when speaking about both the core skills and the employability skills.



Supporting the foundation skills of a learner during training and assessment is essential to ensure that they have the skills needed to achieve competency. 'Foundation skills' refer to the skills necessary for a learner to succeed in their chosen occupation. To support the core skills of a learner, trainers and assessors must provide tailored training and assessment activities that align with the learner's needs and abilities. These activities may involve identifying gaps in the learner's skills; and providing additional support and resources, such as a learning support plan. They may also include opportunities for learners to practise and develop their core skills in a real-world context to ensure they are job-ready.

Core Skills

In a training context in Australia, 'core skills' refer to the fundamental skills needed for success in the workplace, education and daily life. These skills include:

- digital literacy
- learning
- reading
- writing
- oral communication
- numeracy.

The core skills are essential for individuals to participate effectively in the workforce and society.



Employment Skills

‘Employment skills’ refer to the skills and knowledge required for success in the workplace, such as:

- initiative and enterprise
- planning and organising
- communication
- teamwork
- problem-solving
- self-management
- time management
- adaptability.

In a unit of competency, employment skills are included as part of the performance criteria that a learner needs to demonstrate to achieve competency. Including employment skills in a unit of competency ensures that learners are job-ready and have the skills necessary to perform effectively in a workplace. In the unit of competency requirements on training.gov.au, employment skills will also fall under the performance criteria and are occasionally listed under the ‘Foundation Skills’ component.



Foundation Skills

Each unit of competency will have the foundation skills either implicit or explicit for the assessor to review. Some units of competency will state:

The Foundation Skills describe those required skills (language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills) that are essential to performance. ... The remaining foundation skills essential to performance are explicit in the performance criteria of this unit.

This means that, when reviewing, designing or modifying assessment, there are no specific foundation skills that require mapping, as the foundation skills are embedded throughout the performance criteria. What you do need to be mindful of as an assessor is looking through the performance criteria to identify what foundations skills are present.





Example

In the following performance criteria for CHCADV001 Facilitate the Interests and Rights of Clients, the words associated with the core skills are highlighted yellow:

Elements and Performance Criteria

Elements define the essential outcomes

1. Facilitate the realisation of client interests, rights and needs

Performance Criteria

Performance criteria specify the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element

- 1.1 **Discuss** the rights and responsibilities of all parties with client
- 1.2 **Provide** client with **researched**, relevant and timely information on their rights and responsibilities
- 1.3 **Assist** clients to identify their own interests, rights, needs, choices and responsibilities
- 1.4 **Identify** when rights are infringed or not being met
- 1.5 **Provide** client with information on available options for meeting their rights and needs and assist them to identify their preferred option

In the following example from the same unit, the employability skills are highlighted green:

Elements and Performance Criteria

Element

Elements define the essential outcomes

3. Provide ongoing support to clients

Performance Criteria

Performance criteria specify the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element

- 3.1 Support and encourage clients to exercise their rights and personal preferences without compromising their safety and that of others
- 3.2 **Consult with supervisor, other support workers and the service** about interests, rights and needs of clients in a way that upholds their rights and supports their reasonable expectations
- 3.3 **Identify situations of risk or potential risk** and refer appropriately
- 3.4 **Apply work practices to minimise potential for harm** to clients, self and others
- 3.5 **Conduct all activities in accordance with legal, organisation and duty of care requirements**

When a unit of competency on training.gov.au has a table in the 'Foundation Skills' section (similar to the following table), then the assessor needs to ensure that, when reviewing, writing and modifying assessment tools, these foundations skills are present throughout the whole assessment tool and are mapped accordingly.

Foundation Skills

This section describes language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills incorporated in the performance criteria that are required for competent performance.

Skill	Description
Reading	Gathers, interprets and analyses workplace documentation to determine requirements for the operational plan
Writing	Develops and documents a range of detailed texts relating to the management of an operational plan according to organisational requirements
Oral communication	Presents information to a range of audiences using appropriate register, vocabulary and paralinguistic features Listens and comprehends information from a variety of spoken exchanges with clients, co-workers and other stakeholders
Numeracy	Selects and uses mathematical problem-solving strategies to organise resource requirements, performance benchmarks and financial viability of the operational plan
Enterprise and initiative	Monitors adherence to organisational policies, procedures and considers own role in terms of its contribution to broader goals of the work environment
Teamwork	Collaborates with others to achieve joint outcomes, playing an active role in facilitating effective group interaction, influencing direction and taking a leadership role on occasion
Planning and organising	Takes responsibility for developing and implementing systems and processes to achieve organisational objectives, seeking advice, feedback and support as required to assist in the development and planning phase Sequences and schedules complex activities, monitors implementation, and manages relevant communication
Problem solving	Uses systematic analytical processes to aid decision making, identify potential problems and generate contingency plans or solutions
Technology	Demonstrates awareness of the importance of data security in a digital environment



Activity 1F

Unpacking Foundation Skills in Units of Competency

Go to the training.gov.au website and look up a unit of competency you would like to deliver and assess in the future:

<https://scnv.io/cHus>



1. What are the foundation skills required for learners to competently perform the requirements of the unit?
2. Imagine a learner who does not have the listed foundation skills – how would this affect them being able to independently perform the job role in the workplace?

Supporting Learners to Develop Foundation Skills

For some learners, foundation skills will have presented a long-term challenge. Very often, this is because of a learner's life experiences and lack of opportunity, rather than because of an innate lack of ability. It is amazing how much adult learners can grow in foundation skills with a little bit of support, encouragement and explicit modelling.

As assessors, we sometimes find that learners who are brimming with amazing skill in our vocational area are being held back because of foundation skills. So, how can we support learners to demonstrate their competency with the required unit foundation skills that they will need in the workplace?

The best answer is that the foundation skills need to be part of the training and assessment process, from the first moment a learner applies to join a course.

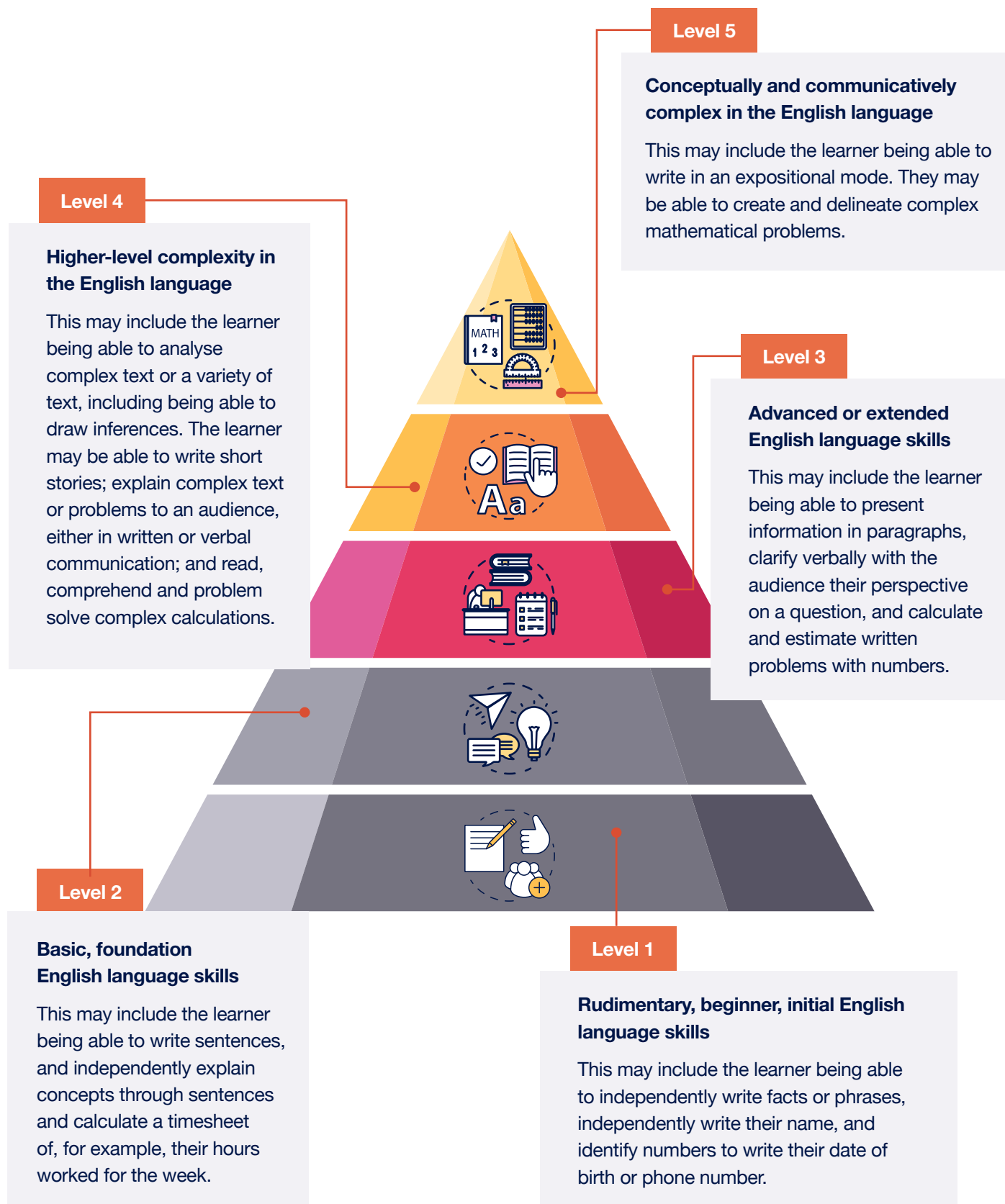
Core Skills Assessment

Usually, RTOs will complete a core skills assessment with all learners prior to enrolment in a course. As the course trainer and assessor, you will be notified if a learner requires additional support to develop their core skills. In industry best practice, the RTO should have a learning support specialist available who can work with the learner to assist them to develop their core skills over the duration of training, to the point where they have sufficient skills to demonstrate competency in an assessment.

