

TAEASS401

Plan assessment activities and processes

Release 2



Learner guide

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Aspire Version 1.2



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TAEASS401 Plan assessment activities and processes Release 2

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *TAEASS401 Plan assessment activities and processes*, Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which activities you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Overview	This section provides general information about the vocational education and training sector and its essential components (such as training packages), which will underpin your learning.
Introduction	The introduction covers the key concepts relevant to this particular unit of competency, including the terminology that will be used throughout this learner guide.
Learning content	Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Templates	Templates are referred to throughout the guide. These are samples of working documents similar to those found in a training organisation. Completed templates may be useful as evidence for portfolio assessments. Ask your trainer for sample templates provided with the <i>Trainer's and assessor's guide</i> for this unit.
Examples	Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. Examples highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Activities	Activities give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete.
Summary	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identifies and confirms legal, organisational and ethical requirements ▶ Selects and analyses assessment-related documents
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Documents the assessment plan ▶ Develops assessment instruments, including instructions and mapping ▶ Records outcomes of draft assessment checks
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Participates in exchanges about assessment processes and the trialling of instruments appropriate to the audience
Navigate the world of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identifies, confirms and takes responsibility for adherence to policies, procedures, legal and ethical requirements
Interact with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Collaborates with others as part of routine activities, and to confirm understanding
Get the work done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Plans a range of routine processes and related tasks with logically sequenced steps, according to defined standards or parameters ▶ Uses formal decision-making processes, identifying information and evaluating several choices against a limited set of criteria ▶ Evaluates effectiveness of planning and design decisions in terms of how well they meet requirements

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Determine the assessment approach	1.1 Identify the candidate and confirm the purposes and context of the assessment with relevant people according to legal, organisational and ethical requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1.2 Identify and access applicable industry or workplace standards for the assessment, and any specific assessment requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2: Prepare the assessment plan	2.1 Analyse units of competency and assessment requirements to identify evidence needed to demonstrate competence, according to the rules of evidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2.2 Select assessment methods and instruments to support the collection of defined evidence, taking into account the context in which the assessment will take place	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2.3 Develop the assessment plan and gain approval from relevant stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3: Identify modification and contextualisation requirements	3.1 Use information from the candidate and, where relevant, the candidate's workplace to identify contextualisation needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3.2 Check advice provided by the training package or course developer relevant to identified contextualisation needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3.3 Analyse existing assessment tools and record amendments required to address identified contextualisation needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3.4 Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and record any changes required to assessment tools	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 4: Develop the assessment instruments	4.1 Analyse available assessment instruments for their suitability for use, and identify any required modifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4.2 Develop assessment instruments to meet the required standard and specific workplace/candidate needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4.3 Map assessment instruments against the unit or course requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4.4 Write clear instructions for the candidate and assessor regarding the use of assessment instruments	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4.5 Check and confirm that draft assessment instruments meet required standards and specific workplace/candidate needs and record outcomes of checks	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

Assessment

When you have completed your learning, you will be asked to complete an assessment. You need to understand what will be required of you regarding assessment as you work your way through this learner guide: your trainer/assessor will provide you with the relevant details. This learner guide does not include a final assessment. Your training organisation may be using Aspire's Assessment and RPL resource for this unit.

For this unit you will show evidence of:

- ▶ planning and organising the assessment process on a minimum of five separate occasions
- ▶ planning and organising two recognition of prior learning (RPL) assessments (which may be two of the five assessment processes above).

The evidence requirements for each occasion must include:

- ▶ a documented assessment plan
- ▶ a different endorsed or accredited unit of competency (or clusters of units of competency) for each of the five occasions
- ▶ contextualisation of the unit/s of competency and the selected assessment tools, where required
- ▶ incorporation of reasonable adjustment strategies
- ▶ development of suitable assessment instruments for each of the five occasions
- ▶ following organisational arrangements.

You must also have the knowledge of:

- ▶ obligations of an assessor under applicable legislation and/or standards
- ▶ the major features of a unit of competency, and how they are to be addressed in assessment activities and processes
- ▶ interpreting competency standards as the minimum standard for assessment
- ▶ guidelines for contextualising units of competency
- ▶ different purposes of assessment and different assessment contexts, including RPL
- ▶ the purpose and features of evidence, and different types of evidence, used in competency-based assessments, including RPL
- ▶ the principles of assessment, and how they guide the assessment process
- ▶ the rules of evidence and how they guide the assessment process
- ▶ different assessment methods, including their suitability for collecting various types of evidence
- ▶ the components of assessment tools
- ▶ different types of assessment instruments and their purpose and relevance for specific evidence-gathering opportunities.

Always refer to your assessor for information about the number, type and detail required in the assessment materials you will be required to complete.

Developing an evidence portfolio

An evidence portfolio is a useful way to demonstrate to your assessor how you have developed the skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities that contribute to competence. Samples of your work that are developed as a part of the activities can be used as evidence for assessment.

Your trainer/assessor may also ask you to provide samples of documents or completed templates to demonstrate your progress in this unit. Some of these could be submitted as part of an evidence portfolio. Always follow the specific directions and guidance of your trainer/assessor to determine what documents your portfolio should include and how they should be presented.

Here are some examples of what your portfolio might contain:

- ▶ your responses to specific activities as indicated in each section of the learner guide
- ▶ personal reflections on your progress via an ongoing learning journal
- ▶ recorded comments from your supervisor, peers or clients about how you have applied skills and knowledge
- ▶ documents or completed templates* you have developed such as assessment plans, assessment tools, training session plans or checklists
- ▶ samples and an analysis of relevant forms, documents and other material used in a training and assessment environment.

*Throughout this learner guide, reference is made to specific templates that you can use for activities or for your portfolio. Ask your trainer for template samples; Aspire has included relevant templates in its *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

Overview

Understand vocational education and training

There is a great deal more to the VET system and the delivery of training and assessment than the information provided in this Overview. Each learner guide for the units offered in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment provides activities and examples to demonstrate the application of your VET knowledge.

To work effectively in the vocational education and training (VET) system, you need to understand its essential components, particularly training packages and how to use them in a training delivery and assessment role.

VET develops skills and knowledge for work through a national training system that seeks to provide consistent training across Australia. The primary purpose of VET is to equip people with the skills, knowledge and attributes they require to be 'work ready' and to operate effectively in employment. The Australian VET system comprises two fundamental elements that help ensure quality and consistency in training: training packages and the VET Quality Framework (VQF), which includes the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Training packages

Training packages are the foundation of Australia's VET system. A training package is a set of nationally endorsed qualifications, units of competency and assessment requirements developed for a specific industry, sector or workplace. Copies of individual training packages can be viewed at: <http://training.gov.au>.

Training packages also provide the structure for competency-based training. A competency-based approach judges outcomes against specific standards established in the endorsed components of a training package. Endorsed components are the various units of competency, the qualifications within which they sit and assessment guidelines that describe the industry's desired approach to assessment and qualifications.

Training packages are developed by Service Skills Organisations (formerly by Industry Skills Councils) to meet the training needs of an industry or group of industries. Training packages are maintained in line with the National Skills Standards Council's Standards for Training Packages to ensure training packages are of high quality and meet the workforce development needs of industry, enterprises and individuals. These standards apply to the design and development of training packages for endorsement by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (formerly the role of the now dissolved National Skills Standards Council (NSSC)).

Units of competency

Units of competency are the nationally agreed statements of the skills and knowledge required for effective performance in a particular job or job function. In other words, a unit of competency is a set of skills and knowledge that form part of a person's job role, and represents a discrete workplace outcome.

Units of competency are packaged as groups into qualifications and qualification levels in each training package. Each qualification has a descriptor that provides guidelines on how the unit is practically applied, who would use it and the unit's relationship to any applicable licensing, legislative or certification requirements.

Training packages do not prescribe how training is to be delivered. They provide guidance on assessment and the methods of assessment that may be appropriate for each unit of competency. Registered training organisations (RTOs) are responsible for how training and assessment occur.

An RTO can also issue qualifications derived from training packages or accredited courses, or statements of attainment to recognise the completion of a unit of competency from a qualification or accredited course.

The VET Quality Framework

The VET Quality Framework (VQF) is a set of standards and conditions used by the Australian Skills Quality Authority to assess whether an RTO meets the requirements for registration. The *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* (Cth) established the National VET Regulator (NVR) and underpins the VQF.

The VQF comprises:

- ▶ the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015
- ▶ the Australian Qualifications Framework
- ▶ the Fit and Proper Person Requirements
- ▶ the Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements
- ▶ the Data Provision Requirements.

Training that leads to the award of an accredited qualification must be delivered and assessed by an RTO that satisfies the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015. The Standards include the Essential Standards for Initial Registration and the Essential Standards for Continuing Registration. There are eight standards to which RTOs must comply.

You should familiarise yourself with the VQF and the compliance requirements it places on RTOs; this compliance directly affects the work you do as a trainer and an assessor.

Australian Skills Quality Authority

Course accreditation agencies such as the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) set regulations and standards for the VET sector to ensure course quality is maintained through the effective regulation of training providers and accredited courses. It does this mainly through the VQF. (Note: Victoria and Western Australia have not referred their powers of regulation to ASQA and continue to be subject to their respective state regulators if they operate solely within their state.)

ASQA works with other regulatory, funding and policy bodies to ensure the training provided is of high quality and meets the requirements of industry-developed training packages, so VET graduates have the required skills and competencies for employment.

Any RTO operating solely in Victoria and/or Western Australia is regulated by those states' regulators (not ASQA), and must comply with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Essential Conditions and Standards for Registration. The VQF Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations derive from the AQTF standards.

Throughout this learner guide, reference is made to both sets of Standards, presented as VQF/AQTF.

The Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), a component of the VQF, is a policy framework that defines the standards for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It specifies the learning outcomes for 16 nationally recognised qualifications. The following diagram represents the 10 levels of the AQF.



Reproduced with permission of the AQF council, from AQF Second Edition, January 2013, p. 19.

An RTO must issue qualifications and statements of attainment that align to the AQF and meet the requirements of the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy and the endorsed training packages within that RTO's scope of registration.

Training and assessment

The primary role of RTOs in the VET system is to deliver accredited training and assessment-based units of competency and qualifications. You may be employed by an RTO to facilitate classroom, online or blended learning; to deliver workplace-based training and assessment on-site to enterprise staff; or to coordinate and support enterprise trainers, coaches and mentors in their roles.

Alternatively, you may be an enterprise trainer whose role is to facilitate learning and carry out assessment in the workplace, perhaps based on national units of competency or internal enterprise standards. The work you do may or may not lead to a recognised qualification.

When working with training packages and before providing training or assessment services, there are two aspects of competency and units of competency that you need to understand:

- ▶ How to identify and 'unpack' the key features of a unit of competency
- ▶ The dimensions of competency and their role in ensuring that competency incorporates all aspects of work performance

Explore a unit of competency

You should unpack a unit of competency and consider each part of the unit to form a picture of what a competent person looks like, how assessment should occur and what evidence is required.

The following table summarises the components of a unit of competency, as defined in the TAE Training and Education Training Package Implementation Guide.

Component feature	What it relates to
Unit of competency	
Title	The title describes the unit outcome.
Unit application	This field describes how the unit is practically applied, who would typically use it and the unit of competency's relationship to licensing, legislative or certification requirements.
Prerequisite units	This is an optional field that specifies any unit/s in which the learner must already be competent prior to achieving competency in this unit.
Unit Sector	This field is used to categorise units of competency in relation to industry sectors or types of work.
Elements of competency	Elements of competency describe the outcomes of the significant functions and tasks that make up the competency. Elements describe actions or outcomes that are demonstrable and assessable.
Performance criteria	Performance criteria specify the required performance in relevant tasks, roles, skills (including foundation skills) and the applied knowledge that enables competent performance.
Foundation skills	This field describes the language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills that are essential to performance.
Range of conditions	This is an optional field that specifies different work environments and conditions that may affect performance. Range is restricted to essential operating conditions and any other variables essential to the work environment, so it is quite different from the previous range statement.
Unit mapping information	This field specifies the code and title of any equivalent unit of competency.
Links	This field provides a link to the Companion Volume Implementation Guide.
Assessment requirements	
Performance evidence	Performance evidence, as the name implies, specifies what individuals must do to show that they satisfy the performance standards in the unit of competency.

Component feature	What it relates to
Knowledge evidence	Knowledge evidence, as the name implies, specifies what individuals must know in order to carry out the work tasks described in the unit of competency safely and effectively.
Assessment conditions	This field describes mandatory conditions for assessment; for example, details of equipment and materials; contingencies; physical conditions; relationships with other people; and time frames. It also specifies assessor requirements.
Links	This field provides a link to the Companion Volume Implementation Guide.

Explore dimensions of competency

Reviewing the dimensions of competency is an important part of unpacking a unit of competency. The dimensions of competency relate to all aspects of work performance in both routine and non-routine work situations. A competent person can successfully apply their skills and knowledge to work activities in a range of contexts.

The following table explores the four dimensions of competency in more detail.

Dimensions of competency	Meaning
Task skills	The candidate must perform the individual skills required to complete a work activity to the required standard.
Task management skills	The candidate must manage a number of different tasks to complete a whole work activity, such as working to meet deadlines.
Contingency management skills	The candidate must use problem-solving skills to resolve issues that arise when performing a work activity.
Job/role environment skills	The candidate must perform effectively in the workplace when undertaking a work activity by working well with all stakeholders and following workplace policies and procedures.

Incorporate foundation skills

Foundation skills are the non-technical skills that support an individual’s participation in the workplace, the community and in education and training. In training packages, the foundation skills can incorporate the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills described in the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF), and the employability skills described in the Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework (CSfW).

Foundation skills underpin competent performance and are identified in each unit of competency in a foundation skills table. The foundation skills should be considered an integrated part of the unit for delivery and assessment purposes.

FSK Foundation Skills Training Package

The FSK Foundation Skills Training Package was developed to work in combination with other training packages to support the development of learners' core skills, so they can achieve their vocational training goals. Trainers have an opportunity to use material developed, such as those developed by Aspire Learning Resources, to deliver foundation skills to learners. RTOs have an opportunity to deliver training and qualifications in foundation skills units to support their students.

IBSA's Building Strong Foundations resource provides information about using the Foundation Skills Training Package. You can access Building Strong Foundations at this website:

- ▶ www.ibsa.org.au

The Foundation Skills Training Package Implementation Guide also contains an explanation of the use of this training package. You can access it at this website:

- ▶ <https://vetnet.education.gov.au>

Assessment methods

The competency-based assessment system relies on an assessor making a judgment about a person's competence against performance benchmarks in a unit of competency, using methods such as criterion-referenced assessment, standards-based assessment or evidence-based assessment. An assessment candidate should be judged as either competent or not yet competent according to whether they demonstrate that they can meet the specified standards.

The recognition process

The recognition process allows candidates to provide evidence that their previous training, work or life experience aligns to the skills and knowledge described in a qualification or unit of competency.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is one form of this process. Recognition can also include recognition of current competency and credit transfer.

Evidence of competency may include work samples, journals, certificates of achievement and third-party testimonials. In addition, candidates may be asked questions, observed undertaking set tasks or asked to demonstrate the authenticity of their work.

RTO staff must be able to provide clear, accurate information on assessment and recognition processes to candidates. Your obligations could therefore include:

- ▶ advising and assisting a candidate/learner to apply for recognition
- ▶ determining the type of recognition for which the candidate/learner should apply
- ▶ assisting the candidate/learner to complete relevant documents
- ▶ processing recognition applications in a timely manner.

Candidates may apply for recognition before the learning program commences. In other cases it may become apparent as a learner progresses through training delivery that they have the skills, knowledge and competence to satisfy the assessment requirements for a unit of competency or a cluster of units.

Introduction

Plan assessment activities and processes

What is assessment?

Assessment is a crucial part of any learning and development program as it lets the trainer and learner know whether the learner has been successful in gaining the skills and knowledge required by the program they have undertaken. Assessment involves reviewing a range of evidence presented by the learner and judging whether the evidence they have provided is sufficient, valid, current and authentic evidence of their competence to successfully undertake a particular task:

- ▶ Sufficient – there is enough appropriate evidence to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly.
- ▶ Valid – the evidence provided is relevant to the unit of competency; the evidence measures what it is supposed to measure.
- ▶ Current – competency requires demonstration of current performance, so evidence provided must be from either the present or the very recent past.
- ▶ Authentic – the evidence presented for assessment is the candidate's own work.

Assessment in a vocational education and training (VET) system is competency-based, meaning that assessment is made against established benchmarks and a person is considered either 'competent' or 'not yet competent' according to whether they have demonstrated that they can meet the specified standards.

An assessment system and its processes must make sure that no-one is disadvantaged because of their age; gender; language, literacy and numeracy abilities; or cultural background. Therefore, in planning and conducting an assessment, assessors must meet specific legal and ethical obligations as well as quality standards outlined in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

What this learner guide covers

This unit of competency *TAEASS401 Plan assessment activities and processes* describes the skills and knowledge required to plan the assessment process, including recognition of prior learning (RPL), in a competency-based assessment system.

The unit of competency applies to individuals with assessment planning responsibilities.

Your job role

This learner guide will assist you to develop the competence required to plan assessment activities and processes in a range of learning environments.

- ▶ You may be employed as a trainer or assessor in a registered training organisation (RTO), such as a TAFE, which provides training and assessment to learners who wish to gain nationally recognised qualifications. You may deliver and assess

training to multiple groups of learners who are enrolled in various courses. This type of training and assessing usually occurs in a group environment, such as a classroom or, increasingly, as blended learning using various online technologies.

- ▶ You may be employed by an RTO and asked to assess candidates in a workplace that is not registered to provide national qualifications. Assessment is the responsibility of the RTO but will be managed in consultation with the learner's workplace supervisor or training and assessment manager.
- ▶ You may be employed in a workplace that is also registered as an RTO. Your job role may be in the organisation's learning and development team where you train and assess workers in various sections of the organisation.

An assessment strategy

This unit of competency is suitable for those working for an organisation (for example, an RTO) that already has an assessment strategy in place. This strategy should provide details of how assessments should be created, conducted and reported.

If you are working for an RTO you need to understand and follow their assessment strategy and the scope of their registration; that is, the qualifications they are permitted to deliver and assess. In order to comply with VET Quality Framework (VQF)/ Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) requirements, RTOs must develop a training and assessment strategy for the training programs they deliver that:

- ▶ meets the requirements of the training package, including language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) requirements
- ▶ meets the needs of particular target groups
- ▶ is consistent with the mode of delivery used by the RTO
- ▶ provides learning pathways
- ▶ reflects input from industry and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the strategy meets current industry requirements
- ▶ documents information according to VQF/AQTF audit requirements.