The Australian Core Skills Framework

Trainers and assessors can refer to the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF), which breaks each of the five core skills – reading, writing, learning, oral communication and numeracy – into five skill levels. So, for example, the ACSF describes in detail how a person's reading skills might be characterised by the ability to recognise a very simple list of memorised, everyday words such as names and addresses (Level 1), to the capacity to analyse and detect embedded meaning and bias in complex technical texts (Level 5). So, the ACSF recognises that core skills evolve. Learners can progress from having little or no confidence in using a particular core skill (e.g. reading) to developing increasing mastery of the skill over time and with practice.

It is important to note that the ACSF levels and the AQF levels are not the same. The five levels range from:





Example

When you look at a unit of competency and see that reading is a required foundation skill, you might find yourself wondering ‘Okay, but how much reading? How difficult should the text be?’ In such cases, you can refer to the ACSF. To do this, first you would check the exact reading skill required in the foundation skills section of the unit of competency.

For example, it might say ‘Reading Skills: to understand entries in a vehicle log’. You could then read through the ACSF descriptors of Level 1–5 in reading. You would see that Level 2 of reading in the ACSF describes learners who are able to locate one or two simple pieces of information in a short, structured text about a familiar topic. So, when we assess this unit, we would provide a sample of a very simple vehicle log and ask learners to answer two very simple questions by identifying two clear answers in the text.

By applying the ACSF, we can assess core skills at the level required for that workplace role. In the case of the vehicle log, we are looking for a learner to show reading skills at ACSF Level 2, not to read Shakespeare.



Resource

Visit the link below to download the ACSF:

<https://scnv.io/CwLu>



Explicitly Teaching Foundation Skills in Regular Course Content

To support learners to develop and display foundation skills, trainers are encouraged to make these skills explicit over the course of training. For example, instead of just saying ‘You must write an incident report if XYZ happens’, spend two hours with learners showing them the features of an incident report and teaching them step by step how to write their own.

Embedding Foundation Skills in Assessment Tasks

Your assessment should explicitly assess the foundation skills listed for the unit of competency. For example, if the unit of competency states that reading is a required foundation skill because learners need to read and interpret a safety data sheet (SDS), then your training should teach learners how to read an SDS, and your assessment should assess learners reading an SDS. You might give learners an SDS for a chemical related to the job role, and ask them to read it and answer questions (e.g. ‘What should you do if your co-worker accidentally swallows kerosene?’).

Seeking Additional Support

Foundation skills should never be a barrier to a learner performing a job role that they have the capacity and drive to perform. However, the reality is that some learners will need to spend considerable time developing their foundation skills. In such cases, it may benefit the learner to complete a dedicated course in foundation skills (refer to the Foundation Skills Training Package [FSK]). Alternatively, your workplace may have a learner support expert who is available to tutor learners to assist them to develop their foundation skills.

LEARN MORE

Visit the link below to learn about the FSK:

<https://scnv.io/ey1l>





1.11 Assessor Requirements

To ensure assessment is fair for learners, strict requirements apply to assessors. These requirements include a qualification in training and assessment, demonstrated skills and experience in the vocational area being assessed, and current industry skills and experience.



Note

RPL is covered under the Standards for RTOs 2015 in Clause 1.13 to 1.16.

At the time of writing, assessors were required to have the following qualifications:

- TAE40122 or TAE40116
or
- TAE40110 plus TAELLN401A or TAELLN411; and
TAEASS502, TAEASS502A or TAEASS502B.

In addition, assessors are required to have the following:

- a vocational qualification in the area being assessed, or relevant vocational experience sufficient to demonstrate equivalence of competency, which means that the trainer and assessor have the broad knowledge, skills and experience requirements similar to actually holding the unit of competency.
- current industry skills, which means that assessors must maintain contact with and activity in the relevant industry.

The idea of currency is very important for trainers and assessors in the VET sector. Currency implies that trainers and assessors keep their industry knowledge and skills up to date by continuing to engage with industry.

1.12 Industry Experts

As discussed previously, when validating assessment, RTOs must involve people who are not assessing a unit and who have industry experience. At such times, RTOs may seek the input of independent industry experts. This is one of the reasons why it is important for RTOs, trainers and assessors to cultivate and maintain relationships with local industry experts in each of the vocational areas being delivered.

Other reasons why industry experts are an important partnership with RTOs, trainers and assessors include:



To ensure that training and assessments are relevant to the contemporary needs and practices of industry.

To assist trainers and assessors to offer real-world experiences to learners, in the form of work experience, excursions, mentoring, apprenticeships and so on.

To offer expert advice on training and assessment products, strategies and processes.



Note

Working with industry experts is covered under the Standards for RTOs 2015 in Clause 1.5 and 1.6.

1.13 Contextualising Assessments

Our goal with both training and assessment is for every task to prepare the specific learner to perform their role in the real world of the workplace.

Assessments, therefore, should not just be some abstract demonstration of skill or knowledge – rather, the learner should feel that the assessment was a useful process that encouraged them to deepen their real skills and knowledge. To this end, it is important that assessments are *contextualised*.

Contextualising training and assessment means adapting the training and assessment materials to meet the specific learning goals and needs of the learners.

When we contextualise, we consider:



The Importance of Contextualisation

To understand the importance of contextualisation, consider the unit BSBXTW301 Work in a Team, for example. This unit is included in 39 different qualifications, including Certificate III in Civil Construction, Certificate III in Meat Processing, Certificate III in Library and Information Services, Certificate III in Aviation, Certificate III in Fitness, and the list goes on.

Obviously, teamwork is important in all of these different vocational areas, but the way a meat worker would demonstrate teamwork skills is very different from how a librarian would demonstrate teamwork skills. It would not work to give the same assessment tool to learners in both cohorts unless the assessment tool was extremely vague and generic. To use such a generic tool means that the assessment process would be basically irrelevant and useless for learners in both work environments. Learners would miss a great opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge in a relevant context, with all the motivation and learning that such an opportunity may inspire.

So, the message here is do not use generic 'one size fits all' assessments. Take the time to contextualise the assessment so that it relates directly to the performance of skills and the demonstration of knowledge in the learner's particular work context.

When you do contextualise an assessment task in a way that changes the task, check and comply with your RTO's procedures. It is likely that you will need to:

- create a new assessment document with the changes and a new version number
- participate in peer validation of the assessment tool
- record changes on official documentation (e.g. assessment record tools).



Chapter 1

Review Questions



Use the following questions to check your knowledge.

- Q1.** In addition to workplace policies and procedures, identify which requirements VET assessors must comply with.

- Q2.** Explain the connection between competency-based assessment and the workplace.

- Q3.** When designing a reasonable adjustment strategy, you consider the specific needs of the learner. Identify the other parameter that determines the reasonable adjustment strategies you could apply.

- Q4.** Imagine you read in a unit of competency that writing is a required foundation skill for that unit. You are not sure how good the learner's writing needs to be, for example, whether spelling mistakes are permissible or not. Identify the document you would consult to check the level of writing skill required.

- Q5.** List three factors you should consider when you contextualise an assessment.

Chapter 2

Unpacking the Assessment Process

In this chapter, we will look at the specific nuts and bolts of compliant assessing in vocational education and training (VET). We will examine the major components that determine and shape the assessment strategy.