What you will learn

In this learner guide you will learn how to:

- ▶ determine the assessment approach
- ▶ prepare an assessment plan
- ▶ identify modification and contextualisation requirements
- ▶ develop assessment instruments.

Essential learning points

The information in this learner guide is based on an understanding of the following concepts and issues.

The purposes of assessment

You need to understand the different reasons a person may be presenting for assessment so you can advise them and provide appropriate support. For example, taking someone through an RPL process will differ from making assessments as a learner works through a qualification; although the end result of the person being 'competent' or 'not yet competent' is the same.

The context of the assessment

The role of an assessor includes evaluating the context of assessment, the individual needs of potential candidates and developing a plan for assessment. You need to know how the assessment will be carried out in relation to the setting, the time, the resources needed, who will carry out the assessment and whether any adjustments have to be made to suit the candidate's individual needs. An assessment system must not discriminate against anyone, so you must know how to contextualise the assessment to meet the needs of each candidate.

For example:

- ▶ you should customise assessment activities so they refer to the candidate's own workplace policies, equipment and personnel
- ▶ you may need to make adjustments to the assessment process to meet a candidate's specific needs, such as:
 - allowing a candidate additional time
 - providing assessment material in braille
 - allowing an interpreter to be present to assist the candidate.

As you work through this learner guide you will learn how to make adjustments so the assessment meets individual needs and, at the same time, continues to satisfy the evidence requirements specified in the units of competency.

The organisational, legal and ethical requirements of assessment

When you have the responsibility for assessing another person's performance, you need to know how to prepare for and conduct the assessment correctly according to legal, ethical and organisational procedures to ensure the assessment system and its processes do not disadvantage any person. There is a range of obligations you have to understand, including the policies and procedures of the organisation you are working for and the legislation you must comply with.

Access and equity issues

Access and equity are vital concepts in the assessment process. All candidates must be guaranteed access to an assessment process and environment that does not discriminate on any basis or cause offence through cultural or language misunderstandings. You will learn how to ensure the assessment system reflects the needs of particular target groups, such as people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, and those people with a language background other than English; for example:

- ▶ developing a profile for each candidate and identifying where they will need support
- ▶ making reasonable adjustments to the assessment; for example, allow for an oral assessment, rather than a written assessment if there are language or cultural issues and as long as the integrity of the assessment is maintained; allow assessment to be conducted in the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander's chosen language or ensure a person from these cultures conducts the assessment so the candidates are not disadvantaged because of their culture; allow candidates to use a calculator if there are numeracy issues and the calculator does not interfere with the intention of the assessment

- ▶ taking into account a candidate's cultural background; for example:
 - not using colloquial Australian words or phrases that may cause confusion
 - contextualising assessment situations to show there is cultural understanding; for example, Indigenous communities have shared leadership and may not understand the concept of frontline management
 - understanding that questioning may be regarded as rude in some cultures
 - understanding cultural dress, but explaining exceptions such as the requirement for a candidate to wear personal protective clothing and/or equipment when operating machinery rather than a traditional scarf or skirt they may usually wear
- ▶ recognising disability issues and making adjustments such as giving extra time for a demonstration or using an interpreter.

Benchmarks for assessment

You will learn how to identify the criteria against which the candidate will be assessed. In many instances these will be units of competency from a training package. Knowing how to interpret a unit of competency is a crucial skill for assessors.

Evidence

Assessors need to understand what evidence is and the different types of evidence you can collect. With experience, you will learn how to recognise and judge whether evidence is sufficient, valid, current and authentic.

Assessment

You will learn:

- ▶ what competency-based assessment is
- ▶ a range of assessment methods and how to identify which ones are appropriate for the candidate's context
- ▶ how to identify and use simple assessment instruments
- ▶ how to map assessments against the evidence and the requirements of a unit
- ▶ what an assessment plan should include.

In some instances you may be involved in the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process, in which a candidate applies to have evidence of their previous training, work or life experience assessed against the benchmarks outlined in a qualification so they can receive recognition for the qualification. While there is a difference in the process you follow for this type of candidate, and a candidate being assessed when they have just completed the units needed for a qualification, in both instances the outcome is the same: you are judging the candidate's current evidence against set standards.



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Identify the candidate and confirm the purposes and context of the assessment with relevant people according to legal, organisational and ethical requirements**

- 1B Identify and access applicable industry or workplace standards for the assessment, and any specific assessment requirements**

Determine the assessment approach

Assessors working in a competency-based assessment system are responsible for judging evidence presented by a candidate and making a decision regarding the candidate's competence in regard to a specific set of benchmarking criteria. The role of an assessor includes evaluating the context of assessment and the individual needs of potential candidates, and developing a plan for assessment. The plan should describe the methods that will be used to gather the evidence in order to make judgments of competence that satisfy the requirements of the frameworks that regulate training and qualifications in Australia.

1A Identify the candidate and confirm the purposes and context of the assessment with relevant people according to legal, organisational and ethical requirements

Vocational education and training is a competency-based system. Competency-based assessment is a process of systematically gathering and interpreting a candidate's evidence, then making a judgment on their performance based on industry units of competency and/or learning outcomes. If the evidence meets the set benchmarks then they are assessed as 'competent'; if there are gaps in their skills or knowledge they are assessed as 'not yet competent'.

Competency-based assessment

You may come across different terms that are used when discussing competency-based assessment. These are outlined here.

Work-focused assessment

The workplace is the context of competency-based training: competence is judged against the standards established for the performance of a specific type of work in an enterprise. For example, the candidate may submit a product they have made for assessment; and assessment will be contextualised to reflect the candidate's workplace policies, personnel, equipment used, etc.

Criterion-referenced assessment and standards-based assessment

This refers to assessment made against established benchmarks or fixed criteria or standards. Benchmarks could include:

- ▶ units of competency from relevant training packages
- ▶ national implementation guides of relevant training packages
- ▶ performance standards and evidence requirements of learning and development activities
- ▶ requirements of legislation, codes of practices, standards and guidelines
- ▶ organisational requirements or product specifications.

Evidence-based assessment

All assessment requires evidence against which to make a judgment. Assessment using units of competency described in relevant training packages involves gathering appropriate evidence to make a judgment about whether the specified standards have been met. The assessment can be formative and/or summative.

Your role in assessment

Your role and responsibilities in planning assessment activities and processes is determined by your job description and where you are employed; for example, whether you are employed as a qualified professional trainer or assessor in an RTO, an assessor in an organisation's learning and development team, or as a workplace

supervisor with assessment responsibilities. Whatever the situation, you need to follow the organisation's assessment strategy, processes, policies and practices so you can successfully plan and organise assessments.

The following skills are needed when planning and organising assessments:

- ▶ Research skills to identify candidate characteristics; access relevant training packages; identify appropriate units of competency and assessment tools.
- ▶ Cognitive skills to contextualise assessment for different learners.
- ▶ Excellent literacy skills to read and interpret information; if you are new to assessment, you need to know and understand the terminology related to training packages, units of competency and competency-based assessment strategies.
- ▶ Sound communication and interpersonal skills to discuss aspects of assessment with all relevant people involved in the process.
- ▶ Organisational skills required to plan the assessment activities or organise the human and material resources.

Assessment responsibilities

It is necessary to understand the concept of competency-based assessment. This process involves reviewing a range of evidence presented by the candidate plus any additional evidence you have gathered of their competence and required underpinning skills and knowledge. Then, you must make a judgment as to whether they have provided evidence that is sufficient, valid, current and authentic, and meets the criteria, benchmarks or standards of performance being used.

You also need to determine whether the candidate has demonstrated that they can perform to the standard expected in the workplace over a number of occasions. These standards of performance may be expressed as learning outcomes in an accredited course or established in industry/enterprise units of competency recorded in training packages. Records of the candidate's assessment outcomes must be maintained by the RTO and/or the candidate's organisation and reported to the candidate.

Identify the candidate

It is important to develop a profile of each candidate prior to assessment. This can be developed through pre-training assessments, interviews or the RPL process.

Assessment activities must be contextualised to the learner's environment and adjusted to ensure access and equity so you can provide the relevant support. You need to know whether your candidate has language, literacy or numeracy issues; is an Indigenous person; is in a remote community; or has any issues that may impact their ability to provide evidence as required.

Knowing the context and purpose of assessment will also help you develop a comprehensive profile of the candidate.

Consider the following points:

- ▶ Has the candidate enrolled in a course, apprenticeship or traineeship?
- ▶ Are they in a workplace, at an institution or working online?
- ▶ What sort of assessment is it – pre-training assessment or RPL to establish the candidate's needs, or assessment of skills learnt through structured training?
- ▶ Are they completing a workplace placement?

Candidate profile

You may need to speak with the candidate personally and observe them either in their workplace or group learning environment in order to gather sufficient information about them to prepare a profile. In some cases you may have already developed a relationship with them when delivering learning and development activities; in other circumstances you may only come into contact with the candidate occasionally if they are a workplace trainee who completes most of their learning online, or uses a workbook with the support and guidance of their workplace supervisor. On some occasions, the candidate may only present as an assessment-only candidate for the RPL process and you may have had no previous experience with them.

Your workplace should have an assessment plan with a form for candidates to complete prior to assessment. Ask your trainer for a 'Candidate profile' template; Aspire has included relevant templates in the *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

A candidate profile should include:

- ▶ the candidate's contact details
- ▶ the purpose of the assessment
- ▶ the candidate's context for assessment
- ▶ language, literacy and numeracy levels, including Australian Core Skills Framework reports or levels
- ▶ whether English is their first language
- ▶ whether they have a disability; it is the candidate's choice whether they wish to disclose any disability
- ▶ access to the resources required for assessment
- ▶ WHS issues identified based on the profile of the candidate and the industry
- ▶ funding implications and permissions sought for requests for additional resources
- ▶ supports identified and the appropriate communication details recorded.

Purpose of assessment

To ensure you use the appropriate assessment instrument for the candidate's specific learning and workplace contexts you need to be clear about the purpose of the assessment. This requires you to ask, 'Why is this person presenting for assessment?' The answer to this question is established by the environment in which learning and development is occurring.

Establishing the purpose of assessment influences the choice of benchmarking criteria that you select for assessment, and allows you to further explore the context of assessment for an individual learner.



Recognition of prior learning

Candidates may wish to have their skills, knowledge and competence formally reviewed against standards, such as the units of competency in training packages, to determine whether they satisfy the requirements for a qualification. This process is referred to as recognition of prior learning (RPL). Learners must match their previous training, work or life experience with the required skills and knowledge outlined in a unit of competency, and supply appropriate evidence to verify competency. The assessor will then assess this evidence against the criteria for the unit of competency, as they would for any assessment.



In judging competence, there is no difference between assessing evidence for RPL and assessing evidence from a candidate who has just completed a qualification/course, or is being assessed as part of a training needs analysis. Evidence of competency is often presented as a portfolio that may include work samples, journals, copies of communications, certificates of achievement and third-party testimonials. In addition, RPL candidates may be asked formal or informal questions in an interview. Sometimes they may be observed undertaking set tasks or asked to provide authenticity of their work. The assessor then needs to assess this evidence against the criteria for the qualification.

Benefits of RPL

RPL offers a range of benefits to both individuals and their employers as described here.

Benefits to individuals

- ▶ Saves time as they do not need to participate in learning activities
- ▶ May provide an opportunity to apply for promotion or new job roles
- ▶ May enhance self-esteem and motivation

Benefits to employers

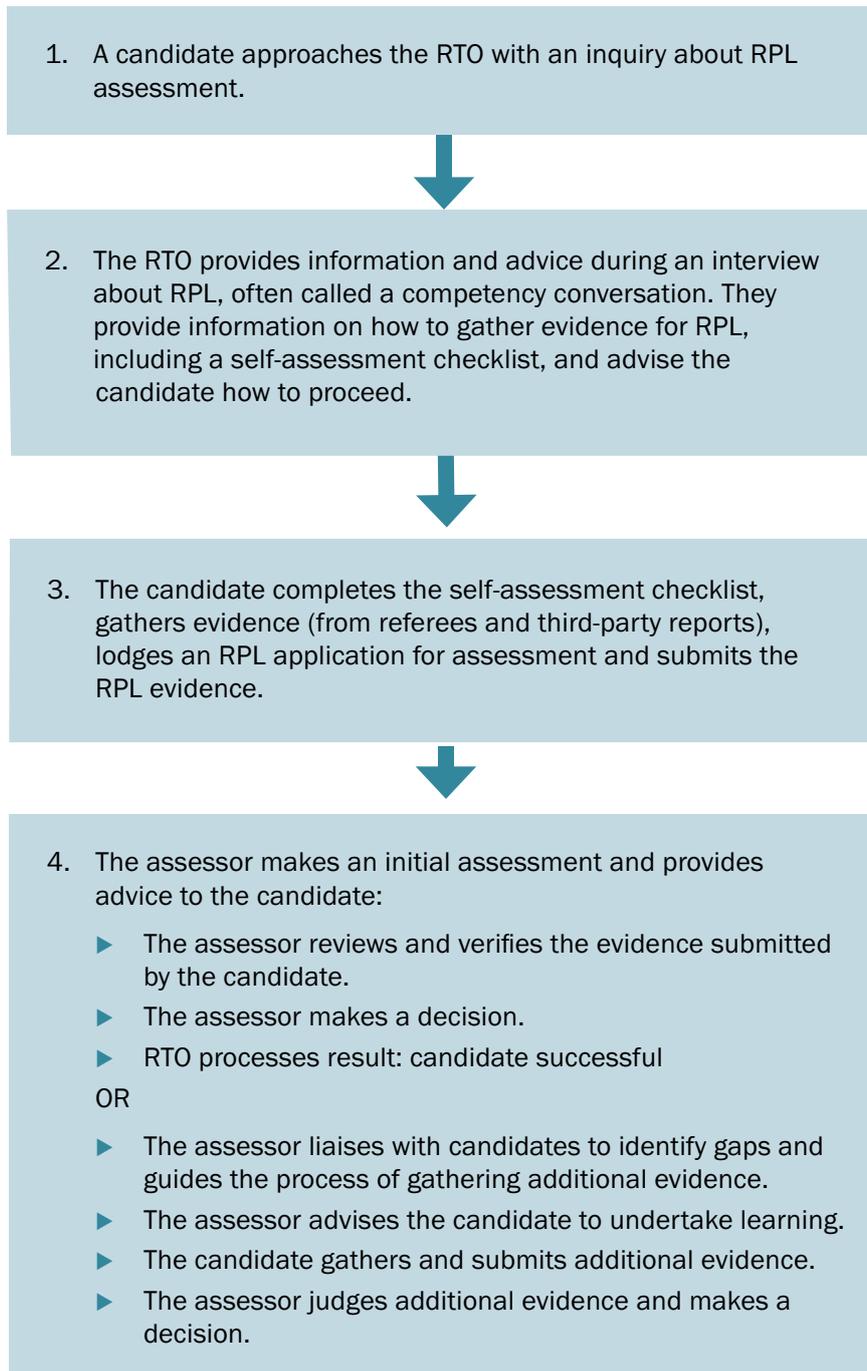
- ▶ Allows them to identify workforce competence
- ▶ Promotes a workplace learning culture
- ▶ Supports continuous improvement and quality management
- ▶ Allows them to access skills and knowledge available in the existing workforces
- ▶ Motivates workers

Assessment of RPL

Your role as an assessor requires that you provide clear and accurate information on RPL entitlements to candidates. Your obligations include:

- ▶ advising and assisting the candidate to apply for RPL
- ▶ assisting the candidate to complete the RPL application document
- ▶ processing RPL applications in a timely manner.

It is also vital to follow the procedures involved in an RPL application. The following is a flow chart highlighting the specific steps to be taken in an RPL process. You should refer to your workplace's RPL policies and procedures for details specific to your organisation.



Recognise existing competencies

Candidates may also be assessed for their existing competencies. For example, a candidate may have been deemed competent in the past but now needs to be reassessed to ensure their competencies have been maintained and are current. This process is commonly required by licensing authorities.

In some instances, an assessor may ask candidates to gather evidence of their current skills, knowledge, and



competence in order to identify their learning and development needs. This process may be part of the organisation's training needs analysis. In this situation, gaps may be identified in the candidate's current competency level and the organisation may arrange training to address the skills gaps.

Candidates may also need their current competencies assessed for recruitment or promotional purposes.

Determine language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) needs

You may be asked to conduct a specific assessment to determine a candidate's competence in language, literacy and numeracy to gauge their ability for a new job, or if LLN issues are emerging and need to be monitored through training to identify skills gaps. You also need to assess their LLN skills to establish whether you need to make adjustments to ensure assessment is accessible to all learners while still satisfying the assessments requirements of the units of competency. Remember that the language demands of the assessment must not be higher than the LLN required to do the work task.



An LLN needs assessment may have been completed as part of the enrolment process. Refer to this or to the candidate's LLN profile to decide if you need to adjust the assessment to ensure they can demonstrate competency. Reasonable adjustment in assessment is examined in detail later in this learner guide.

A useful document to refer to is the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF), which describes levels of performance in learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy. It can be used to identify the skill level of a unit of competency or check a person's performance against prescribed benchmarks and identify where their core skills need to be improved; for example, you can use the ACSF to compare the core skills required for a specific qualification with an assessment of the person's current skills.

The unit of competency should have been mapped to the ACSF so you can make an assessment about the candidate's LLN skills and the LLN demands of training and assessment.

You can access the document on the ACSF at:

- ▶ www.docs.education.gov.au/node/37507

Addressing language, literacy and numeracy issues in training and assessment is covered in detail in the Aspire learner guide *TAELLN411 Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills*.

Licensing or regulatory requirements

Some industries and occupations require workers to have a licence to perform a particular function or role. The performance criteria that are used to assess competence may be established in legislation, regulations or the licensing authority. Examples of this type of assessment may be found in a variety of industries, including construction, warehousing or real estate offices.

Identify and confirm the context of assessment

You need to know about the context and the environment in which the assessment will be carried out in order to incorporate information about physical requirements, evidence gathering strategies and your role and responsibilities in performing the assessment and preparing an assessment plan. For example, be aware of the type of learning program the candidate is undertaking such as a course, apprenticeship or traineeship; whether they are in a workplace, at an institution, working online or a combination. Confirm your role in the assessment – are you an assessor visiting the workplace and observing; relying on third-party evidence, or in the workplace collecting both formative and summative evidence?