By the end of this chapter, you will understand:

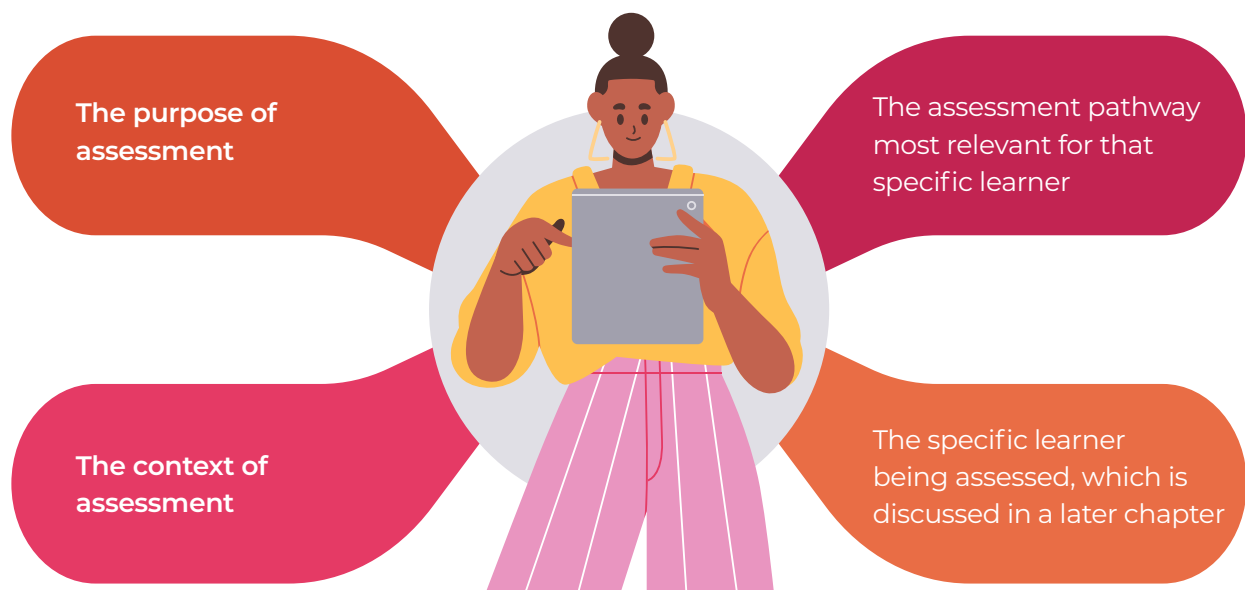
- ✓ the purpose and context of assessment
- ✓ the training package and unit of competency, and how they determine the assessment strategy
- ✓ key components of the assessment framework, including the training and assessment strategy and mapping documents
- ✓ the structure of assessment tools
- ✓ an overview of assessment methods commonly used in VET and the type of evidence they capture.





2.1 The Purpose and Context of Assessment

Every time you assess, the assessment is unique. There are four variables that are always of utmost importance to the assessor. These must be considered before planning the assessment process:



Before we unpack the components of assessments, we will consider these fundamental variables first.

The Purpose of Assessment

There are many reasons for assessment in the VET sector.

Assessment may be carried out to:

- determine the achievement of competence against nationally recognised qualifications and accredited courses
- encourage learning and provide feedback to the learner about how they have progressed and areas that need improving
- ensure that learning is taking place and that the learner has reached a certain standard
- determine gaps in skills and training
- recognise learning that has been gained through work and life experience – recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- assess suitability for career progression
- meet licensing and regulatory requirements
- provide feedback and acknowledgement to the learner.



The Context of Assessment

Assessment in VET may be carried out in a range of contexts. Our aim is always to reflect the real-world conditions of the workplace as closely as possible. The context of assessment in VET should be selected to ensure that it offers a valid and fair opportunity for learners to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

The context of the assessment usually relates to the environment or situation in which the assessment is conducted. For example, some units will stipulate that assessment must be conducted in a workplace or simulated work environment.

Types of assessment include:

- **Practical observations of workplace tasks** – This could include tasks such as installing an air-conditioning unit, implementing soil amendments, poaching an egg or blow-drying a client's hair.
- **Computer-based assessments** – This could include assessments such as updating a database, conducting a customer feedback survey, implementing a file management system or creating a web page.

- **Role plays and communicative scenarios** – This could include activities such as team meetings, or demonstrations of how the learner would show communication skills with a client or colleague.
- **Workplace observations** – This is where the assessor visits the learner in their workplace, with the agreement of their supervisor, and observes them doing the task in real life.
- **Case studies** – This is where learners are given all the relevant information they need about a situation to show how they could use their skills and knowledge to respond.

The list of possibilities is almost endless. As an assessor, it is your role to consider the unit of competency and what it is preparing learners to do in the real world, and then design an assessment strategy that reflects this real-world quality as closely as possible.

Note that the specific context of an assessment has some implications:

Workplace Environment

If an assessment occurs in the workplace, you need to consider the type of work being conducted in the workplace and whether assessment may impact or impede work operations, other staff and access to resources. You may need to conduct assessment outside of normal operating hours.

If an assessment occurs in a workplace, you will also need to determine whether:

- clients or customers of the workplace can participate in activities (such as for observation purposes)
- other staff can be taken away from their tasks to participate in a role play, observation or project
- there are any privacy or confidentiality requirements that could impact on an assessor's ability to observe specific activities or review workplace documentation.

Simulated Workplace Environment

In some cases, when specified in the 'Assessment Requirements' section of the unit of competency, assessment may take place in a simulated environment. If an assessment is to occur in a simulated environment, you will need to make arrangements to create the simulated environment. This will involve gathering industry-expected and relevant tools, equipment, materials and resources; and ensuring scenarios or situations (such as in role plays) are realistic and reflect a real operating environment.

Classroom Environment

If an assessment occurs in the classroom or as homework (such as projects, written tasks or case studies), learners will need to have access to resources to assist them to complete tasks. For example, a mock workplace health and safety (WHS) hazard assessment will need forms that replicate those found in a workplace, hazards will need to replicate those commonly found in the workplace, and learners will need policies and procedures to follow.

Workplace-Based Training

If you are planning for workplace-based training (which may include work placement), you must consult with key stakeholders affected by the assessment and seek their input. Quality assessment needs to be planned and carefully thought through, and the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (the Standards) require RTOs to seek industry consultation on their courses to ensure industry-relevant outcomes for learners. This will include any other trainer and assessor who may be involved in conducting assessments, workplace supervisors, team members, training managers and any other relevant RTO staff.

The Assessment Pathway

In competency-based assessment, there are three main pathways to assessment depending on the context:

Learning and assessment

The learning and assessment pathway takes place as part of a learning program and will involve the learner being assessed during and on completion of their learning. This pathway involves two types of assessment:

- formative assessment (assessment for learning)
- summative assessment (assessment of learning).

Assessment only

An assessment-only pathway assesses a learner's knowledge, skills and experience to determine their competency in a particular area.

An assessment-only pathway is a method of assessing a learner's competency by conducting an assessment that evaluates their current knowledge, skills and experience. This pathway does not consider any prior learning or understanding that the learner may have gained in the field. The learner must demonstrate competence through various assessment tasks that comprise the assessment kit. It is the same assessment that would be taken by a learner who has attended classes, or undertaken online learning or self-paced learning.

RPL

On the other hand, the RPL pathway assesses a candidate's competency by recognising their prior learning and experience. This pathway considers the candidate's previous learning and understanding, and assesses their competency based on prior knowledge and skills. This pathway is for individuals who have gained knowledge and skills through work experience, previous study or life experience; and who do not need formal training to demonstrate competency.





Case study

An Assessment-Only Pathway

Harriet is a trainer and assessor working for QualityEd, an RTO that provides training and assessment services to various industries. She is assigned to conduct an assessment-only pathway for an employer who requires their employees to have the unit PSPLEG005 Comply With Legislation in the Public Sector assessed yearly.

- **Client background** – Harriet's client is a public sector organisation with over 100 employees. The organisation must comply with several pieces of legislation, regulations and policies to provide quality services to the public. PSPLEG005 is one of the critical units for the organisation's employees. This unit ensures that the employees understand the legal requirements they must follow while delivering public services.
- **Assessment-only pathway** – The assessment-only pathway is a process where the assessor evaluates the employee's knowledge and competency through observation and questioning without formal training. The employees have prior knowledge and experience to pass the assessment.