The context of an assessment considers:

- ▶ the physical and operational factors, such as equipment and resources required
- ▶ the assessment system within which assessment is carried out
- ▶ opportunities for gathering evidence in a number of situations
- ▶ the purpose of the assessment
- ▶ who carries out the assessment
- ▶ the period of time during which it takes place.

Seek assistance

You must also consider who can help you to establish the purpose and context of assessment. Your workplace policies and procedures are a useful guide in ensuring that you seek advice and information from appropriate people.

Sources of information to help establish the purpose of assessment include:

- ▶ the candidate
- ▶ the candidate's supervisor or team leader
- ▶ a human resources manager
- ▶ an industry or professional association
- ▶ workplace policies and procedures
- ▶ the training package
- ▶ enrolment information
- ▶ a candidate assessment guide.

Advise the candidate

Your workplace assessment policies and procedures require you to advise the candidate of the assessment process that will be used to determine their competence for each unit of competency they are undertaking. This is regardless of whether the assessment is formative (during delivery of training) or summative (a judgment made after delivery) or as part of an RPL process. Your organisation will provide information to the candidates about the assessment they will be required to do as a part of the assessment requirements for each unit and/or as a part of the qualification/training as a whole. This may be in a document such as an assessment guide or an RPL application.

Legal and ethical guidelines require assessors to inform the candidate about the purpose and context of their assessment, and meet any needs the candidate may have.

Candidates must be provided information on:

- ▶ the assessment requirements for each unit of competency
- ▶ the evidence gathering methods that will be used
- ▶ how their competence will be recorded
- ▶ recognition processes
- ▶ their rights in regard to reviews of their assessment and appeals
- ▶ when assessment will occur (progressively or at the completion of their learning) and where the assessment will be conducted; for example, in their workplace or a simulated workplace.

Advise others about the assessment

You should consider whether there are people other than the candidate who need to be informed about the arrangements for assessment; for example, the candidate's workplace supervisor may be involved in evidence gathering by completing observation checklists or gathering third-party reports. The supervisor may also need to authorise time for the candidate to be absent from the workplace to participate in off-site assessment.

You may also need to coordinate access to specialised equipment, tools, software or other resources that are required to conduct assessment, or arrange for appropriate authorisation from your supervisor or senior manager to conduct assessment at the candidate's workplace.

In some cases you may need to adjust the environment, equipment or time of assessment to meet the needs of candidates with specific requirements, such as the following.

Specific requirements may include needing:

- ▶ an interpreter
- ▶ adaptive technology
- ▶ time to administer medication
- ▶ time to allow for fatigue
- ▶ an adjustment to meet cultural needs.

The assessment environment

In planning assessment, you need to confirm the environment where assessment will occur. This could be in the candidate's actual workplace, in a simulated workplace or a mixture of both. A simulated environment is useful where learners are studying in an off-the-job environment but require exposure to experiences that reflect those in the workplace.

In cases where you need to gather evidence in a simulated workplace, you need to ensure that the learner has access to resources such as technology, equipment and workplace policies and procedures that would be available to them in an actual workplace. Confirm also that the environment meets work health and safety (WHS) requirements to allow the candidate to perform their tasks safely and with no hazard to their health.



Opportunities to collect evidence

The assessment requirements section of individual units of competency specifies that evidence should be gathered on more than one occasion and in a variety of forms. The candidate must be informed of how this evidence will be collected.

You may find that in order to satisfy the evidence requirements you need to ensure that the learner provides evidence gathered from their workplace in the form of observations and demonstrations, work samples and third-party reports that are supplemented with evidence gathered off-site in a formal learning environment using an instrument such as a final assignment or report.



Who carries out the assessment?

Identify and confirm who will be carrying out the assessment and how the assessment outcomes will be recorded and reported to them. The assessment must be conducted by a person with the qualifications defined in the relevant training package. In most cases, an assessor is required to have a training and assessment qualification, a qualification related to and at least to the level of the competency they are assessing, as well as industry and VET currency. Evidence that contributes to assessment may be contributed by a third party such as a workplace supervisor, colleague or customer.



Evidence in the units of competency

You must look for the relationship between the unit of competency and how it is used in evidence to support RPL, work activities in the candidate's workplace and learning activities.

Evidence to support RPL

The assessment requirements and evidence are detailed in the unit of competency and may include work samples, journals and third-party testimonials, observation of tasks and responses to questions. Candidates may present a portfolio of these forms of evidence to support their claim for RPL. You should be able to link each piece of evidence submitted by the candidate to the critical assessment aspects in the unit of competency.

Work activities in the candidate's workplace

You should help candidates evaluate their work activities to identify how they could be used as a method of gathering evidence of competence; for example, candidates for assessment in MSF30513 – Certificate III in Picture Framing may identify an opportunity to be observed in their workplace cutting glass for frames. This observation record could contribute to their assessment portfolio.

Learning activities

Your RTO's assessment system may require candidates to complete learning activities in their workplace to provide evidence for specific performance criteria. The completed learning activities may be signed-off by a workplace supervisor and submitted to the assessor for feedback. The RTO may also require candidates to complete learning activities in a workbook, such as those in this learner guide, and submit the completed learning activities for assessment. This is an example of formative assessment.

Follow organisational, legal and ethical requirements

RTOs are required to satisfy the essential standards for registration specified in the VQF/AQTF as well as ensure that their systems and employees fulfil their obligations in regard to a range of legislation and regulations. RTOs consequently develop systems, work practices, knowledge management processes and continuous improvement systems that are designed to ensure they comply with these obligations.

Organisational, legal and ethical requirements should underpin quality training and assessment practices. Always seek assistance when interpreting assessment system policies, procedures, strategies or requirements.

Organisational requirements

The following information lists some organisational requirements with an explanation of each one.

Requirement	Explanation
Assessment system policies and procedures	An assessment system is a managed and ordered process designed to ensure assessment judgments made in relation to candidates by various assessors in a range of contexts are consistent, fair, valid and reliable.
Assessment strategy requirements	The RTO will have established policies and procedures that trainers and assessors can refer to when developing their approach to assessment and evidence gathering, including the assessment process, methods and assessment tools.
Reporting, recording and retrieval systems for assessment, including RPL	RTOs are required by the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 to achieve specific standards in regard to the management of information relevant to a candidate's enrolment, learning and assessment (including recognition). Make sure you are familiar with the procedures and documentation required for conducting an RPL. You can access a copy of the Standards at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ www.asqa.gov.au/users-guide-to-the-standards-for-registered-training-organisations-2015/about-the-standards-for-rtos/about-the-standards-for-rtos.html
Quality assurance systems	The RTO must implement a quality assurance system that includes processes that are designed to help achieve comparability of standards. There are three major components to quality management of assessments: quality assurance, quality control and quality review.

Requirement	Explanation
Business and performance plans	Business and performance plans comprise part of the organisation's strategic planning activities. They include specific goals and objectives and the strategies that the organisation intends to implement to achieve them. Performance plans identify the specific measures the organisation will use to monitor and report on performance.
Human resources (HR) policies and procedures	HR policies and procedures will establish the assessor's working conditions, role, responsibilities and entitlements. You may wish to refer to HR policies and procedures for information about driving your own car to conduct assessment in a candidate's workplace; your organisation's performance management system; and opportunities to undertake further professional development.
Collaborative and third-party arrangements	<p>RTOs can form a partnership with an enterprise or industry organisation. They can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ help its partner to understand competency-based training ▶ identify how training and assessment can help them to achieve their objectives and skill the workforce ▶ act as a conduit that shares information about the needs of industry and organisations with stakeholders involved in training and assessment ▶ offer specialist advice and support in managing training and assessment records and recognition processes. <p>An RTO may also enter into a formal collaborative assessment arrangement with other RTOs. This collaborative arrangement enables the partners to share resources, effort, time, costs, expertise and responsibility for assessment. The Standards also outline specific information on requirements for partnerships.</p>
Defined resource parameters	<p>Resources specified in the assessment strategy could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ assessment materials that will be used ▶ assessor competencies that are required ▶ the facilities and equipment that need to be available or accessed, including work placement arrangements (the RTO may partner with industry or enterprises to facilitate access) ▶ simulated work environments ▶ support and administration personnel.
National recognition arrangements	The RTO must recognise the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by any other RTO.
Registration scope	<p>The RTO's scope defines the specific AQF qualifications, units of competency and accredited courses it is registered to provide. You should check your employer's scope of registration to determine whether it is registered to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ both training delivery and assessment services, and to issue the relevant AQF qualifications and statements of attainment ▶ only assessment services, and to issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment.

Legal requirements

The following information lists some legal requirements with an explanation of each one.

Requirement	Explanation
Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015	<p>The Standards are a set of nationally agreed quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment services delivered by training organisations. You must be familiar with the Standards that explain your organisation's compliance obligations.</p> <p>Ask your supervisor if you have any difficulty interpreting the Standards.</p>
<p>WHS considerations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ensuring WHS requirements are adhered to during the assessment process ▶ identifying and reporting WHS hazards and concerns to relevant personnel 	<p>Before undertaking any assessment activity, you should conduct a WHS risk assessment. This does not necessarily have to be an involved, formal process; however, during the planning stage you must identify the hazards that are present in the assessment environment and take appropriate steps to minimise or eliminate the hazards. This may require you to bring your concerns to the attention of the candidate's workplace supervisor, human resources manager or health and safety representative. Your workplace policies and procedures should include information that is useful to you in reporting and controlling risk both in your workplace and when conducting off-site assessments.</p> <p>Remember, you have a duty of care to the candidate and must take all reasonable steps to ensure their health and safety during the assessment process.</p> <p>You should also ensure that you receive appropriate training to use any specialised personal protective equipment, technology or materials during the assessment process.</p>
Industrial relations systems and processes, awards and enterprise agreements	<p>You require a general understanding of the framework that relates to industrial relations and working conditions. Consider the impact of these pieces of legislation, awards, workplace agreements and individual contracts when planning learning and development activities and assessment; for example, when scheduling assessment outside of usual business hours, you should be aware of the potential cost to your employer and the candidate's employer in additional wages.</p>
<p>Legal requirements, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ anti-discrimination ▶ equal employment opportunity ▶ job role responsibilities and conditions 	<p>RTOs must comply with the legislation that relates to anti-discrimination and equal opportunity in both their own business operations and when conducting assessment in a candidate's workplace. This means that you must not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their gender, age, religion, ethnicity, family situation or sexual preference.</p> <p>You should also support the RTOs and client organisations in their policies of promoting equitable access to learning and assessment opportunities. You should aim to promote cultural inclusivity in your workplace, group learning environments and when assessing clients in their workplaces.</p> <p>Assessment support may include adapting questions or activities so the candidate is not disadvantaged because of culture or physical disability; for example, providing opportunities to use large text, audio or video recording, or arranging for an interpreter.</p>

Requirement	Explanation
Access and equity policies and procedures	Your organisation should have developed workplace policies and procedures to promote access and equity in delivery and assessment for their clients. You should also familiarise yourself with the policies and procedures that promote access and equity in the candidate's workplace. This is particularly important where assessment will be conducted on the job. Consider those with language difficulties, a physical disability and Indigenous candidates in remote areas, and make appropriate adjustments to meet their needs, such as providing adaptive technology, additional time, resources to meet specific learning environments and/or specialist assessors.

Ethical requirements

There are also ethical requirements to be considered when determining the assessment approach, as described here.

Relevant industry codes of practice

A code of practice is a set of professional standards or guidelines agreed on by members of a particular profession or issued by an official body or a professional association to its members. The purpose of these professional standards is to promote ethical practice and assist members to comply with their obligations in regard to legislation that impacts on their particular industry.

Assessors working in mental health or the disability services sector, for example, should comply with the relevant National Standards that have been developed for workers in these areas.

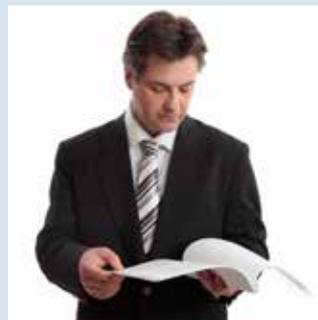
Confidentiality and privacy requirements

Assessors are required to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). This legislation impacts on the information that is collected from candidates, how that information may be shared with others, how it is stored and, ultimately, archived or destroyed by the organisation.

Example

Identify the candidate and confirm the purposes and context of the assessment with relevant people according to requirements

Tony is employed as a trainer/assessor at Primary Training Solutions, an RTO that offers courses in training and assessment, frontline management and workplace health and safety. The company conducts training and assessment on-site for personnel employed by some of Australia's largest producers of natural resources.



Tony has been given the task of delivering training and conducting assessment on-site at DMAq, a mine located near Mackay in Northern Queensland. He will be delivering and assessing a course in Certificate IV in Leadership and Management to a group of learners who have been employed at the mine in various trades and who have been identified as having the potential to move into leadership management roles. Many of the learners have great expertise in their trades and workplace health and safety but have little experience in leadership positions. Many have also not undertaken formal, group learning since completing their apprenticeship many years earlier.

The mine's management team explains to Tony at their initial meeting that they are keen to recognise the current competencies of learners, particularly in regard to units on workplace health and safety and risk management. Before travelling to Mackay, Tony accesses the training.gov.au website and downloads the information about the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management qualification and each of the units of competency in the qualification that are on the RTO's scope of registration. He also accesses the Primary Training Solutions assessment plan for the delivery of this qualification.

Tony begins the process of determining his assessment process by reviewing the information that candidates have provided on a candidate profile form. He determines that in addition to the information he has been given by management, three learners have disabilities that could impact on their ability to complete written assessments; there are also two Indigenous Australians, several candidates left school before completing Year 10, and one learner is very reluctant to participate in the program.

Tony checks the assessment plan and his workplace policies and procedures for information about equity arrangements to support the needs of these candidates and to promote inclusivity in learning and assessment.

Tony realises that many of the learners should apply for recognition of current competence for the workplace health and safety unit that is included in the qualification. He arranges a meeting with all learners and explains the process for recognising current competence and describes the methods they could use to gather a portfolio of evidence. He also explains to the learners that he will meet with each of them individually to discuss their learning and assessment needs and the recognition process with them prior to commencement of the course.

Activity 1

This learning activity is designed to provide you with an opportunity to access websites and gather appropriate documentation to help you determine your workplace's approach to assessment. You will also need to research the legal, organisational and ethical framework that underpins RTOs' assessment strategies. You may need to refer to the training and assessment strategy, and the assessment policy.

Arrange to spend some time with the person responsible for learner enrolments in your workplace. Your objective is to develop your understanding of the processes that are used to gather information about learners. Learners may be enrolling in a course of study or they may be applying for assessment of the current competencies through the RPL process for the whole or part of a qualification.

1. Record information in a report or table about your organisation's procedures for the following items (include relevant weblinks to the organisation's website, where applicable). Keep this information as it will be referred to again in future activities in this learner guide:
 - ▶ Profiling learners, including enrolment information, needs analysis, HR information and workplace information.
 - ▶ Information collected from learners on the enrolment form (keep a copy of an enrolment form for your portfolio); highlight information on the form that may be used to identify that the learner may require reasonable adjustment on assessment.
 - ▶ Printed copies of the information that is given to the learner regarding applying for RPL; ask the person responsible for enrolments how they gather feedback from learners about the quality of information they are given about applying for RPL.
 - ▶ Printed copies of an application form for RPL; attach to the application form your evaluation of the quality of the form. Consider whether the information on the form is easy to understand and is suitable for learners with various levels of literacy, numeracy and diverse cultural backgrounds. Also collect printed copies of information given to learners regarding assessment in the course they are undertaking.
 - ▶ Procedures that are implemented to protect the privacy of personal information collected about learners.
 - ▶ Information given to learners about how the assessment outcomes will be recorded and reported to them (keep a copy of this for your portfolio). This may be outlined in the training and assessment strategy, and assessment policy documents.

You may like to use this table for your response.

Item	Discussion points
Profiling learners	
Enrolment form	
Printed information that is given to the learner regarding applying for RPL	
Application for RPL	
Procedures for protecting privacy of personal information	
Information about assessment recording and reporting procedures	

2. Use the information collected on these topics to summarise it in this table.

Framework of organisational, legal and ethical requirements	Summary of workplace policies and procedures
Quality assurance system	
Collaborative and partnership arrangements	
Defined resource parameters	
Mutual recognition arrangements	
Key aspects of your employer's human resources system that relate to your role as an assessor	
Your employing RTO's scope of registration	
Relevant industry codes of practice	
WHS considerations relevant to assessment	
A summary of your job description and employment contract	

Click to complete Activity 1

1B Identify and access applicable industry or workplace standards for the assessment, and any specific assessment requirements

Competency-based assessment underpins learning in this unit. As discussed in the previous section, competency-based assessment is a process of systematically gathering and interpreting a candidate's evidence then making a judgment on their performance based on benchmarks such as industry units of competency and/or learning outcomes. You are required to demonstrate your application of this required knowledge as an aspect of assessment of your own competence.

Understand the benchmarks for assessment

A key component of planning for assessment is identifying the specific benchmarks that you are required to use to judge the candidate's competence. Benchmarks are agreed good examples of particular levels of achievement. They help clarify the standards expected within a qualification and show how they can be demonstrated and assessed.

The benchmarks that you refer to when judging evidence for assessment are determined by your employment situation. Assessors who are employed by RTOs are asked to judge competence in regard to the assessment requirements prescribed in units of competency. If you are not employed by an RTO you may be asked to assess the candidate's performance against the learning outcomes or performance criteria that are identified in course curricula, enterprise or industry standards or products specifications. You may still use publicly available units of competency as benchmarks for assessment; however, unless your employer partners with an RTO, the candidate will not receive a formal qualification or statement of attainment.

Refer to your workplace policies and procedures for information that will help you to determine the benchmarks you need to use for assessment.



A unit of competency

Be sure you are familiar with each aspect of the unit/s of competency you are using to assess the candidate. If you are just starting out as an assessor, look at a number of units of competency from various training packages to see how they are presented and that all these components are covered. All units of competency include the following information.

Component feature	What it relates to
Unit of competency	
Title	The title describes the unit outcome.
Unit application	This field describes how the unit is practically applied, who would typically use it and the unit of competency's relationship to licensing, legislative or certification requirements.
Prerequisite units	This is an optional field that specifies any unit/s in which the learner must already be competent, prior to achieving competency in this unit.
Unit sector	This field is used to categorise units of competency in relation to industry sectors or types of work.
Elements	Elements describe the outcomes of the significant functions and tasks that make up the competency. Elements describe actions or outcomes that are demonstrable and assessable.
Performance criteria	Performance criteria specify the required performance in relevant tasks, roles, skills (including foundation skills) and the applied knowledge that enables competent performance.
Foundation skills	This field describes the language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills that are essential to performance.
Range of conditions	This is an optional field that specifies different work environments and conditions that may affect performance. Range is restricted to essential operating conditions and any other variables essential to the work environment, so it is quite different from the previous range statement.
Unit mapping information	This field specifies the code and title of any equivalent unit of competency.
Links	This field provides a link to the Companion Volume Implementation Guide.

Component feature	What it relates to
Assessment requirements	
Performance evidence	Performance evidence specifies what individuals must do to show that they satisfy the performance standards in the unit of competency. This includes the associated frequency and volume.
Knowledge evidence	Knowledge evidence specifies what individuals must know in order to carry out the work tasks described in the unit of competency safely and effectively.
Assessment conditions	This field describes mandatory conditions for assessment; for example, details of equipment and materials; contingencies; physical conditions; relationships with other people; time frames, etc. It also specifies assessor requirements.
Links	This field provides a link to the Companion Volume Implementation Guide.

National register for training

As you prepare for an assessment, access the National Register website (<http://training.gov.au>) to download print or electronic versions of training package information, implementation guides/companion volumes, qualifications and units of competency including the assessment requirements document. Use training.gov.au to determine that you are working with the latest version by referring to the release number and the current or superseded status indicated in the unit information.

Australian Qualifications Framework

Units of competency are packaged as groups of units into qualification levels that are represented by various qualifications with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Each qualification within the AQF has a descriptor that provides guidelines for performance at a particular level. Applying the AQF learning outcome descriptors means that assessments can be pitched at the right level to suit the learners. For example, the assessment questions asked to a learner at a Certificate II level would be quite different from those asked to a learner studying for a Diploma qualification.

AQF performance includes:

- ▶ Information-processing capabilities
- ▶ Problem-solving capabilities
- ▶ Responsibility for a person's own work
- ▶ Responsibility for the work of others
- ▶ The breadth and depth of knowledge
- ▶ The breadth and depth of skill
- ▶ The operational environment in which the work is performed

Certification of competence

If learners are undertaking a specific course that requires them to be assessed to ensure that learning has occurred, you will use the document from the learning program that outlines the delivery and assessment strategies to use, and the

individual units of competency that have been selected for this particular qualification. In this case, the purpose of assessment is to gather evidence to make a judgment of the learner's competence against the assessment requirements identified in the units of competency.

An AQF qualification is issued once the full requirements for a qualification, as specified in the nationally endorsed training package, are met. A statement of attainment is issued when an individual has successfully completed one or more units of competency from a nationally recognised qualification or course.

Performance specifications of an enterprise or industry

Private organisations or enterprises and industry associations may develop their own organisational benchmarks and standards that they use to assess the competence of those working in a specific work location or job role. These may be outside an RTO's scope of recognition, but the products produced from such courses may be submitted as documentation/evidence for RPL. Alternatively, the organisation may use a combination of their own specific standards and units of competency from relevant training packag

The standards used may relate to workplace health and safety, manufacturing or logistic processes, or work locations that involve very specific working environmental conditions. For example, you may be engaged to assess the performance of frontline managers who supervise workers in the mining industry. You may assess the candidates using units of competency from the Business Services Training Package that are relevant to leadership and management. You may also assess their understanding of promoting safe working practices using specific organisational standards developed by specialist health and safety representatives for the company.

The human resources manager in the organisation where you are conducting assessment should be able to provide you with printed or electronic information about the standards you should to judge performance. You should be mindful that this information is commercially sensitive and you should ensure the confidentiality of any benchmarking information that is shared with you.

Benchmarks for product specifications

There are industries and workplaces where workers are required to produce products that satisfy specific criteria. These criteria may relate to design specifications, the client brief, Australian quality standards or safety requirements. You may be asked as an assessor to judge whether the candidate is competent to produce a product or part of a product that satisfies product specifications. You should communicate with the candidate's line manager or team leader, the quality assurance manager or human resources manager for information about the product specifications and any relevant quality standards. The evidence guide for this type of assessment should include observing the candidate's work practices and examining product samples. Prepare a series of questions that you can use to gather additional evidence during the production process of the candidate's competence in regard to the underpinning knowledge.

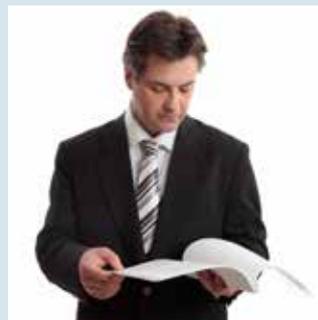


Example

Identify and access applicable industry or workplace standards for the assessment, and any specific assessment requirements

In the following example, Tony of Primary Training Solutions unpacks the unit of competency *BSBWHS401 Implement and monitor WHS policies, procedures and programs to meet legislative requirements*, to identify the benchmarks for assessment and RPL.

Tony begins the process of unpacking the unit of by accessing the training.gov.au website. He checks for the latest release and prints the unit of competency. At this stage, Tony needs to understand the benchmarks to use to judge the performance of candidates.



He begins by reading the unit descriptor that describes the work activity and its relationship with other units. He uses the elements to understand the outcomes that workers performing this activity are expected to achieve. The performance criteria describe the required performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element and the Foundation skills describe the language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills that are essential to performance. The assessment requirements outline the performance evidence that specifies what individuals must do to show that they satisfy the performance standards in the unit of competency. The assessment conditions provide Tony with the mandatory conditions he must arrange for the assessment.

Tony is aware from discussions with colleagues that it is essential that he gathers clear evidence of the application of the knowledge evidence, performance criteria and performance evidence listed in the unit of competency. His workplace has developed a policy that requires him to use questioning to gather evidence of the knowledge component of the unit and observation for the skills component. He knows that this will help those candidates who require specific support.

Tony's initial thoughts are that the context of assessment is well-suited for portfolio-based assessment because there is a list of items in the performance evidence that the candidates must provide. The knowledge questionnaire and observation checklist will provide supplementary evidence. He reviews his decisions in view of any contextualising that needs to occur. Before proceeding further with developing an assessment plan, Tony arranges to meet with his colleagues to share his plan and gather their input.

Activity 2

Either use a time when you have assisted a candidate to apply for RPL in your workplace, or use the following case study.

Read the case study, then complete the tasks that follow. You require internet access to complete this learning activity, along with copies of the various forms and printed information you collected in Activity 1.

Case study

You are meeting with a person who has recently enrolled in a business course with the goal of improving her technology and customer service skills following five-year absence from the paid workforce. The candidate is a 30-year-old woman who is returning to paid work now that her child is starting kindergarten. She had previously worked for six years as a receptionist in a real estate office. You believe that the candidate should consider applying for recognition of her current competence in regard to her communication skills.

1. Access training.gov.au to obtain a copy of the unit of competency *BSBCMM201 Communicate in the workplace* from the BSB Business Services Training Package. Review the learner enrolment form exemplar you gathered in Activity 1 and identify the information you could find on that form that would help you to substantiate the candidate's potential to apply for RPL.

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2. Review the application for the RPL form that you sourced in Activity 1.

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- Identify the information you collected in Activity 1 that provides information to learners about how the assessment will be judged, how feedback will be provided and how the outcomes will be recorded and reported to them.

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Click to complete Activity 2

Summary

- Assessment is the process of gathering evidence and making judgments of whether a candidate has demonstrated performance to the standard expected in the workplace, expressed in the units of competency in a relevant training package or the learning outcomes of an accredited course.
- Assessors should review a range of evidence presented by the candidate and use that evidence to make a judgment as to whether they have satisfied the assessor that the evidence they have provided is sufficient, valid, current and authentic.
- Prior to assessment the assessor must prepare a profile of the candidate to establish their needs, the purpose and context of their assessment.
- RTOs are involved in providing accredited training and assessment to individuals that result in recording the learner’s competence against performance criteria that are specified in individual units of competency.
- Assessors who are employed by RTOs must judge competence in regard to the assessment requirements prescribed in units of competency.
- The assessment approach adopted by an RTO must accord with the needs of learners, current industry requirements and the requirements of the training package.
- The units of competency are a set of standards that have been developed by enterprises and industry that establish the performance criteria, skills and knowledge that are required by workers to competently undertake specific work tasks and activities.
- You are obligated as an assessor to ensure that assessment activities are contextualised to the learner’s environment and are adjusted to ensure access and equity.



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Analyse units of competency and assessment requirements to identify evidence needed to demonstrate competence, according to the rules of evidence**

- 2B Select assessment methods and instruments to support the collection of defined evidence, taking into account the context in which the assessment will take place**

- 2C Develop the assessment plan and gain approval from relevant stakeholders**

Prepare the assessment plan

Assessment plans are a key component of the organisation's assessment process. They are designed to align with the organisation's assessment strategy and provide important advice to ensure assessors comply with their VQF/AQTF obligations. An assessment plan also contains information of interest to the candidate and their employer.

During the development phase of the assessment plan, you should record the purpose of assessment, the context of assessment, the needs of candidates and the benchmarks that will be used to judge performance. This information underpins the decisions you make to determine appropriate methods for gathering the evidence by which you judge competence.

2A Analyse units of competency and assessment requirements to identify evidence needed to demonstrate competence, according to the rules of evidence

Assessment relies on judging whether the evidence presented by a candidate demonstrates their competence in regard to specific benchmarking criteria.

In this section, you will examine the three types of evidence that you will use for assessment and the various forms they may take. Understanding and applying the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment is critical when making judgments about competency. If you are employed by an RTO you should ensure that you are familiar with the *Users' guide to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*.

This guide provides essential information for the registration and obligation to conduct assessment in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.



Satisfy the rules of evidence

Evidence is information that provides proof of competency. While evidence must be sufficient, trainers and assessors must focus on quality rather than the quantity of evidence.

There are four rules of evidence that guide the collection of evidence. These are described in detail here with an example.

Sufficient

Sufficiency is about the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence provided by the candidate. In some cases it may be difficult to gather sufficient evidence using a summative assessment instrument and the assessor should make arrangements to gather supplementary information. This may involve requesting a third-party report where the learner is observed performing a specific skill.

Example: The candidate is completing a course in website design and development.

She has compiled a portfolio of evidence of the various websites she has created as she progressed through the course. She will be completing a final case study where she will be holistically assessed against the performance evidence and knowledge evidence components of the relevant unit of competency. Her assessor has organised for the candidate's supervisor to complete a third-party report in order to gather evidence of the candidate's competence to work as a member of a team.

Teamwork is identified as a foundation skill in the unit of competency.

Valid

Assessment is valid when the process is sound and assesses what it claims to assess.

Validity requires that the evidence must cover the performance evidence and knowledge evidence and be integrated with their practical application. Evidence used for assessment must have been gathered on a number of occasions and in a range of contexts using different assessment methods. This makes sure that the learner has the skills, knowledge and attributes described in the unit of competency.

Example: Processing a payment

Review the unit of competency to know what a competent person would do when they are processing a payment for a customer in a retail store.

Gather evidence of the candidate in a range of scenarios during the delivery stage of the unit including role-plays (where an observation record is completed); a quiz where the learner will answer questions to assess underpinning knowledge while they operate the cash register; and a summative assessment instrument completed in a simulated retail store where the candidate processes various forms of payment.

Current

Current relates to the age of the evidence presented. Competency requires demonstration of current performance; thus the evidence collected must be either from the present or the very recent past.

Example: The Vue Interior Design Academy assessment policy requires that evidence provided by candidates must be less than five years old.

Authentic

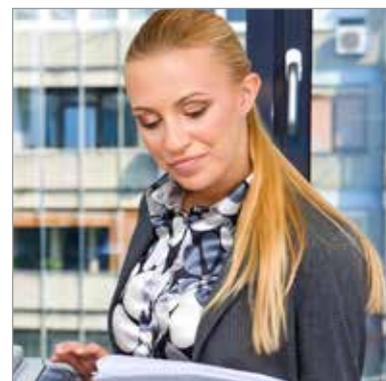
You must be convinced that the evidence presented for assessment is the candidate's own work and that supporting documents are genuine.

Example: The candidate is completing a Certificate IV in Bookkeeping.

In order to meet the requirements of the Australian Taxation Office in regard to competence in preparing business activity statements, the RTO has decided that all candidates will be assessed using a supervised exam. This is a part of the RTO's strategy to authenticate the candidate's assessment.

Check the assessment requirements

The assessment requirements document for a unit of competency provides advice on assessment. The performance evidence must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, foundation skills, knowledge evidence, and the assessment conditions for the relevant training package. The evidence required by assessors should be drawn from a range of sources. It may be collected by the assessor only, or the assessor and the candidate, or a third party such as a workplace supervisor. Your objective is to select the evidence-gathering methods that have the greatest potential to provide quality evidence that will allow you to satisfy the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment.



You should also check the 'Application' of the unit and the assessment conditions carefully to identify important information about any workplace and regulatory requirements you need to know that may impact on assessment. For example, workers in the meat industry may be undertaking a course of study that includes a unit of competency about inspecting particular types of meat such as game. Assessors would be aware from reading the assessment requirements for units of competency in the Australian Meat Industry Training Package that all assessment must be conducted against Meat Standards Australia regulations.

Apply principles of assessment

When developing assessment tools you need to ensure that the principles of assessment are met. High-quality assessments must be:

- ▶ Fair – assessments must not be discriminatory or disadvantage the candidate in any way
- ▶ Flexible – assessments must meet the candidate's individual needs and include a range of appropriate assessment methods
- ▶ Valid – assessments must assess the established benchmarks and be consistent in a variety of contexts
- ▶ Reliable – there must be a common interpretation of the assessments.

Strategies you can use to ensure you comply with the principles of assessment are outlined here.

Fair

An assessment system and its processes must not disadvantage any person. All eligible candidates must be guaranteed access to assessment, which does not discriminate on any basis. Assessment processes must be designed to address the individual needs of candidates. This may require the reasonable adjustment of assessment methods. The key characteristics of fair assessment processes are as follows:

- ▶ Clear communication to the candidate of the assessment process – particularly in instructions.
- ▶ Agreement by the candidate to the assessment process – make sure they know exactly what the assessment involves and what their responsibilities are.
- ▶ An opportunity for the candidate to challenge the result of the assessment and for reassessment to occur if necessary.

Flexible

The methods selected to gather evidence must reflect the individual needs and circumstances of the candidate. You may need to use a range of assessment methods that are appropriate to the context of the unit and the assessment requirements, and are in context for the individual learner. The assessor must also implement an assessment strategy that supports recognition of competencies that have already been acquired by the candidate.

Valid

Assessment is valid when the process is sound and assesses the evidence performance presented by the individual learner. The assessment must cover a broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance, and the knowledge and skills must be integrated with the practical application of the assessment. A learner should be able to demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other, similar situations. For example, an important strategy that an RTO uses to ensure assessment is valid is to evaluate whether an assessment instrument that was originally developed to gather evidence in a specific context gathers the same type of evidence in a different context.

Reliable

Reliable assessment processes use methods and procedures that ensure that the units of competency are interpreted and applied consistently from person to person and from context to context. Judgments of competence may be made consistently by various assessors relying on the same types of evidence.

Identify opportunities for integrated assessment

You should also consider opportunities to integrate assessment for units of competency. Be very careful when developing integrated assessment, as you need to gather evidence to satisfy the assessment requirements for each of the included units of competency.

You should complete the appropriate record that demonstrates how you have mapped the various parts of the assessment instrument to the performance evidence, knowledge evidence, foundation skills and performance criteria in each unit. It is good practice to have this mapping document checked by a colleague or your workplace supervisor. You may like to recommend that assessment instruments that assess units holistically should be included in your workplace assessment validation process as they present a higher risk to the RTO.



You can also consider holistic assessment within a unit and combine elements where appropriate.

Assess foundation skills

Foundation skills are the non-technical skills that support an individual's participation in the workplace, in the community and in education and training. They are identified in each training package in the Companion volumes/Implementation guides for each qualification. The foundation skills incorporate the learning; language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills described in the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF); and the employability skills described in the Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework (CSfW). They are embedded in each unit of competency and should be assessed as an integral part of the task that is being assessed. Foundation skills that underpin competent performance are identified in each unit of competency in a foundation skills table.

You can download a copy of the ACSF at:

- ▶ www.education.gov.au/download-acsf

You can read more about the Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework at:

- ▶ www.education.gov.au/core-skills-work-developmental-framework

Here are some examples of the foundation skills for the FNS20115 Certificate II in Financial Services unit of competency *FNSFLT206 Develop knowledge of taxation* from the Financial Services Training Package.

Skill	Performance criteria	Description
Reading	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	Accesses, interprets and collates information from a range of sources and identifies key relevant information for the task
Oral communication	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	Uses active listening and questioning to develop a clear understanding of topics and issues, and participates in verbal exchanges to share information
Numeracy	2.3, 3.3, 4.1	Interprets financial information relating to taxation to determine how calculations are made
Navigate the world of work	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	Maintains up-to-date knowledge of taxation necessary for own situation
Get the work done	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	Plans and organises tasks according to defined requirements Uses digital systems and tools to source and analyse information

What will be assessed

While some assessment information is for the assessor to use for planning purposes, the candidate needs to be fully informed about the assessment and the evidence they will be required to gather and present.

Each unit of competency or part of a course curricula describes a specific work activity, conditions under which it is conducted and the evidence that may be gathered to determine whether the activity is being performed competently.

Evaluate the unit of competency to answer the following:

- ▶ What is the work activity?
- ▶ What does the work activity involve?
- ▶ What skills and knowledge are needed to perform the work activity?
- ▶ What level of skill is needed? (Check the unit descriptor, AQF level, employability/foundation skills and the level of LLN.)
- ▶ What are the conditions under which this work activity may be conducted? (The section 'Application of the unit' contains relevant information.)
- ▶ What evidence is needed to prove that a person is competent?
- ▶ Where should evidence be gathered?
- ▶ What resources are required to gather the evidence?