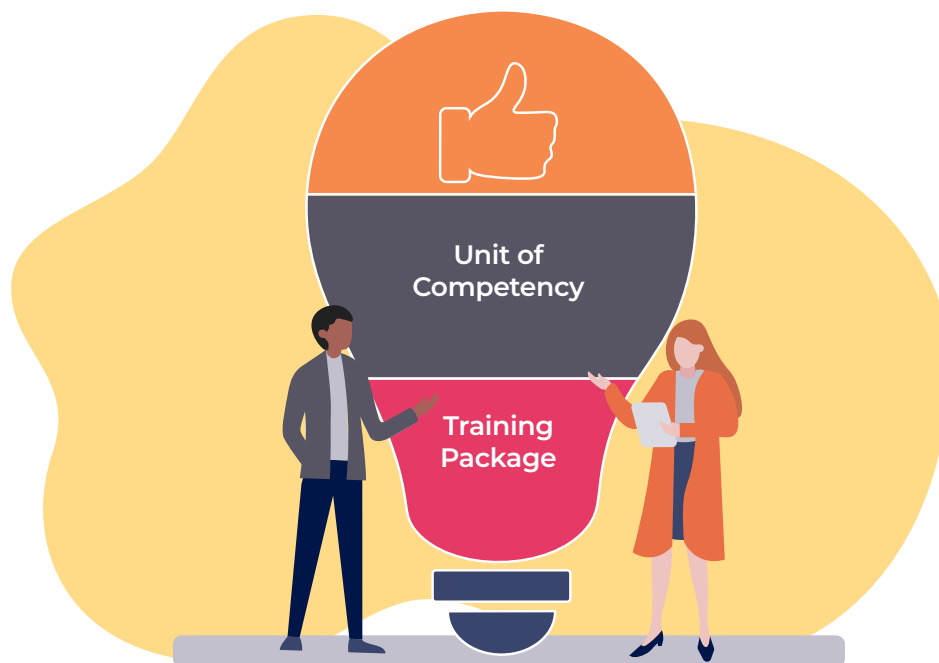
Harriet uses the following method to conduct the assessment:

1. **Pre-assessment communication** – Harriet communicates with the employer to understand the employees' roles; responsibilities; and prior knowledge of the legislation, regulations and policies.
2. **Assessment design** – Harriet designs assessment questions relevant to the employees' job roles based on the pre-assessment communication. The assessment questions cover the legislation, regulations and policies required for the employees' job roles.
3. **Assessment delivery** – Harriet delivers the assessment by questioning the employees and observing their performance in their job roles. The questioning covers the legal requirements; procedures; and consequences of non-compliance with the legislation, regulations and policies.
4. **Assessment outcome** – Harriet evaluates the employees' competency based on their responses and performance in their job roles. She provides feedback to the employees and the employer on their competency levels and areas for improvement.



2.2 The Assessment Framework

When an assessor is clear about the purpose, context and pathway of assessment that fits the learner, they begin to unpack the assessment process. This means considering the training package and the unit of competency, which guide the design and delivery of every assessment tool in VET.



Training Packages

It is important for trainers and assessors to be familiar with training packages. They provide the criteria for recognising and assessing a learner's skill in a particular industry.



Definition

Training package:

VOCEDplus describes 'training packages' as follows:

Training packages define the competencies required by different occupations and industries and describe how these competencies may be packaged into nationally recognised and portable qualifications that comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Training packages are developed by Service Skills Organisations (SSOs) to meet the training needs of an industry, or a group of industries. Each training package is made up of three components; units of competency, qualifications framework levels of education and assessment guidelines.

Training packages are developed through rigorous research and consultation across the industry served by the package, and under the coordination of the relevant Industry Reference Committee (IRC) and Skills Service Organisation (SSO).

When you train or assess a unit, you should start out by reading the training package, which will tell you:

- what context or industry the learner is preparing to work in
- what level of independence and expertise they should be expected to demonstrate at the level appropriate to the qualification
- how the unit fits together with others to form a qualification.

To be a successful trainer and assessor, you will need to be familiar with the training packages that you are using to deliver training and assessment. The training package will inform development of a training program and determine how assessment will be conducted.



Activity 2A

Training Packages



1. Go to the training.gov.au website, and under 'Nationally Recognised Training', search 'training package':

<https://scnv.io/cHus>
2. You will see 37 current training packages come up (correct at the time of writing). Select the training package you would like to deliver and assess in the future.
3. You will notice that the training package includes a collection of qualifications related to the training area. Select one qualification you would like to deliver in the future.
4. When you select the qualification, you will notice that it is made up of a collection of units of competency. Select one unit of competency you would like to deliver and read the following sections:
 - 'Elements and Performance Criteria'
 - 'Performance Evidence'
 - 'Knowledge Evidence'
 - 'Assessment Conditions'.

These components are the base on which we build assessments.



Units of Competency

Qualifications are comprised of a specific number of units of competency. A unit of competency is a written summary of specific knowledge and skills that must be attained and applied in the workplace. Competencies are developed in conjunction with industry to ensure that graduates and employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet their needs.

A unit of competency:

- sets the benchmarks for assessment and the specifications or outcomes for learning
- describes a particular work activity within an overall job role and is defined further through the components described below.

Units of competency are structured in two components: when accessing these from training.gov.au you will find the 'Unit of Competency' and the 'Assessment Requirements'. The following table provides some further explanation on the key aspects of units related to assessment.

Aspect	Explanation
Elements of Competency	The elements of competency provide the basic outline of a unit of competency. They describe the major functions and tasks that must be performed to achieve competency.
Performance Criteria	The performance criteria of a unit outline the observable skills and knowledge of competent performance. In simpler terms, the performance criteria describe what must be done and how well it must be done to satisfactorily complete the element.
Performance Evidence	The performance evidence outlines the skills a learner is required to demonstrate to be deemed Competent in a unit. It identifies the application of the required knowledge in the context of a workplace outcome. Generally, performance evidence must be assessed through a learner <i>enacting</i> the skills, not just answering questions about the skills. For example, if the required performance evidence is to 'refer the client to another service' then we need to see <i>the learner take this step</i> – possibly in a role play, or by writing a referral email or making a phone call. The performance evidence also specifies how many times a learner needs to demonstrate a skill to achieve competency.
Knowledge Evidence	Knowledge evidence outlines what the learner needs to know to be able to perform the work effectively. Knowledge evidence can be assessed in a variety of ways and may be assessed by asking questions.
Assessment Conditions	The assessment conditions inform the process of assessment for the unit and provide advice on the context, resources and conditions for assessment. As such, the evidence guide will outline requirements relating to: • demonstration of consistency – how many times the learner needs to perform a given skill to consider them as having 'got it' • the assessment environment – that is, the conditions under which the assessment must take place • suitable approaches to assessment • considerations to be made by the assessor when assessing against the requirements of the unit.



Activity 2B

Performance Evidence and Assessment Conditions

1. Go to the training.gov.au website and search for a qualification you would like to deliver and assess in the future (e.g. Certificate II in Hospitality):
<https://scnv.io/cHus>
2. Locate the list of core units for the qualification. Select THREE of the core units. For each one, read the performance evidence and the assessment conditions.
3. Reflect on the following questions:
 - a) What does the learner have to do in the assessment?
 - b) How many times do they have to do it?
 - c) Where do they have to do it?
 - d) What resources do they require?



It is also beneficial as an assessor to read the TAS beforehand because it provides a clear understanding of the expected learning outcomes and assessment methods for the cohort they will be assessing. By familiarising yourself with the TAS, you can ensure that you consider learners based on the intended outcomes and use appropriate assessment methods to evaluate the learners' performance accurately.

The TAS outlines the assessment processes and procedures you, as the assessor, should follow. It can help you plan and prepare for the assessment, including identifying necessary resources, setting appropriate timelines, and ensuring that you adhere to relevant regulations and standards.

The TAS may also include information on the context and requirements of the specific training program, such as the needs of the learners, any workplace-specific considerations, and any external accreditation or certification requirements. This information can help you to tailor your assessment approach to the specific needs and conditions of the cohort, improving the overall quality and effectiveness of the assessment process.

The Training and Assessment Strategy

The training and assessment strategy (TAS) is a document prepared by your RTO. It explains how the RTO intends to deliver and assess the content of the unit of competency, including information about:

- the qualification the unit is part of
- how the unit is put together with others in the course structure
- the learner cohort (including age, previous education and other demographic information of the learners)
- the training strategy, including delivery mode, duration and timetable
- the assessment strategy.

The TAS explains how the assessment for the unit fits into the overall picture of training and assessment for the learner. It is an essential document to refer to when planning and carrying out assessment.



Activity 2C

Training and Assessment Strategy

Look at an example of a TAS from an RTO. Ideally, try to access a TAS for a course you would like to deliver and assess in the future. If you are unable to do so, you should have been given a TAS for the TAE (training and education) qualification you are currently studying.

Read the TAS. Explain what the TAS tells you about:

- the learner cohort
- the course structure and delivery mode
- the way different units fit in sequence in the training and assessment schedule.

Mapping Assessment Tools

The VET system has a rigorous quality auditing system that requires all RTOs to assess learners against the unit of competency.

When you write or use an assessment tool, it is not enough to have a quick look and think 'That is good enough', or to use a tool just because a colleague uses it. Each assessor is responsible for ensuring that the assessment tool they are using meets the requirements of the unit of competency.

The way we ensure that the assessment complies with the unit of competency is by mapping the assessment tool.

To map the assessment tool, we use a mapping document for the unit, which clearly lists all:

- elements
- performance criteria
- performance evidence requirements
- knowledge evidence requirements
- assessment conditions.

We use this mapping document as a checklist. We carefully read the entire assessment tool and map where every single unit requirement is met. We are then able to observe whether there are any gaps. We also need to ensure that performance evidence is not collected through theoretical questions, but rather through actual practical demonstration of the skill. Assessors should be careful to check the assessment conditions and ensure they are being met. For example, if the conditions state that a skill must be performed in a real workplace, we need to make sure we observe the learner performing the skill in a real workplace.