Gather evidence

The following steps may help you plan the types of evidence that need to be collected for assessment.

Evidence collection

1. Review the picture of competence; that is, what a person will look like as they complete the task in the workplace.
2. Identify the evidence required to demonstrate competency, including performance and knowledge evidence.
3. Consider the rules of evidence – how to gather evidence that is sufficient, valid, current and authentic.
4. Make sure the instructions for collecting evidence do not have higher levels of LLN than required for the unit.
5. Identify where the evidence will come from.

Collect evidence

Having identified the evidence requirements, you must determine how the evidence will be collected. It is important to consider the best possible and most appropriate combination of evidence-gathering techniques. This will also be affected by the mode of delivery/assessment; for example, it may be more difficult to provide a simulated workplace experience for courses delivered online.

You also need to ensure that the methods you select to gather evidence are consistent with the training and assessment strategy developed by the RTO, and described to the candidate when they enrol in the course or unit.

Considerations when collecting evidence

- ▶ The nature of the work activity
- ▶ The evidence requirements
- ▶ The individual characteristics of the candidate
- ▶ The assessment context and purpose

How evidence can be gathered

- ▶ Through real work/real-time activities through observation and third-party reports
- ▶ Through structured activities
- ▶ Through formative assessments where assessment is progressive throughout the learning process and validated along the way by the trainer
- ▶ Through summative assessment where assessment is an exercise or simulation at the end of the learning process

Direct evidence

Direct evidence is anything that the candidate has either produced themselves or for which they have been primarily responsible. In order to satisfy the rules of authenticity in assessment, you may require the candidate's workplace supervisor to verify that work samples presented by the candidate for assessment have been produced either by them or primarily by them.

The direct evidence supplied by the candidate largely reflects the context of assessment and the work they perform.

Your assessment process may require the candidate to annotate the evidence with reflective statements where they discuss the process of performing the relevant work activity, or they may highlight how they have demonstrated the relevant underpinning knowledge. You may ask people with literacy issues to discuss a photograph of them working, or a product they have completed instead of writing an explanation. Samples of work and demonstration may be especially useful for Indigenous candidates who may find it difficult to express themselves appropriately in written English. Candidates applying for RPL may be asked to supply a portfolio of current work samples.

Direct evidence could include:

- ▶ audio recordings or podcasts
- ▶ audiovisual recordings using DVD, video or YouTube
- ▶ correspondence (letters, memos, emails) composed by the candidate
- ▶ demonstration of skills
- ▶ diary or journal extracts
- ▶ a learning journal
- ▶ materials or tools used to perform work
- ▶ observations by an assessor or workplace supervisor
- ▶ photographs
- ▶ published works such as operational manuals
- ▶ samples of work
- ▶ workplace documents produced by the candidate.

Indirect evidence

Indirect evidence is proof of a candidate's work that was gathered 'off the job' and can be reviewed or examined by assessors. This is particularly relevant to RPL candidates. Any indirect evidence must be authenticated.

Indirect evidence may include:

- ▶ accredited courses or qualifications the candidate has completed
- ▶ budgets prepared or implemented by the candidate
- ▶ the candidate's curriculum vitae or résumé
- ▶ the candidate's performance appraisal
- ▶ a certificate of achievement (this could be for non-accredited training)
- ▶ formal certificates or results of relevant training that has been completed
- ▶ job specifications or position description
- ▶ letters of appreciation from customers, suppliers or work colleagues
- ▶ membership of professional associations

- ▶ minutes of meetings that contain information on the candidate's participation and performance in specific activities
- ▶ presentations or written speeches
- ▶ a reference or letters of support
- ▶ workplace awards and certificates
- ▶ a written test of underpinning knowledge.

Supplementary evidence

Supplementary evidence is additional evidence presented by candidates to demonstrate competence. The most common form of evidence used for these situations is a third-party report. These reports are generally used because the current assessor has not been able to observe the learner. This may be because of difficult circumstances, such as a learner based in a remote area, or because the learner is applying for RPL and the evidence is from a previous period of time.



It may be necessary to seek supplementary evidence where a candidate has submitted a portfolio of documents or work samples for assessment – this is especially relevant to RPL candidates. In this case, the assessor may identify that the candidate has not provided sufficient evidence of underpinning knowledge or has not provided evidence in regard to every performance criterion. The assessor may liaise with the candidate to agree on additional evidence that could be gathered to address these gaps. It may be agreed that the candidate will provide a written report or answer questions that are designed to address the required knowledge of the unit of competency.

The candidate may also be asked to authenticate a work sample or certificate they have presented. Testimonials from employers may also be used as supplementary evidence. Usually the assessor negotiates a time line for supplementary evidence.

Collate a portfolio

A portfolio is a collection of items of evidence gathered by the candidate that demonstrates their competence in regard to the assessment criteria. Candidates seeking recognition for their existing competence usually present a portfolio of evidence for the assessor to review. Portfolios are also an effective tool for candidates who are being assessed at higher AQF levels, such as Certificate IV and Diploma. In many cases, candidates at this level are employed in job roles that are relevant to the course they are undertaking and may be able to collate evidence of the application of their learning in their workplace. You should negotiate with this type of candidate to determine whether there is enough scope in their job role to gather sufficient evidence of their competence. You may agree on an assessment process that requires the candidate to provide supplementary evidence by completing a quiz on the knowledge evidence component of the unit of competency, or arranging for a testimonial from their employer about their performance of a specific aspect of competence.

You should develop very clear guidelines to follow when evaluating the portfolio submitted for assessment. How will you know that a specific item satisfies the rules of evidence? How will you ensure that other assessors would interpret and judge the items in the same way? You may address these aspects of reliable assessment by

collaborating with relevant stakeholders in developing the rules that you use to make decisions. You may decide to develop an evidence checklist that you use to record how you have applied the decision-making rules.

Evidence presented in a portfolio

- ▶ Employment records
- ▶ Work diaries or logs
- ▶ Records of workplace training
- ▶ Assessments of current skills
- ▶ Assessments of current knowledge
- ▶ Third-party reports from current and previous trainers, managers, customers or clients
- ▶ Previous qualifications
- ▶ Confirmation of relevant unpaid or volunteer experience
- ▶ Examples of work products

Example

Analyse units of competency and assessment requirements to identify evidence needed to demonstrate competence, according to the rules of evidence

Julia is employed at Vue Design School. This semester she is responsible for the first time for assessing the unit of competency *BSBDES402 Interpret and respond to a design brief*. Julia has unpacked the unit of competency as a key part of her process in visualising how a competent person would look performing this work activity. Her group of learners are all employed in the industry.



Julia is part-way through the process of preparing a map of the types of evidence she needs to collect from assessment candidates when she is approached by Patrick, another design teacher who has assessed BSBDES402 at his last workplace. Patrick explains he took some time to decide on appropriate assessment methods for this unit and consulted with his colleagues before he made his decision. Julia checks over the documents carefully and decides that she will ask for at least one piece of evidence for each of the items listed in the performance evidence. (Note: if a specific volume or frequency is not stated, then evidence must be provided at least once.) She is mindful that she needs to consider and apply the principles of assessment of being fair, flexible, valid and reliable.

The performance evidence states that candidates need to show evidence of the ability to:

- ▶ articulate and document the process of developing own design practice by learning to develop new skills, ideas and a unique voice – the evidence will be a portfolio
- ▶ adjust work processes via peer feedback and self-evaluation – the evidence will be a journal with audio recordings of her experiences
- ▶ identify work options and incorporate networking in career development – the evidence will be an assignment.

Activity 3

To complete this activity, you need to access a unit of competency from <http://training.gov.au>.

Select a unit of competency and plan the type of evidence you will gather to judge a candidate's competence. You may use either a unit of competency that you are responsible for assessing for your RTO or use *BSBWHS201 Contribute to health and safety of self and others* from the BSB Business Services Training Package.

Address each of the following assessment requirements in planning the appropriate types of evidence to be gathered:

- ▶ Elements and performance criteria
- ▶ Performance evidence
- ▶ Knowledge evidence
- ▶ Foundation skills
- ▶ Assessment conditions

You may record your plan using either a template that is used in your workplace for this purpose, a mind map or this table. Keep a copy of your work as possible evidence and you will also need to refer to your plan to complete in the next activity.

Critical aspect of assessment	Type of evidence to be gathered	How this satisfies the rules of evidence
Elements and performance criteria		
Performance evidence		
Knowledge evidence		
Foundation skills		
Assessment conditions		

Click to complete Activity 3

2B Select assessment methods and instruments to support the collection of defined evidence, taking into account the context in which the assessment will take place

An RTO's assessment strategies should describe how assessors can select appropriate assessment methods that will enable them to collect evidence in various contexts. The assessor needs to remind themselves what a person would look like as they complete the task in the workplace. This guides the assessment as it provides a profile of acceptable performance measures or benchmarks. This information is then used in deciding on the best assessment method and which assessment instrument is best suited to the candidates and the context of the assessment.

In this section, you will develop the skills and knowledge you require to:

- ▶ evaluate the context of assessment
- ▶ consider the performance benchmarks that will influence the assessment methods chosen
- ▶ consider the assessment methods that will be most effective.

Understand the context of the assessment

As discussed in a previous topic, the decision about which assessment method you should use to gather evidence is grounded in the context of assessment. The following table demonstrates the key components of the context of assessment that you need to consider when developing the assessment plan. You should reflect on each of these points as you examine the variety of assessment methods that are described in the following section of this learner guide.

Purpose of assessment

Why is assessment required?

- ▶ To demonstrate competency for a particular unit of competency
- ▶ To identify training needs
- ▶ To confirm training progress
- ▶ To provide informal feedback to the learner on their progress to assist them to evaluate their learning (formative assessment)
- ▶ To recognise current competencies through an RPL process

Units of competency

What are the criteria that will be used to judge performance?

- ▶ Elements
- ▶ Performance criteria
- ▶ Performance evidence
- ▶ Knowledge evidence
- ▶ Foundation skills

Assessment location

Where will assessment take place?

- ▶ Workplace
- ▶ Group learning environment
- ▶ Online
- ▶ Simulation
- ▶ Face-to-face interview

Select appropriate assessment methods

There is a range of assessment methods you can select from when planning an assessment. To determine the most appropriate method for gathering the types of evidence that are required to demonstrate competence, you should also consult with your peers, relevant parties in the candidate's workplace and representatives of industry for their experience and expertise.

You will also find it beneficial to subscribe to journals and professional associations related to training and assessment to continue your own professional development. Be alert to emerging ideas about best practice in assessment, new technologies that are being used in assessment and ongoing research and share this information with your colleagues.

Your workplace policies and procedures may include specific advice about the preferred assessment methods your RTO uses in specific contexts of assessment. Your workplace may also have a bank of assessment instruments that have been validated for specific assessment contexts, and provide instructions and guidance for choosing the best assessment method for the context of the assessment.

Here are some descriptions of assessment methods used to gather evidence.

Direct observation

Direct observation is an effective method of gathering first-hand evidence of the candidate completing a specific work activity. It may not be possible to assess all of the performance evidence in a unit of competency using direct observation. You should visualise the worker performing each of the elements and performance criteria and select those that lend themselves to observation for assessment purposes. You should outline a clear task to be observed. This should include an indication of the time it will take to complete the task, which provides a guide to the candidate. You may find that you need to coordinate several occasions where the candidate's performance is observed and recorded on assessment instruments such as a checklist (or similar). The skills are usually most effectively assessed using observation.



Additional evidence during observations

In many cases you may need to gather supplementary information in addition to an observation, to satisfy the requirement to gather sufficient evidence of competence. This could involve:

- ▶ collecting work samples
- ▶ evaluating a third-party report
- ▶ asking the candidate questions during or after the observation period to gather evidence of the knowledge components in the unit of competency that are not able to be directly observed.

Make sure candidates understand that you will be observing them and what you expect them to do. You may need support from their supervisor, an experienced technician or other support person to make the person comfortable and aware of what they have to do in the situation.

Consider the instrument that will be used to record observations of the candidate. There may be an existing checklist or form available in your workplace. You may decide to trial the use of the form or checklist with your peers prior to using it for assessing a candidate. The goal of this trial is to ensure that assessors record observations and interpret the benchmarking criteria consistently. This trial process will satisfy the reliability principle of assessment. Ask your trainer for the 'Observation assessment instrument checklist' template in *Aspire's Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

Real work/real-time activities at the workplace

Real-time observation is conducted in the candidate's workplace. You should communicate with the candidate's workplace supervisor, learning and development specialist in the workplace or the human resources manager to coordinate a time for assessment. The health and safety officer needs to be consulted to ensure that the candidate has access to the various resources and materials that are needed to perform the specific work activity in a safe manner. The candidate should receive timely advice of the arrangements that have been made for observation.

Work activities in a simulated workplace environment

Candidates who are not currently employed or are undertaking their learning in a group environment may not have access to an actual workplace for assessment. You therefore need to coordinate access to a simulated workplace where you can observe the candidate. Your RTO may have developed a simulated workplace, or may have partnered with an organisation that offers this type of service.

When conducting assessment (and training) in a simulated workplace, assessors must make sure the simulated environment gives the learner the opportunity to meet the following essential criteria to make sure learners are 'work ready' on successful completion of the units of competency.



Quality

- ▶ The work is of the standard required for entry into the industry.

Productivity

- ▶ The work is performed within a time frame appropriate for entry to the industry.

Safety

- ▶ The work is performed in a manner that meets industry safety standards.

Source: BSB Business Services Training Package Implementation Guide Companion Volume, Version 2

Structured activities

There are a number of structured activities that can be used to gather evidence, as listed here.

Structured activities include:

- ▶ simulation exercises and role-plays
- ▶ projects
- ▶ presentations
- ▶ activity sheets
- ▶ questioning
- ▶ written questions.

Simulation exercises and role-plays

Simulations and role-plays are particularly suitable for gathering evidence of the candidate using their skills. They are also very appropriate when the candidate does not have access to an actual workplace or the activities to be performed pose a risk to health or safety. Simulations and role-plays allow the assessor to more easily control the conditions of assessment. Simulations are increasingly being used in online assessment and are appropriate for an RPL candidate.

Assessing in simulated work environments

The dimensions of competency require that an assessment must provide opportunities for the following:

- ▶ performing the task (task skills)
- ▶ managing a number of tasks (task management skills)
- ▶ dealing with workplace irregularities, such as unexpected problems, breakdowns and changes in routine (contingency management skills)
- ▶ fulfilling the responsibilities and expectations of the job and workplace, including working with others (job/role environment skills).

Simulation assessments must also be realistic and reasonable in terms of scale. Assessment conducted under simulated conditions should reflect those typically found in the workplace.

To enhance the validity of the assessment process using simulation, the assessor should consider covering a range of interconnected units of competency and using assessment checklists to ensure that all required performance and knowledge evidence requirements have been met.

Here is a list of things to remember when considering assessment methods and developing assessment instruments.

Does the assessment allow to learner to:	Yes/No
▶ deal with typical customers, including difficult customers and diverse types of customers?	
▶ use facilities, equipment and materials that meet current industry standards?	
▶ plan and prioritise multiple tasks to meet deadlines?	
▶ experience the typical workflow for the industry?	
▶ require adherence to service standards, workplace procedures and WHS requirements?	
▶ work with others as part of a team?	
▶ consider constraints and pressures that need to be met in the workplace; such as budget, time and availability of resources?	

Source: BSB Business Services Training Package Implementation Guide Companion Volume, version 2.

Projects

Projects are appropriate at higher AQF levels such as Certificate IV and above. You may decide to prepare the project assessment instrument in such a way as to allow the candidate to undertake their project in their workplace, using a case study or by undertaking research.

The advantage of the project method of assessment lies in the scope it offers. Projects may be used to gather evidence of competence in a wide range of assessment contexts and are often very effective in gathering evidence holistically, as the project gathers evidence of various aspects of the unit of competency rather than individual aspects. Supplementary evidence of how the candidate applied specific skills as they conducted their project may be required from those who worked alongside the candidate for the project.

You should also consider working with a peer to review the project in order to map it to the benchmarking criteria. A loosely written project assessment instrument can lead to candidates investing significant time in completing a project that doesn't ultimately provide all the required evidence. Alternatively the candidate can waste time gathering and researching evidence that is not required as a part of the unit of competency assessment requirements. The learner should be provided with a clear project plan with assessment criteria to guide them.

You may find it beneficial to have candidates submit their projects for feedback at several stages in order to ensure that relevant evidence is being gathered. Check your workplace policies and procedures for advice on whether giving this type of feedback during the development phase complies with their summative assessment conditions.

Presentations

Presentations may be used for both formative and summative assessment. You may wish to have candidates present research findings, or their experience from their own workplace, to their fellow learners during the delivery stage of learning. Your observations of the presentation may be recorded as a component of assessment.

Presentations as a method of assessment are essential when presentation and communication skills are part of the assessment requirements or the foundation skills and identified in the benchmarks that are being used to judge competence.

Activity sheets

Activity sheets are particularly appropriate for assessment at lower AQF levels. You should trial any activity sheets that you develop to ensure they are clear, use culturally inclusive language and provide easy-to-follow instructions. Most importantly, you should ensure that they are validated to ensure they gather the evidence you require. A poorly designed worksheet may result in the candidate gathering evidence that is not clearly linked to the critical aspects of evidence outlined in the unit of competency.

Consider using observation and role-plays to gather evidence that the candidate is competent to apply their knowledge (demonstrated on the activity sheet) to a work-based scenario.

Questions

You should evaluate the assessment context and the candidate's profile to determine the most appropriate type of questioning to use.

Written questions are an effective method for assessing underpinning knowledge and may be used in conjunction with simulations, projects, observations or case studies. You should carefully consider the AQF level of the candidate, their cultural background and their LLN levels when deciding the format of the written questions.

There is a range of question formats that may be suitable for use in specific circumstances including multiple-choice, true/false and short answer questions. Some questions require a brief response, while others require the learner to list their knowledge or ask for examples. A short scenario may be given and the responses to questions need to be based on the example provided in the story.

Consider the following when choosing questions as an evidence method.

Considerations for using questioning as an assessment method

- ▶ The advantage of using written questions to gather evidence is the ease of marking. Assessors may develop a bank of solutions or a marking guide that can be used to promote reliability in assessment.
- ▶ Written questions are a popular format for assessment in online learning and blended delivery. It is important to consider how you will authenticate the candidate's responses where they are submitted online.
- ▶ Trial the use of the written question assessment instrument prior to using it with candidates. You should check that the questions are clear, gather the relevant evidence and are culturally inclusive.
- ▶ You may need to use other evidence-gathering methods to satisfy the requirements for assessment as written questions are not usually able to gather sufficient evidence of the learner's competence when used on their own.

Interviews

Interviews are a popular and effective method for gathering evidence from candidates who are submitting a portfolio of evidence for assessment. The assessor should review the portfolio before meeting with the candidate to identify areas where sufficient evidence of each of the assessment requirements may not have been presented. The assessor should then prepare a list of questions to use to gather supplementary evidence to clarify the process that was used to complete a specific task and to identify any obstacles or issues the candidate needs to address to complete the work represented in the portfolio. It is best if there is a book of questions that the assessor can choose from. This ensures reliability between assessors, and is fairer to the learner.

Questions that are specifically designed to gather evidence that the learner has the necessary underpinning knowledge described in the benchmarking criteria should be included in the interview. Interviews are an effective method for satisfying the validity and authenticity rules of evidence.

Verbal questioning

Verbal questioning may be used to gather evidence that the candidate has the underpinning skills required to perform the work activities described in the performance criteria that is being used to judge assessment. Assessors often use verbal questioning to gather supplementary evidence when observing candidates for assessment purposes.

Verbal questioning may also be used to accommodate the needs of candidates who have lower levels of literacy and numeracy or who have a disability that impacts on their ability to complete a written assessment.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a written or electronic set of questions that may be used to gather information from a candidate, which are then used to develop an understanding of the candidate's background, work experience, attitudes, self-reflection, goals and aspirations. A questionnaire is not used to test or examine a candidate; rather it gathers information that may be used to support a candidate's claim for recognition or as a component of the candidate's portfolio. Questionnaires are usually used as assessment instruments when the unit of competency requires evidence of the candidate's attitude, goal setting or reflective practice.

Oral or written examinations

Units of competency that form the various components of qualifications at higher levels such as Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma require application of more sophisticated or complex underpinning knowledge. In some cases, competence requires the candidate to demonstrate that they have an in-depth knowledge of specific types of legislation or are able to manage an organisation's compliance system. The RTO may determine in their assessment policies that underpinning knowledge in these higher level qualifications will be assessed using a formal oral or written examination. This type of summative evidence gathering may be in addition to various types of formative assessment that are conducted in the delivery stage of the learning.

You may also encounter situations where candidates are undertaking assessment in order to obtain a licence or secure membership to a professional association. Some professional associations require potential members to complete formal examinations in order to demonstrate that they possess the required attributes and knowledge.

Portfolios of evidence

The various activities a learner completes during the delivery stage of a learning and development activity may be gathered into a portfolio of evidence that forms a component of assessment. A portfolio is a collection of evidence that is gathered to show a person's learning journey over time and to demonstrate their abilities.

Portfolios can be used to develop learners' skills in identifying appropriate material for the inclusion in a portfolio; they may use the gathered items, such as completed documents and work samples, to showcase their competence to potential employers; and assessors may use the contents as a component of assessment. Trainers should consider the opportunities that are presented to gather portfolio items in the planning stage of learning and development. Learners should be prompted at appropriate points to retain a copy of relevant items in their printed or electronic portfolio folder.

Portfolios are a particularly effective method of assessment for candidates who have access to a workplace where they can gather items that are relevant to the benchmarking criteria. You should be mindful of the principles of assessment that require evidence to be gathered over time and in various formats. You should provide advice to candidates to ensure they do not rely on only one form of evidence in their portfolios.

Portfolios are a popular choice for candidates undergoing an RPL assessment. RPL candidates should be given advice about the items that are suitable for inclusion and a copy of the performance criteria and performance evidence they need to satisfy in order to demonstrate competence.

Portfolio items

The following table describes a selection of items that are suitable for inclusion in a portfolio of evidence. Always consider the context of assessment when providing guidance to candidates about the types of evidence they should present in their portfolio.

Work samples

The type of work performed by the candidate and the performance criterion that is being assessed will suggest the types of work samples that the candidate presents in their portfolios. These may include manufactured products, completed garments, floral displays or pieces of jewellery, etc.

A product with support documentation

In some cases, a unit of competency will state that the candidate must present a specific number of samples of their work for assessment. Alternatively, you may interpret the unit of competency and decide that the most appropriate form of assessment is an examination of at least one product produced by the candidate.

Consider what forms of additional information to use to assess that the candidate demonstrated their competence in regard to the process they applied in the production stage. You may ask the candidate to supply a design or project brief, working papers, feedback they received during the production stage and drawings or plans they developed.

Consider whether you need to use written or verbal questioning to gather supplementary evidence of underpinning knowledge.

Historical evidence

The candidate's résumé; certificates; awards and qualifications; testimonials from work colleagues, supervisors, customers and suppliers; and work completed as a learner in other courses of study may be suitable for inclusion in the portfolio.

Journal or logbook

A journal is a useful tool for gathering evidence of the candidate's learning journey. They may be used to promote reflective practice by learners, which may be a requirement for competence.

Logbooks are particularly beneficial when the candidate must have completed a specific number of hours of work performance or have completed specific work tasks in order to be deemed competent. Candidates who are employed as apprentices, for example, are required to maintain a log of their work activities.

Life experience

Candidates who are seeking recognition of their competence may ask the assessor to consider their life experience. The portfolio items they provide could include testimonials from groups where they have worked as volunteers or where they have contributed as a member of a sporting or community group.

Assessors should support candidates (particularly those with lower levels of work experience) to identify the various types of evidence that may be available from their role as a homemaker, carer or member of a school community that is relevant to the requirement of the assessment.

Review of products

Candidates may include products in a portfolio or as an individual component of assessment. Wherever possible, you should attempt to observe the candidate's involvement in the process of creating the product, not just the end product. Often the unit of competency requirements indicate that skills, knowledge, planning, identifying and obtaining resources need to be addressed as well. Remember, the type of product the candidate presents for assessment is determined by the context of assessment (their work role and the requirements of the assessment criteria). For example:

- ▶ A candidate completing a Diploma-level unit of competency may produce a business report or set of policies and procedures they have composed as evidence.
- ▶ A candidate who is employed as an apprentice may submit an item they have constructed, manufactured or repaired.
- ▶ A hospitality student may produce a food product they have made.

Candidates may also submit products that supplement the evidence that is gathered using a summative assessment instrument. These types of products may be useful in assessing competence of individual performance criteria for a candidate and may identify where a gap exists in their competence.

It is important to plan how you will authenticate the candidate's product and ensure that other assessors review the product in the same way, and are consistent in their judgment of competence.

RPL evidence

The following outlines the types of products that candidates may select to submit for assessment. Consider how you would apply the assessment requirements of a unit of competency with which you are familiar, to the various types of products described.

Testimonials and reports

Carefully evaluate the evidence presented by the candidate to identify how closely it relates to the assessment requirements. You also need to use questioning and other forms of supplementary evidence. Candidates may submit products they have produced such as a book, a plan, photographs of a wall they have constructed, a meal or a piece of jewellery. All of these need to be authenticated by an employer or supervisor, using a testimonial or report.

Evidence of training

When the candidate has completed an individual unit of competency in a previous course of study and presents a record or transcript of competence you must authenticate the certificate or record.

You may have a candidate who supplies evidence that they have completed previous training that relates to an individual performance criterion rather than the complete unit of competency they need. In this case, you should prepare a plan for the candidate to undertake learning to address the gaps in their competence.

Authenticated prior achievements

Ensure that the authentication is valid. You also need to confirm that the previous achievements are relevant to the benchmarking criterion that is being used for assessment.

Interviews

Interviews are a useful tool for gathering evidence of the candidate's performance in the workplace, particularly their application of the knowledge evidence points that are described in units of competency.

Plan how you will ensure the information you receive from employers, supervisors or peers is valid. Supplementary evidence should be gathered to satisfy the sufficiency rule of evidence.

Self-assessment

Candidates may complete a self-assessment checklist or use reflective practice that is recorded in a printed or electronic journal as a component of assessment. Make sure any younger candidates or those with lower literacy levels or limited work experience understand what is required of them in self-assessment and that they are familiar with the terminology used in any checklist or instrument given to them.

Instrument templates

The assessment method you have selected determines which templates or proformas you need to develop for the assessment instrument. Templates and proformas can support assessors and candidates in gathering quality evidence by clearly articulating the evidence that must be collected using language that those conducting the assessment, and candidates, will understand. Remember that assessment instruments are also used by people other than qualified assessors. Workplace supervisors, technical experts and subject matter experts, for example, may contribute to the process of collecting evidence under the supervision of a qualified assessor.

Templates and proformas are often in the form of questions or checklists. They are particularly useful for workplace supervisors, coaches and mentors who need to complete third-party reports and observation checklists.

The following information describes the relationship between the assessment method and the various instruments selected. Templates and proformas will also include instructions to the assessor and candidate.

Observation method

- ▶ Observation checklists list the actions the candidate should take and the performance benchmarks; the checklist should be piloted before being implemented for assessment.
- ▶ Templates to gather evidence should include the context of the observation, the tasks that need to be observed, the duration of the use/demonstration of skills, and the number of occasions on which they would be observed.
- ▶ Checklists and forms/reports to be completed by a third party such as an experienced colleague or supervisor.

(Templates may require the assessor to supplement the information gathered with questions to gather evidence of the knowledge required.)

Simulation method

- ▶ A simulation scenario that describes a particular scene/role-play to enable the candidate to provide evidence; this method is particularly suitable for classroom/group learners and may be appropriate for candidates with special needs.
- ▶ An observation checklist that prescribes what to look for when observing the candidate and a clear description of the different roles to be played by the participants. This ensures validity and reliability across different assessors.

Questioning

- ▶ For prepared questions it is important to use a range of questioning types (open, closed, probing). Consider the LLN proficiency required to complete questioning and provide benchmark responses (model answers) for the assessor. A form must be provided to record the responses from the candidates.

Portfolio

- ▶ A template of instructions to remind learners of the need to comply with their workplace privacy policies and procedures when collecting evidence for their portfolios.
- ▶ A proforma that provides a list of the evidence needed.

Third-party report method

- ▶ This should include:
 - instructions for the third party
 - a third-party observation checklist with the context of the observation, the tasks that need to be observed, the duration of the use/demonstration of skills, and the number of occasions on which they will be observed.
- (This is effective in gathering workplace evidence, though usually requires supplementary evidence.)

Quality assessment tools

The following information outlines the key components of a quality assessment tool. It may be useful to refer to when working through this learner guide.

Key components of a quality assessment tool

Assessment context

The assessment context is a description of the:

- ▶ target group and purpose of assessment
- ▶ characteristics of the candidate that may impact the assessment, such as LLN levels, age, education and work experience
- ▶ learning environment, such as the workplace, classroom or online.

Competency mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Competency mapping is a description of the relationship between individual parts of the assessment instrument and the unit of competency. ▶ You must demonstrate the linkages between components of the assessment and the elements, performance criteria, foundation skills, required knowledge and assessment requirements identified in the unit of competency.
Materials and resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This section outlines any materials and resources that may be required to complete assessment.
Tasks to be administered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tasks the candidate must complete are outlined in an assessment plan. For example, respond to questions; undertake a role-play; write a report; prepare meeting minutes; do a presentation; complete a project; or present a portfolio of work samples and third-party reports. ▶ The assessment method must be appropriate to collect the required evidence; for example, direct observation, structured activities and oral questioning – see ‘Reasonable adjustment’.
Evidence required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Evidence is what is needed to demonstrate competency; for example, a portfolio of written work samples such as minutes, reports and correspondence; a checklist recording observations during a role-play; a performance appraisal report; third-party reports; or certificates for completed courses.
Information to the assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This section includes clear and comprehensive instructions for conducting the assessment, the resources they may need to organise and how to contextualise the unit of competency. ▶ Also included is an outline of specific conditions that apply to the assessment. For example, access to reference material during assessment, assistance that may be sought from other people during assessment, the type and amount of supervision that may be provided during assessment, time limits and number of attempts that the candidate may make of a particular aspect of a task or activity. ▶ Instructions for saving, filing and storing assessment material and results are also included.
Decision-making rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This section includes the rules that the assessor will follow in judging competence.

<p>Reasonable adjustment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The individual needs of the candidate must be considered when selecting evidence-gathering methods and instruments. This is called reasonable adjustment and it means choosing alternative assessment methods or tools to meet the individual needs of candidates. Groups that may need reasonable adjustment in assessment include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – candidates from rural/remote areas – candidates with disabilities – candidates with low levels of education – candidates with low literacy or numeracy levels – Indigenous candidates – candidates with non-English-speaking backgrounds – older candidates – female candidates. ▶ Adjustments are considered reasonable if they still allow for a valid and reliable assessment within the resource capabilities of the RTO. It is essential that the assessment continues to satisfy the requirements of the evidence guide and critical aspects of assessment specified in relevant units of competency.
<p>Recording requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This section includes the type of information that will be recorded in regard to the outcomes of assessment including how that information will be stored.
<p>Information to the candidate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This section includes a specific task or activity designed to produce quality evidence that the candidate must complete and present to the assessor in order for a judgment of their competence to be made. ▶ Also included are clear and accurate instructions relating to how the candidate should complete the assessment activity.

Example

Select assessment methods and instruments to support the collection of defined evidence, taking into account the context in which the assessment will take place

Grayson is responsible for assessing the unit *SITHIND002 Source and use information on the hospitality industry*. While some of the students undertake their learning in a classroom, many of the students are completing the unit online. A significant number of the online learners are located overseas.

This unit of competency aims to provide a basic understanding of the hospitality industry by focusing on the organisation of hotel and food and beverage operations, and industry opportunities and future trends.

Teaching aims	Learning outcomes	Assessment method
<p>The unit examines the field of hospitality, emphasising the current trends and future development of the industry.</p>	<p>To demonstrate the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to source and use current and emerging information on the hospitality industry.</p>	<p>Online discussions run for four weeks across the trimester. The assessment involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ the candidate reading an article regarding the current trends in the hospitality industry and answering the key questions provided in relation to that article, while researching for support material to back-up their responses to the questions; the questions are generic about the topic but require the candidate to research material ▶ formative assessment as an online quiz consisting of only true or false and multiple-choice questions ▶ the major and final assessment requirements of a report and final exam.

Activity 4

In this section of the learner guide you have examined how you select assessment methods that support the collection of defined evidence. This activity is designed to build on your earlier work in regard to identifying the needs of candidates; establishing the context of assessment; and analysing the benchmarks for assessment in order to plan how you will you gather evidence. To complete this activity, you need to synthesise your learning thus far in order to select an assessment method for a specific unit of competency.

Select a unit of competency that you are responsible for assessing on behalf of your RTO or you could use the evidence gathering plan that you developed for *BSBWHS201 Contribute to health and safety of self and others* in Activity 3 and complete this table.

Unit of competency	
Purpose of assessment	
Context of assessment	
Key characteristics of candidates	
Requirements for reasonable adjustment	
Summary of assessment requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Elements and performance criteria ▶ Performance evidence ▶ Knowledge evidence ▶ Foundations skills ▶ Assessment conditions 	
Evidence required for judgment of competence:	
Assessment method 1:	Rationale for selection:
Assessment method 2:	Rationale for selection:
Assessment method 3:	Rationale for selection:

[Click to complete Activity 4](#)

2C Develop the assessment plan and gain approval from relevant stakeholders

An important part of planning an assessment is to prepare a plan documenting each step in the process of assessing a candidate's performance.

The assessment plan is usually prepared using a template or form that has been prepared for this specific purpose in your workplace. Make sure you confirm the plan with relevant personnel. It may be your responsibility to develop the plan or it may already have been developed and it is your responsibility to follow it.

The assessment plan shows:

- ▶ who the assessment is for
- ▶ the evidence required
- ▶ the processes, activities and instruments for collecting the evidence
- ▶ resources needed
- ▶ who will be involved and their responsibilities

Learners with equity considerations should be provided with a personal plan. This will outline the adjustments to assessment processes to comply with reasonable adjustment principles.

Prepare an assessment plan

List the various people who refer to the assessment plan to help you determine the information you need to include on the plan, and the tone and style of language you use to record information. In some cases the candidate will receive a copy of the plan along with the candidate's workplace supervisor. Ask your trainer for the 'Assessment plan' template in *Aspire's Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

Items included in an assessment plan are outlined here.

Purpose of assessment	Candidates may present for assessment to achieve recognition of their existing competence or to achieve a qualification, to fulfil their licensing or compliance requirements; as a component of the organisation's performance appraisal system or to be considered for promotion.
Benchmarks used to assess competence	The benchmarks could be an individual or cluster of units of competency or performance standards developed by an individual organisation.
Profile of the target group	The profile should summarise the characteristics and needs of the candidates including any reasonable adjustments that need to be made to ensure access and equity.

Others involved in the assessment process	List everyone who will be involved including trainers, assessors, technical experts, disability support staff, workplace supervisors and cultural advisors.
Methods of assessment	The methods are those chosen for this unit of competency.
Environment/ location of assessment	Identify whether assessment will be conducted on or off the job; in a simulated work environment; face-to-face interview; or online.
Resources required	Resources could include access to tools, machinery, computers, stationery items, checklists and safety equipment.
Evidence required	Describe how evidence will be collected. It may be appropriate to collate work samples, observation checklists or photographs. You should check that the information you record in this section satisfies the rules of evidence.
Special considerations for assessment	This section should record any contextualisation that has been made to the assessment process and specific instructions or reasonable adjustment that assessors should follow while conducting assessment to address the individual needs of candidates.
Reporting arrangements	Clarify whether specific legislation or regulations impact on the records of assessment outcomes you are required to maintain. The records of competence that you need to store will reflect the type of industry that your candidate's workplace operates in and the various job roles performed by employees. The type of learning and development activities that are supported by the organisation will also have a major impact on the various records of competence that are created for employees. Identify any special requirements for an RPL process.

When assessment will take place

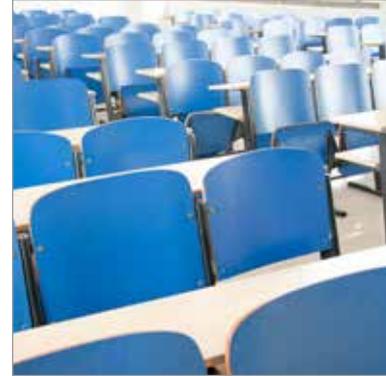
The timing of evidence-gathering activities should be planned, so you can explain this to candidates at the beginning of the assessment process or prior to training. You should discuss assessment timing with the candidate's supervisor or human resources manager when assessment is to be conducted in the candidate's workplace, or when the candidate will need to be absent from work to undertake assessment over a number of occasions. The assessment plan may need to have a schedule of events and meetings to coordinate the overall assessment for the unit being assessed.