In addition, ensure that you comply with the performance evidence requirements. For example, if a learner is required to demonstrate a skill three times, ensure your assessment tool captures evidence of the learner performing the skill on three separate occasions.

If there is even one gap in an assessment, it is not compliant. The assessment must be modified to cover the gap, and the modifications must be validated using the correct workplace procedure.





2.3 Structure of Assessment Tools

For an assessment to be effective, it should collect and record sufficient, valid and current evidence that demonstrates the learner's competence. Assessment tools comprise a collection of documents – all of which are integral to ensuring the validity, fairness, quality and reliability of the assessment process. We will start by looking at the difference between the assessment instrument on its own and the assessment tool as a whole.

The Assessment Instrument

An assessment instrument is the set of tasks and activities the learner completes to demonstrate their competence in the assessment. These instruments are used during an assessment to gather evidence. Assessment instruments could include knowledge questions, role plays, observation checklists, case studies, questions, portfolios and more. When marking an instrument, each one needs to be marked satisfactory in each part to make up the overall competency. If one part is marked not satisfactory, then a competency cannot be awarded overall.

The Assessment Tool

An assessment tool should include assessment tasks, procedures and the documents required to record the evidence provided and then the assessment outcomes.

The assessment tool documents are used during an assessment to gather and interpret evidence, and include:

- the assessment instrument
- a guide to the quantity and type of evidence to be collected from the learner (marking guide)
- the criteria used to decide whether the learner's performance is competent or not (marking guide)
- the context and conditions of assessment.

You will often find that the different parts of assessment tools are referred to by different names, but they generally include the following documents.

Marking Guide

This guide provides instructions to the assessor about each assessment task and must include sample responses to each question and task provided. The assessor instructions will guide the assessor on every aspect of preparing and running the assessment, including the resources and equipment required, the context of the assessment and the time allocated.

The marking guide will also spell out any assessment conditions as required in the unit. For example, if the assessment must take place on an actual worksite with access to personal protective equipment (PPE), then the marking guide will make this clear.

Note: The marking guide may also be referred to as 'guidance to assessors', 'assessor instructions', 'benchmark answers' and so on.

Mapping Guide

As stated previously, the mapping guide is for the assessor and is a copy of the unit of competency, often in table format. Each assessment task is listed, and its relationship to each unit requirement is marked. An assessor or auditor can look at the mapping guide and immediately see how each unit requirement has been covered and how often.

Record Tool

This tool is where the assessor marks the outcomes for each assessment and then the overall assessment outcome (i.e. Competent, Not Yet Competent). This is not always done separately – you may find it incorporated into the assessment that the learner completes.

Learner Assessment

This is given to the learner and includes all tasks that they need to complete. Tasks for the learner are based on the requirements of the unit of competency. For example, if we consider the unit SHBHCUT011 Design and Maintain Beards and Moustaches from the Certificate III in Hairdressing, we expect to see tasks in the assessment that require the learner to style and shave the moustaches or beards of five different clients. We would expect to see task instructions that clearly spell out for the learner what is expected of them and how to complete each task. The assessment must include detailed instructions for the learner about how to prepare for and complete the assessment, including any resources they might need. It may also include an assessment cover sheet for each task.



Read

Read the guide below to learn more about assessment tools:

<https://scnv.io/5lmN>





2.4 Assessment Methods

Across the VET spectrum, an almost endless array of assessment scenarios are used to assess learners' competence. From blow-drying a poodle, to welding a chassis, to flying a plane, VET assessors see it all. If we distil the essence of all the varied assessment activities conducted in VET, we find that a few reliable and valid assessment methods are used frequently across a wide range of vocational areas.

The following methods can be applied in a range of fields. They are frequently used because they offer valid reflections of learner skills and knowledge. They also reflect the application of skills and knowledge in the workplace.

Direct Observation

What is it?	In direct observation assessments, the assessor observes the learner performing a skill.
What kind of evidence does it gather?	This type of assessment is used to gather performance evidence.
How is it related to units of competency?	The performance evidence requirements of the unit will tell us about the skills we need to see learners performing. Direct observation is basically the gold standard of assessment methods for assessing a learner's performance of skills.
Resource requirements	• An observation checklist that clearly spells out what you are looking to see step by step and includes benchmarks of a competent performance • Any tools, equipment or other resources stipulated in the assessment conditions in the unit of competency
Examples of assessment instruments	• Workplace observation • Simulated workplace event

Product-Based Methods

What is it?	Product-based methods include structured assessment tasks where the learner produces a finished product for submission to you, the assessor. Examples include an artist portfolio, a floristry display, a business report or a website designed for a client.
What kind of evidence does it gather?	This type of assessment is used to gather performance evidence where the skills described in the unit relate to producing a final product of some sort.
How is it related to units of competency?	The performance evidence requirements of the unit will tell us about the skills learners need to use while creating the product. The performance requirements will specify the type of product required (including the scope, the dimensions or number, and other details). We might observe learners creating the product and check the skills observed off on a checklist, or ask the learner to submit a description of the steps taken to produce the product.
Resource requirements	• An observation checklist that clearly spells out what you are looking to see step by step and includes benchmarks of a competent performance • Any tools, equipment or other resources stipulated in the assessment conditions in the unit of competency
Examples of assessment instruments	• Report • Portfolio • Finished product

Questioning

What is it?	Questions can be asked either in written form or verbally to gather evidence.
What kind of evidence does it gather?	This type of assessment is used to gather knowledge evidence.
How is it related to units of competency?	We must collect evidence to show that the learner has a grasp of the concepts listed in the knowledge evidence requirements. Questioning is a simple way to collect this evidence.
Resource requirements	• Marking guide • Course learning materials, which learners may refer to • Resources required for the learner to complete the questions (depends on the format – may include a pen, or a laptop with internet connection)
Examples of assessment instruments	• Pen and paper assessment tool • Interview questions • Online quiz



Case study

Different Assessment Methods

Harriet is a trainer and assessor at QualityEd, an RTO. She is responsible for assessing a learner, Sarah, who works as a retail assistant. The assessment task requires Sarah to communicate effectively as a retail assistant with diverse people.

Harriet will use three different assessment methods to assess Sarah's communication skills, each providing a different perspective on Sarah's communication abilities.

Assessment Method 1: Observation

Harriet will observe Sarah interacting with customers from diverse backgrounds in retail. During this observation, Harriet will take notes on Sarah's communication skills, including her ability to listen actively, use appropriate language and effectively respond to customers' needs. Harriet will also note any barriers to effective communication, such as language or cultural differences.

Assessment Method 2: Role play

In the role play, Harriet will ask Sarah to demonstrate how she would communicate effectively with a customer from a different cultural background. Harriet will provide Sarah with a script with a dialogue between the customer and the retail assistant. Harriet will then assess Sarah's ability to apply practical communication skills in this simulated scenario. Harriet will evaluate Sarah's ability to use appropriate language, listen actively and respond effectively to the customer's needs.

Assessment Method 3: Written task

For the written task, Harriet will ask Sarah to write a report on her experiences communicating with diverse customers as a retail assistant. In the information, Sarah must describe three situations where she had to communicate with customers from diverse backgrounds. She will need to reflect on the effectiveness of her communication in each situation and identify strategies she used to overcome any communication barriers.





Activity 2D

Assessment Methods

In Learning Activity 2B, you looked at three core units from a qualification you would like to assess in the future.

1. Go to the training.gov.au website and look at the three core units again, and search for a qualification you would like to deliver and assess in the future (e.g. Certificate II in Hospitality):
<https://scnv.io/cHus>
2. Locate the list of core units for the qualification.
3. Select THREE of the core units. For each one, read the performance evidence, the assessment conditions, the performance criteria and the knowledge evidence requirements.
4. For each unit, decide which mix of assessment methods would best work to capture the skills and knowledge evidence for that unit.



Watch

The following video discusses developing assessment tools:

<https://scnv.io/19QT> 



Chapter 2

Review Questions



Use the following questions to check your knowledge.

Q1. Is it always possible to assess units using a simulated work environment as the context? Explain your answer.

Q2. Identify the section in the unit of competency where it specifies how many times a learner must demonstrate a skill to achieve competency.

Q3. Explain the difference between an assessment instrument and an assessment tool.

Q4. List the main documents found in an assessment tool.

Q5. Explain in what circumstances direct observation might be selected as an assessment method.

Chapter 3

Conducting Assessments

In this chapter, we will discuss the process of conducting assessments, from preparing the environment and learner, all the way through to recording the result. We will examine how to ensure that assessment processes and outcomes are fair, valid, reliable and inclusive for all learners.

By the end of this chapter, you will understand:

- ✓ creating an inclusive, safe assessment environment
- ✓ assessment event and learner preparation, including learner support
- ✓ gaining clear consent from the learner for the process of assessment and appeal before commencing
- ✓ checking evidence collected using the assessment tool to ensure validity
- ✓ ensuring assessments meet regulatory requirements, reliability in assessment outcomes, including moderation and validation
- ✓ determining and recording assessment outcomes
- ✓ working with learners who are Not Yet Competent.