You should also consider the individual needs of candidates in determining the assessment timing. You may not always be able to accommodate their needs; however, you should attempt to be sensitive to their circumstances particularly when this relates to ensuring equitable access to assessment. For example, a candidate who has a hearing impairment may need to coordinate support from a carer or specialist support person; a person with a physical disability may need to schedule their assessment at a time when they have access to tools or equipment that have been modified to assist with performing a specific work activity.

When you are conducting assessment in a group learning environment you may need to coordinate access to a simulated workplace or a computer laboratory to conduct assessment of software skills.

Where assessment will take place

In almost all cases, the context of assessment or assessment conditions in the unit of competency documents will recommend the workplace as the preferred setting for assessment; however, it may not always be possible for assessment to be conducted in a workplace environment. In these cases, you should consider how you can replicate the workplace environment in order to satisfy the rules of evidence. You may have access to a sophisticated simulation such as a model office that provides access to technology including computers, binders and printers and relevant workplace policies and procedures. You may also consider using role-plays or appropriate case studies in order to satisfy the evidence requirements of the individual unit of competency. Assessment for an RPL application may be conducted online with follow-up telephone calls or a face-to-face interview. In some instances the environment may have to be adjusted for certain candidates.



How assessment will take place

Your workplace policies and procedures will contain information about the logistics and coordination of assessment activities; for example, whether it is a single event or a series of sessions to collect evidence, and whether it will be different in a learning environment than a workplace or online environment.

Your role and responsibilities in coordinating assessment depend on your job description and the organisational structure of your workplace. It is important, however, that you understand the assessment process that the candidate is participating in so you can provide support, information and guidance where necessary.

You need to know:

- ▶ the location of assessment (workplace, simulated work environment, simulation, group learning environment, online)
- ▶ the timing of summative and formative assessment
- ▶ the method of assessment
- ▶ who the assessor will be
- ▶ how the assessment will be reported.

Confirm the assessment plan

You may need to confirm the assessment plan with relevant people such as your supervisor, other assessors or the candidate’s supervisor. Make sure that the people reviewing the assessment plan have access to the benchmarking information you are using for assessment.



Arrange a suitable opportunity to discuss their feedback and incorporate their suggestions in the final assessment plan. Remember to retain copies of draft assessment plans as evidence of your own participation in continuous improvement activities as part of your organisation’s quality management system.

You must also confirm the details of the assessment plan with candidates. You should follow your workplace policies and procedures for advising candidates of this information. You may be required to have the candidate sign a form or send an email that confirms that they have received information about assessment arrangements.

Example

Develop the assessment plan and gain approval from relevant stakeholders

The following assessment plan was developed by an assessor who is responsible for judging competence of people operating a chainsaw.

Assessment plan	
Unit of competency: <i>AHCMOM213 Operate and maintain chainsaws</i>	
<p>Purpose of assessment: This unit of competency describes the skills and knowledge required to safely operate a hand-held chainsaw and maintain it in working condition. This unit applies to cross-cutting fallen timber from trees using safe cutting techniques. This unit applies to individuals who undertake defined activities with specialised tools and methods, work in a structured context, apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy and limited judgment, and provide solutions to a limited range of predictable problems. Work is implemented with low-risk work procedures and to comply with Safe Work Method Statement documentation.</p>	
Target group (candidates)	Workplace trainees; one trainee works part time
Assessors	Fred Chase Lloyd Brown
Location of assessment	This unit should be assessed in the workplace under normal operating conditions or under conditions that accurately simulate a realistic workplace. The fallen timber will be accessed in a bush site adjacent to the workplace property. Confirm assessment arrangements with the candidate and the employer.
Timing of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To be coordinated with the workplace supervisor ▶ A quiz at the start of the training to test knowledge of tasks and safety ▶ Observation at four-week intervals (three observations)

Methods of assessment

- ▶ Check and maintain chainsaw – demonstration/observation x3; third-party report; logbook
- ▶ Worksite communication – demonstration/observation x3; third-party report; logbook
- ▶ Operate chainsaw – demonstration/observation x3; questions; third-party report; logbook
- ▶ Recognise and apply workplace safety procedures – quiz

Resources required for assessment

A suitable location with all required materials and equipment should be arranged with the candidate/employer and confirmed prior to assessment. The candidate must have access to all relevant tools and equipment including:

- ▶ chainsaws and chains
- ▶ toolkit and files/grinder/vice
- ▶ fuel and lubricant
- ▶ protective equipment
- ▶ first-aid equipment.

Equipment must be safe, well-maintained and meet Australian Standards.

Evidence required

The candidate must provide evidence that they can:

- ▶ apply chainsaw use and operation risk assessment and implementation of controls
- ▶ clean and store chainsaw
- ▶ confirm first-aid and emergency personnel, equipment and procedures
- ▶ confirm work zone with work crew and monitor site
- ▶ determine site location and work details and clarify with supervisor
- ▶ identify site hazards, assess risks and report to supervisor
- ▶ identify, tag and report chainsaw faults and malfunctions
- ▶ record and implement work health and safety, site, environmental and traffic control measures
- ▶ use appropriate personal protective equipment
- ▶ safely cross-cut fallen timber using compression and tension cuts with a hand-held chainsaw
- ▶ use appropriate tools and materials to maintain chainsaw
- ▶ use environmentally responsible workplace practices
- ▶ use low-risk work practices including stopping, disengaging quickly and dealing with foreign matter
- ▶ use safe work procedures relevant to operating a chainsaw.

Special considerations for assessment

Assessors should ensure that:

- ▶ all relevant health, safety and environment practices are followed
- ▶ PPE for the task is provided
- ▶ any site-specific requirements are met
- ▶ relevant regulations are adhered to
- ▶ assessment is conducted at a time suitable for the part-time trainee.

Reporting arrangements for assessment

- ▶ Results to be recorded as competent/not yet competent
- ▶ Transcript of student results to be sent at the end of semester

Activity 5

In this Activity, you have an opportunity to practise your skills in preparing an assessment plan. You may record the assessment plan using this template, or a form or template available in your workplace for this purpose.

Complete task 1, 2 or 3.

Retain copies of your completed assessment plan for possible assessment evidence for this unit.

1. Prepare an assessment plan for a unit of competency that you are responsible for assessing on behalf of your RTO.
2. Take this opportunity to consolidate what you have learnt so far by preparing an assessment plan for another unit of competency; for example, you may find it beneficial to practise preparing an assessment plan for a different AQF level.
3. Prepare an assessment plan for the unit of *SIRXCOM001 Communicate in the workplace to support team and customer outcomes* from the Retail Services Training Package. Access the unit of competency from www.training.gov.au.

Assessment plan	
Unit of competency:	
Purpose of assessment:	
Target group (candidates)	
Assessors	
Location of assessment	
Timing of assessment	
Methods of assessment	
Resources required for assessment	
Evidence required	
Special considerations for assessment	
Reporting arrangements for assessment	

[Click to complete Activity 5](#)

Summary

1. The assessment requirements must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, knowledge evidence, performance evidence, foundation skills and assessment conditions.
2. In order to satisfy the rules of evidence, evidence must be valid, authentic, sufficient and reliable.
3. When developing assessment instruments, you need to ensure that the principles of assessment are met. High-quality assessments must be fair, flexible, valid and reliable.
4. Assessment instruments are the specific templates and other forms that are used for collecting evidence.
5. Direct evidence is anything that the assessor can directly observe and assess.
6. Indirect evidence is proof of candidate work that was gathered off the job and can be reviewed or examined by assessors.
7. Supplementary evidence is additional evidence presented by candidates to demonstrate competence.
8. The decision about which assessment method you should use to gather evidence is grounded in the context of assessment.
9. An assessment plan is a document developed by an assessor that includes:
 - ▶ the unit of competency or performance criteria to be assessed
 - ▶ when the assessment will occur
 - ▶ how the assessment will occur
 - ▶ the assessment location
 - ▶ the assessment methods to be used
 - ▶ the decision-making rules
 - ▶ an overview of instructions for the candidate, the assessor and the third party, if applicable.
10. When identifying what needs to be assessed you also need to consider the dimensions of competency and foundation skills.
11. Always confirm your assessment plan with the relevant people to ensure it is accurate and the outcome will be a quality assessment that meets all guidelines and standards.



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Use information from the candidate and, where relevant, the candidate's workplace to identify contextualisation needs**
- 3B Check advice provided by the training package or course developer relevant to identified contextualisation needs**
- 3C Analyse existing assessment tools and record amendments required to address identified contextualisation needs**
- 3D Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and record any changes required to assessment tools**

Identify modification and contextualisation requirements

An assessment system must be contextualised to make sure it is relevant to the industry or workplace. It may be necessary to customise assessment activities so that they refer more specifically to the candidate's own workplace policies, equipment and personnel. You may also need to make adjustments to the assessment process to meet a candidate's specific needs.

As you work through this guide you will learn how to make adjustments so the assessment meets individual needs and, at the same time, continues to satisfy the evidence requirements specified in the units of competency.

3A Use information from the candidate and, where relevant, the candidate's workplace to identify contextualisation needs

As discussed in Topic 1 it is important to gather information about the candidate so you can contextualise the assessment and make adjustments, as necessary, to meet the principles of assessment. This may mean providing support that enables the candidate to participate in an assessment process that is fair and relevant to their industry or workplace experience and at the same time satisfies the evidence requirements specified in the units of competency.



Principles of equity

The principles of assessment require that when developing and planning assessment activities and processes, the principles of fairness and flexibility are applied. High-quality assessments always ensure that assessments align to practices that are equitable. Two of the four principles of assessment directly relate to contextualisation consideration.

Two principles of assessment:

- ▶ Fair – they must not be discriminatory or disadvantage the candidate in any way.
- ▶ Flexible – they must meet the candidate's individual needs and include a range of appropriate assessment methods.

Information from the candidate

Information gathered from a learner profile can provide important material that can assist you in tailoring the assessment to meet the particular needs of the candidate. The characteristics of the candidate identified in a profile can influence the assessment process and should be considered in the planning and developing of assessment methods and instruments.

Characteristics of a candidate may include:

- ▶ age
- ▶ work experience – current and previous
- ▶ previous education
- ▶ cultural background
- ▶ language, literacy and numeracy issues
- ▶ disability
- ▶ access to technology
- ▶ learning environment
- ▶ support from other people
- ▶ degree of experience with an assessment process.

Contextualise the assessment

Contextualisation of needs of the candidate requires that the assessment methods or assessment instruments used consider the workplace in which the person is currently working or the location in which they will conduct their assessment.

Contextualising an assessment means that the assessment process better reflects the candidate's workplace, the personnel they come in contact with as a part of their job, and the equipment and terminology specific to an industry or area of work. For example, a candidate may live in a rural location with a small population and with limited access to a workplace/business. If the assessment requirements of a particular unit of competency being undertaken states that the assessment must be conducted in a simulated or real workplace, then this difficulty needs to be considered and adaptations made to be fair to the candidate. In other words, wherever possible the assessment needs to be contextualised to meet the needs of the candidate. It is unlikely the candidate will be able to find a suitable workplace for supervision for their assessment. In this case a simulated workplace could be used where a demonstration of skills by the candidate is recorded using audiovisual technology and is submitted as evidence. Perhaps a local business could provide an office space suitable as a scenario or backdrop for the filming.



Obtain candidate information

To obtain information from the candidate about their needs and to determine contextualisation requirements, you need to read and analyse learner profile information and documents held by the training organisation. Always confirm with a supervisor and read the training organisation's policies and procedures in terms of accessing private and personal information. This information should have been collected as part of enrolment for the whole qualification/cohort of students.

If the training has been initiated by the workplace, then the employer will be able to provide valuable information about the candidate and the needs of the industry/ and that of the candidate in terms of training and assessment. Information can be obtained from an interview where the candidate and the workplace supervisor or representative contributes to the discussion about their specific needs. The information gathered can be used and applied to the assessment planning process. You may be able to arrange an observation of the candidate at work in order to gather information and design and plan the assessment.

In some cases you may have already developed a relationship with the candidate through the delivery of a learning program. In other cases, the candidate may only be presenting as an assessment-only candidate for the RPL process and you may have had no previous experience with them.

Example

Use information from the candidate and, where relevant, the candidate’s workplace to identify contextualisation needs

Siobhan is preparing and planning assessment for a small group in a community setting. She is employed as an assessor by a RTO to deliver and then assess the group over a 15-week period in one unit of competency in *SIRXCOM001 Communicate in the workplace to support team and customer outcomes*.



When Siobhan reads over the assessment instruments, she identifies that each candidate is enrolled in the training because they have future employment opportunities in the retail industry. Siobhan makes adjustments to the assessment tasks and methods to better meet the needs of the group. She also makes sure she files the new versions of the assessment documents she has contextualised. Here is a list of notes she adds to the assessment plan about the changes she will implement.

Siobhan will:

- ▶ rewrite a case study to include a scenario that reflects the retail industry
- ▶ include a demonstration of skills in a workplace scenario
- ▶ increase the time scheduled for the assessment process to allow for the changes in assessment methods such as observation and the planning involved in setting up a scenario.

Activity 6

You are planning a summative assessment for a work health and safety unit of competency. One of the candidates named Jo has told you he now has employment and as a part of his job he has been involved in WHS training and induction. After some questioning, you realise that a better assessment method for Jo may be that his observation assessment be conducted in a real workplace under the supervision of his supervisor, rather in a simulated workplace at the RTO.

1. What information do you need to gather, both from the candidate and the workplace, in order to contextualise the assessment for this candidate?

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2. Outline the possible changes in assessment that could be accommodated now that the candidate has employment and training in WHS.

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Click to complete Activity 6

3B Check advice provided by the training package or course developer relevant to identified contextualisation needs

Assessment tools and instruments can be modified to suit particular candidates and their work environments. The units in the training package or accredited course can be contextualised in several ways, such as referring to the specific equipment the candidate uses, the people they work with and the policies they have to follow in an assessment.



Contextualisation guidelines

Contextualising training and assessment is when you take generic learning and assessment objectives and tailor them to meet the specific needs of a learner or workplace.

Training package documentation may provide advice about contextualisation and emphasise that any contextualisation carried out must maintain the integrity of the overall intended outcomes of the unit of competency.

When a unit of competency has been contextualised for delivery, you also need to contextualise the assessment tools, methods used and instruments. Assessment instruments that have been contextualised should be quality reviewed by the RTO's assessment validation team prior to assessment.

Course and assessment developers may:

- ▶ add or amend a unit of competency to suit particular delivery methods, candidate profiles, specific equipment requirements or meet local needs, but they must not remove or add to the number or content of elements and performance criteria
- ▶ add specific industry terminology to performance criteria where this does not affect competency outcomes
- ▶ add more detail to the assessment requirements or resources as long as the additions retain the scope of the competency.

Companion volume implementation guides

The implementation guides that provide information relevant to training packages may include a section on contextualisation. It is usually a generic statement directed at training organisations that deliver the training and units of competency in a training package.

You can find the relevant training package implementation guides at:

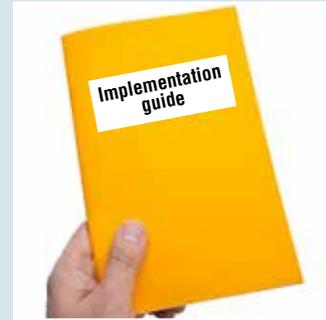
- ▶ http://companion_volumes.vetnet.education.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx

Example

Check advice provided by the training package or course developer relevant to identified contextualisation needs

The *User's guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015* states that engaging with industry stakeholders 'is critical to ensuring training and assessment is aligned to current methods, technology, products and performance expectations for the workplace tasks specified in the training package or VET accredited course'.

'RTOs must be able to demonstrate that all strategies for training and assessment have been developed in response to information obtained through engaging with industry stakeholders. This information could include the qualification, course or skill set that best meets the skill and knowledge needs of industry. It may also include the most relevant electives for the training (in accordance with any packaging rules for the training product). The mode of study and the training and assessment methods to be used must also reflect the needs of industry.'



Activity 7

Access and search VETNet at:

- ▶ http://companion_volumes.vetnet.education.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx

Look for the companion volume implementation guides for any training package that includes information on contextualisation.

Alternatively, use the Community Services Companion Volumes – CHC Assessment Strategies Guide 2015 at:

- ▶ http://companion_volumes.vetnet.education.gov.au/Pages/TrainingPackage.aspx?pid=7

Prepare a short report that outlines the guidelines and advice provided by the course in a companion volume of your choice on contextualisation.

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3C Analyse existing assessment tools and record amendments required to address identified contextualisation needs

Assessment tools include many of the components of the assessment process. According to the VET regulator, ASQA, an assessment tool is made up of the following listed components.

Assessment tools are made up of:

- ▶ context and conditions of assessment
- ▶ tasks to be administered to the student
- ▶ an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the candidate
- ▶ evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (i.e. the assessment decision-making rules)
- ▶ administration, recording and reporting requirements, and may address a cluster of competencies as applicable for holistic assessment.

You can read more about assessment tools at:

- ▶ www.asqa.gov.au/verve/_resources/Guide_to_developing_assessment_tools.pdf#search=assessment



Continuous improvement records

You may be using commercially available assessment tools or ones that other colleagues in your organisation have developed. All assessment tools need to be analysed to see whether they are appropriate for your assessment context and if they need to be modified to suit a specific assessment environment or the needs of candidates. If changes are required, those changes must be recorded and versions must be tracked.

Records of the activities you undertake to analyse and modify assessment tools forms part of continuous improvement, which is an important part of the RTO's VQF/AQTF compliance obligations.



Assessment bank instruments

The process of developing and planning assessment can be time consuming and may draw on various resources from across the organisation. In order to maximise the outcomes of the assessment development process, RTOs usually require assessment resources to be collated into an assessment bank that are available for use by any of their assessors.

These documents can be commercially sensitive and represents a significant investment by the RTO. You should not share assessment tools, especially assessment

instruments, with external parties or publish assessments in printed or electronic form without the approval of the appropriate person such as a supervisor or quality control officer.