3.1 Safe and Inclusive Assessment Environments

In competency-based assessment, our goal is for the learner to be as well prepared and confident as possible so that they can demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Fear, panic, confusion, stress and exclusion are all barriers to us seeing an accurate reflection of the learner's competency. Therefore, prior to assessing the learner, it is important to create a safe and inclusive environment. We can do this by:



Communicating Expectations Clearly and Explicitly

In competency-based assessment, it is good practice to prepare the learner as thoroughly as possible so that the assessment process is not a mystery. This includes reading through the assessment task together with the cohort and discussing the assessment process, tasks and resources required. It also means showing the students the checklist or assessment record tool so that they understand what we are looking to see in a competent performance. This does not mean that we coach the learner.

For example, saying to a learner before the assessment 'You will need to think about workplace health and safety (WHS) before you start, and make sure you follow all WHS requirements for the job' is very different from coaching the learner by saying 'Make sure you put on your steel-cap boots and a high-vis vest before you pick up any tools, otherwise you won't pass this assessment'.

Using Inclusive Language

Inclusive language is fundamental during all aspects of training and especially during assessment. As assessors, we need to ensure we place awareness on our use of language.



Definition

Inclusive language:

Charles Darwin University defines 'inclusive language' as 'language that does not belittle, exclude, stereotype or trivialise people on the basis of their race, gender or disability'.

When we use inclusive language, we choose words and phrases that apply to everyone and make all learners feel at home. A very simple example might be to say 'Okay, people!' rather than 'Okay, guys!'

Be very conscious that language carries shades of meaning that are historical and political. For example, First Nations people in Australia hear a lot of discriminatory language passed off as 'just a joke'. This is never acceptable in VET environments because it creates exclusion. Inclusivity has linguistic and cultural dimensions. For example, if you are chatting with some Australian-born learners cracking jokes about Vegemite five minutes before the assessment, this instantly creates an atmosphere of exclusion for all of the learners who were born overseas.

Being inclusive also means remembering that English is not the mother tongue of every learner in the cohort. Ensure you speak clearly and not too fast.

Overall, for the learner, language that excludes or discriminates can cause stress and anger and become a barrier to participating equally in the assessment. When this occurs, the assessment becomes unfair.



Case study

Using Inclusive Language

Harriet is a trainer and assessor for QualityEd, a registered training organisation (RTO) focusing on providing quality training and education to diverse communities. Harriet is assigned to assess a culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) cohort of five students who must demonstrate their knowledge and skills in correctly donning their personal protective equipment (PPE) for working in a hospital setting.

To ensure that her assessment is inclusive, Harriet takes the following steps:

1. She introduces herself and creates a safe and welcoming learning environment for her students. She takes the time to get to know her students, their cultural backgrounds and their language needs.
2. She provides clear and concise instructions for the assessment, using inclusive language that is easy to understand. She uses visual aids, such as posters and videos, to support her instructions and demonstrate the correct way to put on PPE.
3. Harriet uses culturally appropriate examples and scenarios to explain the importance of correctly wearing PPE. She understands that different cultures have different approaches to health care and hygiene, so she takes the time to explain why wearing PPE is crucial for preventing the spread of infections and keeping everyone safe.
4. During the assessment, Harriet gives her students ample time to ask questions and seek clarification. She encourages them to share their thoughts and experiences, and actively listens to their feedback and suggestions.
5. Finally, Harriet provides constructive feedback to her students, highlighting their strengths and areas for improvement. She acknowledges her cohort's cultural and linguistic diversity and tailors her feedback to suit each student's needs.



Activity 3A

Exclusive Language

Consider the following real-world assessment situation examples. For each example, identify how the language used may exclude some learners.

1. 'Everyone, run and grab your PPE to use in this assessment.'
2. 'Okay, you blokes, get ready for the assessment. Oh, I mean you blokes and Kate.'
3. 'Jenny and Sage, work together. Jenny, you will interview him. I mean her. I mean them. I mean him, her, she, he, whatever your name is.'





3.2 Assessment Preparation

Learner Preparation

One of your roles as an assessor is to make sure that all your learners are prepared for their assessment – that is, they understand the process clearly, know what is expected of them and have all the information they need. You should also try to identify any learners who may require assistance during the assessment process.

Assessments can be stressful, so give the learners plenty of opportunity to ask questions well in advance and make sure you have the information they need.

Learner questions may cover topics such as:

- why they need assessment
- exactly what they must do
- the logistics, such as time and location
- all resources the learner will need and where these can be accessed
- how long the assessment will take
- any changes made to customise the assessment process, such as reasonable adjustment or workplace-specific changes
- who will be present during the assessment
- how you determine whether they are competent or not
- what will happen if their assessment is unsuccessful
- what process the learner can follow to appeal their result if they feel the assessment process or their outcome was unfair.

By being positive and supportive, you will give your learners the best possible chance of success, so your communication skills are crucial in developing a positive relationship.

You should provide clear information about how the assessment is to be conducted, including the nature of any task, ways of gathering evidence and the criteria for the assessment. The way this information is communicated can be very important – make sure that you always use language that is suitable for your learner. Many learners will not understand the language that describes competency-based training. You may have to use plain English to explain the assessment task, and for any written information or instruction you are using.

You will need to get evidence that the learner:

- agrees to participate in the assessment
- understands the requirements of the assessment
- has requested any specialist assistance or consideration with the assessment (if relevant)
- is aware of the appeal process.

Assessor Preparation

Before the assessment, your workplace will likely have an assessment procedure in place that you should follow. Assessment procedures involve going through your assessment plan and making arrangements for assessment.

- Notify the learner about the time, place and any materials they will need to bring.
- Notify any other stakeholders who are responsible for access to venues, and supply of equipment or materials.
- Carefully read all assessment documents and ensure you are clear about the instructions you will give to the learner, the resources required and the evidence you will need to collect.
- If you are not familiar with a venue, check it prior to the event and make sure you have keys, access and login codes for computers.
- Ensure all WHS conditions are in place.
- Speak with other assessors or supervisors if appropriate.
- Ensure you have all your assessment instruments ready, including documentation for recording and reporting outcomes.
- If a learner requires specialist support, arrange this in advance with the learner and the support person.
- If a learner requires reasonable adjustment, develop a plan for how the assessment task can be adjusted to meet the learner's needs without compromising the integrity of the unit of competency. This may involve making changes to the assessment space prior to the assessment.

This information can be summarised as an assessment procedure, which you can use as a basis for discussion about the assessment activities.

You will also find additional information in the assessment guidelines that are part of each unit of competency.



Learner Consent

Once you have prepared the learner and the site for assessment, confirm the following with the learner:

- Have they understood the assessment process and what is required of them?
- Do they understand the process of appeal if they are unhappy with the assessment process or their result?
- Do they have any further questions?

If the learner indicates that they understand the assessment process and what is required of them, ask the learner whether they are ready to be assessed.

Always seek the learner's consent before beginning the assessment process.

3.3 Supporting the Learner

Undertaking assessment can be a very stressful experience for the learner. Part of your role is to get the best performance from the learner, and to do this, you need to create a safe, supportive and trusting relationship. To perform well, the learner needs to trust you and feel confident in their own abilities.

One way to ensure this happens is to set up a comfortable environment:

- Make sure the environment is comfortable, with adequate light and temperature.
- Supply water.
- Greet learners in a friendly but professional way.
- Provide time for learners to familiarise themselves with the surroundings and with others.

If you are assessing in the workplace, try to make the activity as much a normal part of the day's work as possible.

Specialist Support

In some circumstances, learners may need access to specialist support. Specialist support may include assistance of a third party such as a carer for people with a physical or intellectual disability, or an interpreter for Auslan or languages other than English. While assessments are conducted in English, interpreters can provide explanations of the assessment instructions in the learner's first language and provide moral support. Support people cannot participate in the assessment process unless this is documented as being part of a reasonable adjustment.

Remote learners and assessors may also need local third-party support, someone familiar to the learner. Alternatively, someone who is familiar with the equipment and location of the assessment may support the learner in navigating an unfamiliar location.

Depending on what is being assessed, you may also draw on technical or safety experts to assist setting up or conducting an assessment.





3.4 Workplace Health and Safety

In setting up an assessment, ensure that all the required conditions are in place. This includes doing a WHS assessment to check that all requirements are covered as they would be in a workplace context. You should also consider WHS issues for the assessment itself:

- How the assessment venue is set up should be considered, for example, setting up electrical equipment so that no cables are crossing walkways, ensuring any required PPE is available, and checking that any equipment is safe for use and has been regularly maintained.
- All WHS policies and procedures for your workplace and the assessment location (if it is different) should be considered. Ensure that your assessment complies with all relevant WHS policies and procedures.
- Regulatory and other requirements should be considered. Sometimes, a unit requires us to assess learners who are not yet qualified in performing a dangerous or risky task. In this case, your workplace or the assessment site will have very clear guidelines on procedures and safety controls for the assessment event. Ensure you follow these scrupulously.
- Learners for assessment must be informed of emergency procedures so that they know what to do should an emergency occur during assessment.

During the assessment event, you should always take responsibility for monitoring health and safety. This may include calling a stop to the assessment if WHS requirements are breached.



Activity 3B

Health and Safety

Go to the training.gov.au website:

<https://scnv.io/cHus>



Locate and read the following units of competency. For each unit, list the WHS requirements that will be an integral part of the assessment.

HLTWHS002 Follow Safe Work Practices for Direct Client Care

AURVTP111 Apply Solid Acrylic Two-Pack Materials to Vehicle Components

AHCCHM307 Prepare and Apply Chemicals to Control Pest, Weeds and Diseases

3.5 Gathering Quality Evidence

Assessment instruments are designed to prompt learners to produce evidence of their competency. This evidence should not be taken at face value. It should be put through tests of meeting the Principles of Assessment and all the Rules of Evidence.



Note

Always ask yourself:

- Does this assessment meet the Rules of Evidence?
- Is the evidence valid, sufficient, authentic and current?

You need to evaluate all the evidence presented and test it against the following questions using the Rules of Evidence as objectively as you can. Put aside what you already know about the learner and consider the evidence.

These rules apply to evidence gathered by the RTO as well as evidence supplied from third parties, such as workplace supervisors.

The test of *currency*:

- How recently was the evidence collected?
- Does your RTO have any guidance on what it considers to be current?

In the light of rapid technological change, you may need to consider five years as current in competencies that require knowledge and skills of a technical nature, but have a longer definition of 'current' for generic skills such as employability-related skills.

The test of *validity*:

- Has the evidence collected been a response to a valid assessment instrument?
- Has the evidence been collected with documentation to provide content and construct validity?

In the case of role plays or observation checklists, you may need to supplement your completed checklist with further evidence, such as recordings or photos. Refer to your workplace policies and procedures.

- Can it be mapped to benchmarks from a training package – that is, mapped to an element, a unit of competency or a cluster of units?

The test of *authenticity*:

- What proof do you have that this is the work of the learner?
- What role did the learner play in evidence that includes a collaborative project or teamwork?
- Has evidence been verified in the assessment documentation by endorsement of a supervisor or other observers, with notations about time and place, and signatures?
- Does your RTO have a licence for software to check for plagiarism in written evidence?
- Does your knowledge of the learner raise questions about their performance? Do you need any supplementary evidence to satisfy you about the authenticity of the evidence?

The test of *sufficiency*:

- Has the learner collected enough evidence to demonstrate competency? Is there more than one type of evidence? Has evidence been collected over time and in various contexts?
- Does the overall evidence demonstrate competency against all performance criteria and the critical aspects of evidence?
- Are you assured that the learner can routinely perform within the dimensions of competency?



3.6 Checking the Assessment Against Requirements

When we conduct assessments, we do not just need to consider the learner and the context. We must consider the regulations that apply to the assessment process, and ensure that the learner's performance has satisfied these requirements.

In the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) specifies the requirements that apply to assessments in Clauses 1.8 to 1.12. Referring to the Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015, we can see that the assessor needs to consider the following regulations when making judgements about a learner's performance in an assessment:



Resource

Refer to Clauses 1.8 to 1.12 of the Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015: 'Clauses 1.8 to 1.12—Conduct Effective Assessment'

<https://scnv.io/bnMO>



Only after we confirm that the learner's performance has met the requirements can we deem them Competent.

As stated in the *Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015*, the Principles of Assessment are as follows:

Principle	Description
Fairness	The individual learner's needs are considered in the assessment process. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied by the RTO to accommodate the individual learner's needs. The RTO informs the learner about the assessment process and provides the learner with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be reassessed if necessary.
Flexibility	Assessment is flexible to the individual learner by: • reflecting the learner's needs • assessing competencies held by the learner no matter how or where they have been acquired • drawing from a range of assessment methods and using those that are appropriate to the context, the unit of competency and associated assessment requirements, and the individual.
Validity	Any assessment decision of the RTO is justified, based on the evidence of performance of the individual learner. Validity requires: • assessment against the unit(s) of competency and the associated assessment requirements covers the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance • assessment of knowledge and skills is integrated with their practical application • assessment to be based on evidence that demonstrates that a learner could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations • judgement of competence is based on evidence of learner performance that is aligned to the unit(s) of competency and associated assessment requirements.
Reliability	Evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.

Source: Australian Skills Quality Authority. (2019). Clauses 1.8 to 1.12—Conduct effective assessment. In *Users' guide to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*.

3.7 Moderating Assessment Outcomes

The difference between validation and moderation can be a bit confusing. We will refer to ASQA for clarification.



Definition

Validation:

ASQA defines 'validation' as follows:

Validation is the quality review of the assessment process and [it] is generally conducted after assessment is complete.

Validation involves checking that your assessment tools have produced valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence, enabling your RTO to make reasonable judgements to about whether training package (or VET accredited course) requirements have been met.

Moderation:

ASQA defines 'moderation' as follows:

Moderation is a quality control process aimed at bringing assessment judgements into alignment. Moderation is generally conducted before the finalisation of student results as it ensures the same decisions are applied to all assessment results within the same unit of competency.

The process of moderation involves a minimum of two qualified assessors and may also involve other experts in addition (e.g. industry experts or learner support specialists). Moderation seeks to answer the question: 'If two learners demonstrate a similar level of skill and knowledge, are their efforts marked consistently and fairly?' This is particularly important when several assessors in an RTO are assessing the same unit. Moderation involves comparing learner evidence and ensuring that standardised benchmarks are being fairly applied by all assessors to judge competency. Where discrepancies are found, the benchmarks in the unit of competency and the training package should be referred to in order to make a decision.

Moderation is also highly useful if a learner expresses that they feel that the assessment process or their result was unfair – even if they do not make a formal complaint. Assessors who understand the responsibility of their role should always look for opportunities to welcome feedback through the moderation process, as it ultimately creates a fairer and more reliable assessment process.

Assessor Bias

As assessors, we are human and therefore need to be aware that bias can and does affect our judgements on occasion. During the assessment process, we need to be aware of bias that may potentially be influencing our judgement. Examples of bias include:

- assuming that our learners are better than other learners because we are familiar with their skill level
- assuming that learners who always attend class will automatically perform better than learners who attend infrequently
- identifying with some learners more than others and therefore being inclined to give them the benefit of the doubt – this is particularly risky when we have a lot in common with a learner
- 'liking' the personality of some learners more than others or empathising more with their circumstances and therefore being more inclined to leniency.

As assessors, we also have tools that assist us to combat bias. These include:

- **Personal awareness and reflection** – Using reflection is essential in combating bias. This means noticing when we feel more favourable about one learner's performance than another's, and asking ourselves: 'Does the evidence reflect a difference in performance, or am I being biased?'
- **Benchmarks** – Benchmarks are the ultimate judge of performance. A good assessment tool should clearly stipulate in the marking guide the benchmarks expected in a competent performance. By following these benchmarks meticulously, we greatly reduce or eliminate the risk of bias.
- **Moderation** – A fantastic strategy for ensuring fairness and reducing bias is moderation. A colleague who has no personal connection with the learners will be able to give an impartial assessment of their competency or highlight examples of possible bias in your marking.

3.8 Determining the Assessment Outcome

Once assessment is completed – that is, the learners have provided their evidence, and any assessment events have been conducted – your role is to reach a decision about the learners' competency.

The decision of competency is about considering the evidence and deciding whether the learner has achieved the level of competency described in the unit, cluster or module.

When you are making your decision about competency, consider the following questions:



Identify pieces of evidence that give clear indication of competence and use these to make a judgment. Your judgment must always involve consideration of more than one piece of evidence.

So, to sum up, your judgement about competency is made using evidence that satisfies the Rules of Evidence and the evidence requirements of the unit, and using an assessment tool that complies with all legislative requirements.



3.9 After the Decision

Always ensure you give learners honest feedback on their assessment. Your feedback should always be constructive, based on factual information, and clear and concise. The types of information and support you should offer and the modes of communication you should use for feedback will be set out in your RTO's policies and procedures.

Remember to use the feedback sandwich, which is:

1. Start with something positive.
2. Communicate constructive feedback.
3. End on something positive.

Watch

The following video discusses giving feedback:

<https://scnv.io/P1Fj>



Activity 3C

Feedback Policies and Procedures

Find out the process for providing feedback to learners that is used by your RTO or others in the industry.

1. How much feedback is provided?
2. How is it provided?
3. What records are kept of the feedback?
4. Does anything about the process change if someone is found Not Yet Competent?

3.10 Achieving Competency

When assessing the skills and knowledge demonstrated by a learner, our benchmark is the unit of competency and the training package. To meet the different types of assessment criteria, a learner must complete more than one type of assessment task to demonstrate competency in a unit. Each assessment task will be marked as either Satisfactory or Not Yet Satisfactory. When all assessment tasks are marked as Satisfactory, the learner will then be marked as Competent in the unit.

Not Yet Satisfactory

In cases of Not Yet Satisfactory, remember the word yet. As we saw in the beginning of this unit, 'yet' is a very important concept in competency-based assessment. Ask yourself, what might this learner need to demonstrate the full extent of skills and knowledge required in this assessment?

The assessor must always take the step of providing honest, constructive feedback to the learner, including clear information about where their skills performance or knowledge evidence was Not Yet Satisfactory.

The assessor should then consider how to support the learner to reattempt the assessment. This may include:

- offering additional training or opportunities to practise the skill prior to being reassessed
- offering learner support services to overcome any barriers preventing them from demonstrating their skills and knowledge competently (e.g. assistance with anxiety or assistance with spelling)
- applying or modifying reasonable adjustments to remove barriers the learner is facing
- negotiating a reassessment plan.

Assessors must clearly record and document the reassessment plan for each learner. This may be done on the learner's assessment record tool or other appropriate forms as required by your workplace. It is very important to document reassessment plans and results to demonstrate that the assessment process is fair and offers opportunities for learners to try again.

In some cases, a learner may need several attempts at reassessment. Your workplace will have policies on how many times a learner

If a Learner Is Not Yet Competent

In any assessment process, the situation may arise where a learner does not demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to evidence competency in that unit. Consider the following possible reasons why this may occur:

- **Non-transferable skills or a lack of skill repetition** – In this case, a learner can successfully perform a skill once under predictable circumstances. However, when the context changes and the learner has an opportunity to perform the skill again, they are not able to transfer the skill to the new context. In this case, if the assessment conditions of the unit require the learner to demonstrate the skill on three occasions in a range of contexts, they would be deemed Not Yet Competent in this unit.
- **Partial fulfillment of performance requirements** – In some cases, a learner may not enact the performance criteria fully. For example, a unit of competency might require a learner to submit an incident report to the shift supervisor. A learner might correctly identify the incident and answer questions about it, but unless they actually submit the incident report, they cannot be deemed Competent.
- **Insufficient evidence of knowledge** – In some cases, a learner may not demonstrate sufficient background knowledge based on the knowledge evidence requirements of the unit. Situations may include incomplete assessment tasks, or lack of sufficient depth and detail of knowledge for the AQF level.
- **Breaching regulatory or workplace requirements** – In some cases, a learner may perform a task in a way that breaches legal requirements. For example, if someone being assessed in the unit RIIWHS204E Work Safely at Heights does not put on PPE and inspect the fall protection equipment prior to working, they have broken worksite WHS policies and procedures. Or, if a learner uses an artificial intelligence (AI) program to write their business plan for them, they have breached plagiarism requirements.

At a certain point, it may become clear that a learner is not able to demonstrate the skills and knowledge required by the unit of competency at this stage. In such cases, a decision needs to be made about whether it may benefit the learner to repeat the training for the whole unit or reattempt the unit later. It is best practice to involve the learner in arriving at this decision, understanding that the real value of the process for the learner lies not in 'passing the unit', but rather in mastering the skill and performing it with confidence in the real world.



3.11 Recording Results

Once you have made your assessment decisions, this information needs to be properly documented through your RTO recordkeeping systems and reported to stakeholders as required, depending on the nature of the program.

All RTOs are required to have a learner management system and to maintain records for a statutory period.

In a large RTO, you may record the results in a database, while administration staff will report to stakeholders, and the whole procedure will be overseen by a staff member with responsibility for compliance. In a small RTO, you may be responsible for the full recording and reporting process.

Whatever the system used, your RTO must supply information to the state or territory training authority that complies with statistical standards set by the Council of Australian Governments through the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) also collects standard information about learners, RTOs and the programs that they conduct.



Activity 3D

Recordkeeping Procedures

What is the recordkeeping system used in your RTO? Access the procedures for recordkeeping and summarise your responsibilities as an assessor.

As an assessor, you need to use the map you developed in your assessment plan to maintain your records of assessment for each learner, for each assessment event and then for a qualification. Usually, each learner will have an assessment record tool, where the outcomes of each assessment task or event are recorded, along with the dates of the assessment and the overall result.

During the recording and reporting process, make sure that you comply precisely with your RTO's policies and procedures:

- Are you using the required forms and format for recording results?
- Have you provided all the mandatory information required?
- Have these forms been submitted to the right people for quality assurance and for timely processing?
- Have records and reports been provided within the specified period?
- Have appeals been processed according to RTO policies and procedures?

When you record outcomes, ensure that you include details such as:

- the date of assessment
- the outcome
- the assessment task used
- any resubmission requirements
- any modifications made to the assessment (e.g. reasonable adjustments).

It is a good idea to keep a backup copy of all competency decisions. For example, if you record competency online, keep a paper record of all learner outcomes too.

The following table is an example of a final assessment outcome record:

Assessment Tasks	Task Outcome				
	Satisfactory (S), Not Yet Satisfactory (NYS)	Date	Assessor Initials		
Assessment Task 1: Written questions	S	10/4/20XX	KL		
Assessment Task 2: Project	S	28/5/20XX	KL		
Assessment Task 3: Workplace observation	S	30/6/20XX	KL		
Final Assessment Results	Result (Competent [C], Not Yet Competent [NYC])		Date		
BSBMKG408 Conduct market research	C		6/7/20XX		
Student name:					
Assessor name:					
Assessor signature:		Date: / /			



Activity 3E

Record Assessment Outcomes

For this learning activity, you must select ONE of two options:

Option A: Source the forms that are used in your RTO to record assessment decisions. How do they guide you to keep accurate and appropriate records?

Option B: Design a suitable form for recording assessment decisions.

Once the documentation is completed, all learners should be given their certificate or statements of attainment, and transcripts of results.

The results may be used by the learner in several ways, including as a:

- contribution to a formal qualification
- note on a human resources file
- prerequisite for promotion or a pay rise
- condition of an industry licence or similar.



Case study

Recording Assessment Details

Harriet is a trainer and assessor at Quality Ed, an RTO that provides VET to students across various industries. Harriet's role as a trainer and assessor involves developing and delivering training programs and assessing students' competency in their chosen fields. As part of her assessment duties, Harriet is responsible for ensuring that she records vital information on the assessment tool after each assessment.

Harriet is assigned to assess a group of students undertaking a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care. The assessment task requires students to demonstrate their ability to plan and implement activities that support children's learning and development.

Harriet carefully reviews each student's work and provides feedback to help them improve. Once she has completed marking the assessments, Harriet makes sure to record the following vital information on the assessment tool:

- **The assessment task used** – Harriet makes a note of the specific assessment task that was used for each student. This helps to ensure that the assessment was consistent across all students and that they were all assessed using the same criteria.
- **The assessment date** – Harriet notes when she completed each student's assessment. This helps to ensure that the assessment was conducted on time and that students received prompt feedback on their work.
- **The assessment outcome** – Harriet records whether each student had achieved Satisfactory or Not Yet Satisfactory.
- **Assessment feedback** – Harriet notes specific feedback on the students' work – positives and guidance for improvements.
- **Any resubmission requirements** – Harriet notes whether students needed to resubmit their work or complete additional tasks to demonstrate competency. This helps to ensure that students had clear guidance on what was required of them and could work towards improving their skills and knowledge.
- **Any modifications made to the assessment** – Harriet records any changes made for students who required reasonable adjustments. This helps to ensure that students with disability or other special needs could access and complete the assessment equally with their peers.

3.12 Seeking Feedback

At the end of any assessment process, feedback should be sought from the learners you have worked with on the assessment (and training) process. You can use this information to improve your assessment practices in the future, and the information will also be used to provide feedback to the RTO on your performance.

It is best to seek feedback as soon as possible after the assessment while the activity is still fresh in the stakeholders' minds.

Try to collect both formal and informal feedback. Informal feedback could be in the form of a discussion with the learner and the workplace or other involved parties at the end of the process. A more formal approach could be to provide a questionnaire to complete. Often, you will receive more honest feedback if you leave the questionnaire with the stakeholders and ask for it to be returned later, or provide an envelope in which to seal the questionnaire once they have completed it.



Chapter 3

Review Questions



Use the following questions to check your knowledge.

Q1. Identify the three areas of consent and understanding you must check with learners before the assessment.

Q2. Identify who is responsible if WHS requirements are breached during an assessment event. Identify what the responsible person should do in response to a breach in WHS requirements.

Q3. List three strategies you as an assessor can use for reducing the risk of bias influencing your assessment judgements.

Q4. List the actions the assessor should take in cases where a learner does not demonstrate competence.

Q5. Identify the organisation that collects data about VET student outcomes nationally.

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1300 761 141

www.eduworks.com.au

info@eduworks.com.au