The assessment resources forms part of the assessment strategy that requires assessment to be conducted under strict conditions; for example, candidates completing an accounting unit as part of their Higher School Certificate must do so under strict examination conditions. You may find that access to the assessment bank is restricted to certain people in some cases.

Always keep a copy of every version of your work and save it with appropriate version control as outlined in your assessment policies and procedures documents. When contextualising assessment, make sure you take a copy of the most recent version or an earlier version that may be easier for you to contextualise. You will also need a copy of any assessment validation records that have been completed for the assessment products.

Remember to retain records of the activities you undertake to analyse and modify assessment tools as this type of continuous improvement activity is part of the RTO's VQF/AQTF compliance obligations.

Amend assessment plans

The assessment plan indicates who the assessment is for; the evidence required; the processes, activities and instruments for collecting the evidence; resources needed; who will be involved and their responsibilities. It also indicates contextualisation requirements for particular industry or workplaces.

Learners with specific equity considerations should be provided with a personal plan rather than a group profile. This will outline the adjustments to assessment processes to comply with reasonable adjustment principles.

The assessment plan will include a section for recording the specific adjustments that may be required for a candidate or a group of learners. It should provide details on the profile of the target group or individual learner (in the case of a personal plan), the changes made to the assessment process and specific instructions that assessors should follow while conducting assessment to address the specific workplace or industry context in which the assessment takes place.

Make amendments

Once the existing assessment tools have been adjusted to reflect the contextualising needs of the candidate, the various draft versions of the assessment instrument can be saved and the RTO's record-keeping system can be kept as evidence of continuous improvement processes. Remember to use appropriate version control methods to clearly identify the revised version of the assessment tool. Check the training organisation's policies and procedures for advice on the preferred version control method. Follow your organisation's guidelines for version control to ensure that assessors select the most recent assessment instrument from the organisation's record-keeping system. This usually involves verifying changes with the compliance manager or your supervisor.

Remember that the final assessment tool will be validated according to the training organisation's assessment validation policies and procedures prior to use.

Contextualising assessment tools often involves the following adjustments:

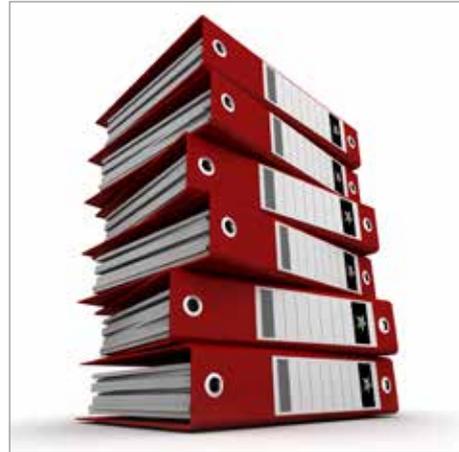
Generally recommendations are for:

- 1 Instructions**
Giving clearer instructions to candidates and assessors
- 2 Context**
Changing the method of assessment so it can be used in a wider range of assessment contexts; for example, online, group learning or workplace assessment
- 3 Reasonable adjustment**
Providing clearer advice to candidates and assessors about reasonable adjustment; for example, LLN or cultural contexts
- 4 Assist understanding**
Providing checklists, diagrams or flowcharts to help candidates understand what they are required to do
- 5 Resources**
Ensuring candidates have access to necessary resources, such as technology to assist with disabilities, like braille devices
- 6 Conditions of assessment**
Changing the conditions of assessment to more closely simulate a workplace or industry; for example, it may be appropriate to assess using a simulation rather than a written, closed-book assessment
- 7 Adjust methods**
Adjusting the assessment methods so they are more accessible for the candidate
- 8 Guidelines for evidence gathering**
Writing clearer guidelines for making reasonable adjustments to evidence-gathering methods; for example, assessment instruments that are used in remote Indigenous communities should better reflect the language and literacy levels of candidates

3D Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and record any changes required to assessment tools

Integrated (or holistic) assessment is the term used for an assessment activity that assesses several units rather than assessing individual units and elements as specific tasks or components of a work activity. Holistic assessment, underpinned by professional judgment, can reduce the time for assessment, and can promote greater equity in the assessment process.

Training package developers identify units of competency that together represent whole work activities and group them to form a skill set. Skill sets offer an opportunity for integrated assessment.



The implementation guides/companion volumes for training packages may provide advice on the opportunities to integrate assessment for units of competency relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role.

If you are considering integrating assessment when developing assessment tools, it is crucial to clearly map each aspect of the integrated assessment tool to the assessment requirements of the unit of competency.

Maintain integrity of the unit

Always refer to the competency profile that has been developed from the unit/s of competency. This overall picture of a competent person in practice should have been developed before proceeding with the assessment tool development. This profile describes a person in the workplace performing the various components of the benchmarking criteria holistically.

If assessment activities are to be integrated, the 'profile' of a competent person should be referred to so that the workplace relevance and the application of the unit is maintained. The assessor can identify the types of evidence needed to show competence and the techniques that would be used to gather that evidence. The evidence is then reviewed and a decision made about the applicant's competence.



In the same way, the foundation skills should not be forgotten. Foundation skills underpin competent performance and are identified in each unit of competency in a foundation skills table. If assessment tools are being integrated, then the foundation skills should continue to form an integrated part of the assessment.

Integrated assessment in simulated environments

Opportunities for integrating assessment are best applied to assessments that require candidates to demonstrate consistent performance in conditions that replicate the workplace. For many of the units and qualifications this includes having access to a suitable practice environment that is realistic and reflects the environment in which candidates will be practising in future.

In conducting assessment in a simulated workplace environment using integrated assessment, assessors must make sure the simulated environment gives the learner the opportunity to meet the following critical criteria and provide opportunities for integrated assessment of competence.

Simulated assessment environments must provide:

- ▶ work of the standard required for entry into the industry
- ▶ work that is performed within a time frame appropriate for entry to the industry, and in a manner that meets industry safety standards
- ▶ work that shows the correct application of equipment, resources and documents required to perform the tasks
- ▶ opportunities for the candidate to perform the dimensions of competency such as task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills
- ▶ opportunities for transferring competencies to new contexts.

Record changes to assessment tools

Whenever integrated or holistic assessment is used, all of the assessment tools need to reflect the changes made. When assessing several units holistically, the assessment tasks, evidence requirements, and decision-making rules all must map back to the individual units of competency. For compliance, the mapping documents must link the assessment requirements of each unit of competency to the relevant assessment tools.

Example

Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and record any changes required to assessment tools

Ruby is reviewing assessment activities for the course she will deliver and assess next semester. She has assessed this qualification previously and determined that the duplication in the performance evidence requirements in several units of competency means she could integrate several assessment tools.

She decides that a project will work well because the project method of assessment provides scope to integrate several different evidence items. The project will gather evidence of competency in a wide range of assessment contexts and is effective in gathering evidence holistically (the project gathers evidence of various aspects of the unit of competency rather than individual aspects). Ruby gets to work and records the changes she has made on the RTO's database for assessment instruments.



Summary

1. The principles of assessment require that when developing and planning assessment activities and processes, the principles of fairness, validity, reliability and flexibility are applied.
2. Contextualisation requires that the assessment methods or assessment instruments used consider the workplace in which the person is currently working or the location in which they will conduct their assessment.
3. The units in the training package or accredited course can be contextualised in several ways such as referring to the specific equipment the candidate uses, the people they work with and the policies they have to follow in an assessment.
4. Training package documentation provides advice about contextualisation and emphasises that any contextualisation carried out must maintain the integrity of the overall intended outcomes of the unit of competency.
5. The implementation guides that provide information relevant to training packages often includes a section on contextualisation.
6. You may use commercially available assessment tools or ones that other people in your organisation have developed. Be aware of copyright issues, validation, relevance to the target group and the mode of delivery.
7. Records of the activities you undertake to analyse and modify assessment tools forms part of continuous improvement, which is an important part of the RTO's VQF/AQTF compliance obligations.
8. Check the training organisation's policies and procedures for advice on the version control method that they prefer to use. Follow your organisation's guidelines for version control to ensure that assessors select the most recent assessment instrument from the organisation's record-keeping system.
9. Validation and obtaining approval for changes is usually a requirement of the RTO's assessment strategy/policy.
10. Integrated (or holistic) assessment is the term used for an assessment activity that assesses several units rather than assessing individual units and elements as specific tasks or components of a work activity.
11. When integrating assessment activities the 'picture' of a competent person should be constantly referred to so the workplace relevance and integrity of the unit is maintained. The assessor then identifies the types of evidence needed to show competence and the techniques that would be used to gather that evidence.



Topic 4

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 4A Analyse available assessment instruments for their suitability for use, and identify any required modifications**
- 4B Develop assessment instruments to meet the required standard and specific workplace/candidate needs**
- 4C Map assessment instruments against the unit or course requirements**
- 4D Write clear instructions for the candidate and assessor regarding the use of assessment instruments**
- 4E Check and confirm that draft assessment instruments meet required standards and specific workplace/candidate needs and record outcomes of checks**

Develop the assessment instruments

Once your assessment plan has been prepared, you need to source or develop appropriate assessment instruments for identifying and recording competence. Your workplace may have developed a bank of assessment instruments you can evaluate. You may find a pre-existing assessment instrument that you can either use immediately or modify to suit the context of assessment, and for alignment with the assessment plan.

You can expect that at various times you may be required to develop a new assessment instrument that suits the specific requirements of the assessment plan.

4A Analyse available assessment instruments for their suitability for use, and identify any required modifications

You may be using a commercially available assessment instrument or ones that other people in your organisation have developed. If so, you need to analyse them to see whether they are appropriate for your assessment purpose or if they need to be modified to suit a specific assessment environment or the needs of a candidate.



Commercially available instruments

Assessment instruments may be available from within the training organisation as a part of an assessment bank that is shared among trainers in an organisation, or they may be accessed via external sources. Assessment instruments must be closely aligned to the unit of competency and be used to collect the evidence used for a decision to be made of competency.

Always check the copyright information for assessment instruments you source from publishers to confirm how the assessment instrument may be used and how widely it may be shared. Also check that these instruments have been validated to ensure they meet quality standards and will produce consistent assessment results.

External sources for assessment instruments include:

- ▶ RTOs that offer use of their assessment instruments for a fee
- ▶ private organisations that sell assessment instruments for a fee – often these are provided in electronic format and are able to be customised to suit the needs of the assessor
- ▶ publishers such as Aspire Learning Resources, which offer assessment instruments with benchmark solutions that enhance the RTO's quality management processes.

Analyse assessment instruments

When analysing assessment instruments you may find it helpful to involve other stakeholders including candidates, representatives of industry and enterprises, members of the wider community and other assessors. Remember to retain records of the activities you undertake to analyse and modify assessment instruments as this type of continuous improvement activity is part of the RTO's VQF/AQTF compliance obligations.

You may have a form or template to use to guide you through the analysis process.

Review the following aspects of the assessment instrument:

- ▶ Is it based on realistic or authentic work activities and contexts?
- ▶ Does the evidence collected relate directly to the units of competency?
- ▶ Is it appropriate for the AQF level?
- ▶ Have tasks been designed to allow holistic and integrated assessment?
- ▶ Will evidence be drawn from a variety of sources on more than one occasion?
- ▶ What are the sources of evidence of skills and knowledge that underpin competence?
- ▶ Was the assessment instrument developed in consultation with stakeholders?
- ▶ Is it appropriate for the mode of delivery? For example, an observation will not suit online delivery.
- ▶ Are checklists and instructions to assessors clearly mapped to the unit of competency?
- ▶ Are instructions clear and designed to promote reliability in judgments?
- ▶ Can it be adapted to meet the needs of all candidates and workplaces?
- ▶ Does information to candidates include the method, criteria, procedure, feedback and appeal process?
- ▶ Does it cater for individual needs of candidates from various cultural backgrounds?
- ▶ Does it cater for individual needs in relation to language, literacy and numeracy?
- ▶ Can reasonable adjustment be made, while maintaining the integrity of assessment outcomes?
- ▶ Are there opportunities for feedback and review to be provided to candidates?

Modify assessment instruments

It may be necessary for you to modify an assessment instrument following your analysis. Modifications should be made in accordance with your workplace policies and procedures. You may find it helpful to work with a partner or a small group of colleagues when making modifications.

Regardless of the type of modifications you make, you must follow your organisation's guidelines for version control to ensure that assessors select the most recent assessment instrument from the organisation's record-keeping system. Remember to validate the modified assessment according to your workplace assessment validation policies and procedures prior to use.

You may need to modify the assessment instrument in the following ways; some of these may benefit all candidates, while some are specifically aimed to provide reasonable adjustment for candidates who require special consideration.

Mode of delivery

One of the most common adjustments you need to make is to match the assessment instruments to the mode of delivery. For example, if there is no work context, it will have to be a simulated work environment and the third-party report must be replaced with another verifying document. This will affect the resources and equipment requirements for the assessment.

Add instructions

You may need to add instructions that assessment needs to be conducted in an actual or simulated work environment so the assessment complies with the assessment requirements.

Check AQF level

The activities or tasks the candidate is asked to perform may need to be changed so they comply with the relevant AQF standard. For example, you may identify that an assessment instrument for an AQF level 2 candidate should not require them to submit a 1500-word report about a project they have conducted.

Be sensitive to individual differences

You may need to adjust an assessment instrument to ensure it is culturally sensitive or allows for people with LLN issues or those with a disability. For example, the instrument may need to indicate that a candidate may use an audio recording of texts, adaptive technology or require an interpreter.

Align with work activity

It may be necessary to integrate various parts of the assessment in order to gather evidence that more closely authenticates the performance of the work activity described in the unit of competency. For example, the evidence does not allow you to visualise how competently the candidate could perform the complete activity in an actual workplace.

Collect evidence on more than one occasion

In those cases where the assessment instruments collect evidence only once using a summative assessment, it is necessary to develop additional assessment instruments to satisfy the requirement that evidence is collected on more than one occasion using various methods.

Use plain English

Instructions to candidates and assessors may need to be clarified and re-worded in plain English.

Accommodate reasonable adjustment

Flexibility in assessment may be required to accommodate reasonable adjustment; for example, the assessment may need to be provided in braille or the candidate's first language.

Example

Analyse available assessment instruments for their suitability for use, and identify any required modifications

This semester, Lourdes has been asked to deliver and assess the unit of competency *BSBWOR501 Manage personal work priorities and professional development*.

She unpacks the unit of competency and retrieves the assessment instruments that were used in the college for this unit last semester. She works with her colleague, Ron, to review the instruments to confirm whether they comply with the principles and rules of evidence.

Lourdes records their findings using the form that has been developed for this purpose in her workplace. This is what they find.

BSB51915 Diploma of Leadership and Management

BSBWOR501 Manage personal work priorities and professional development

Assessment instruments consist of:

- ▶ team member checklist
- ▶ supervisor checklist – third-party report
- ▶ learner guide
- ▶ knowledge questions
- ▶ journal entry (tool not sighted)
- ▶ workplace project scenario.

Assessment principles:

Assessment of this unit complies with the principle of validity by addressing:

Y	N	NA	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elements and performance criteria
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Foundation skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assessment requirements – performance evidence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Context and consistency of assessment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assessment methods
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application appropriate to the unit's AQF level

Assessment of this unit complies with the principle of reliability as each assessment activity:

Y	N	NA	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is supported by consistent benchmark criteria for acceptable performance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is conducted and assessed against the benchmark criteria
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is supported by clear information for assessors about assessment requirements

Assessment of this unit complies with the principles of fairness and flexibility as assessment:

Y	N	NA	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is supported by clear information for students about assessment requirements
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Allows for reasonable adjustment to meet client and/or industry needs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does not demand more than the training package or course requires
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensures students are provided with objective assessment feedback
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Allows for appeals against assessment decisions
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Allows for recognition of existing competencies

Rules of evidence:

(Judgments are made on completed assessment material where possible or on the benchmark criteria if assessment has not yet occurred)

Y	N	NA	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Valid: Assessment evidence relates directly to the unit of competency
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Authentic: Systems are in place to ensure assessment evidence submitted by the candidate is their own work
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Current: Competency judgments rely on evidence that demonstrates current skills and knowledge
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sufficient: Sufficient assessment evidence is gathered before competency is determined

Regulatory requirements:

Y	N	NA	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Competency judgments are supported by the student's employer (Qld apprentices and trainees only)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assessment tools mandated/approved by a government regulatory authority are used

Lourdes realises that she will have to adjust the assessment instruments to ensure they meet all the requirements. For example, she sees that she must revise the instructions given to candidates and assessors and adjust the instruments to ensure they meet reliability standards. In addition, one of their target groups will be doing their assessment online, so the mode of delivery will be different and require adjusting for this group.

Using the same checklist, Lourdes re-evaluates the assessment instrument after she has made the necessary revisions.

4B Develop assessment instruments to meet the required standard and specific workplace/candidate needs

In this section, you will examine a range of assessment instruments to select from when deciding how best to assess candidates in a specific context. Remember that your primary goal in developing an assessment instrument is to ensure reliability in assessment. This means that another assessor should be able to use and replicate the assessment process without any further clarification from you.

Follow these steps.

Developing assessment instruments

Step 1: Clarify the evidence requirements by thoroughly analysing the unit of competency and visualising a competent person.

Step 2: Choose the most appropriate assessment method.

Step 3: Design and develop relevant assessment instruments.

Step 4: Trial and refine the assessment instruments.

Step 5: Validate the assessment instruments prior to implementation.

What is an assessment instrument?

An assessment instrument is the specific questions, activity or checklist used to assess competence by the assessment method selected.

An assessment instrument may be supported by:

- ▶ the instructions to the candidate
- ▶ a statement of the purpose of the assessment
- ▶ an outline of any specific conditions that apply to assessment
- ▶ a profile of acceptable performance
- ▶ the decision-making rules or guidelines to be used by assessors.

Remember the VQF/AQTF Standards do not prescribe a specific format for assessment instruments. Individual RTOs are charged with the responsibility for using a quality management approach to design assessment instruments that gather evidence to allow a judgment to be made regarding a candidate's competence. They must implement continuous improvement processes that include the validation of all assessments by a panel of stakeholders. This ensures that an RTO's assessment system and individual assessment instruments are VQF/AQTF compliant and satisfy the rules of evidence and principles of assessment.

Quality assessment instruments

The quality of the assessment instruments you develop is enhanced where you collaborate and consult with relevant stakeholders including representatives of industry and organisations, learners and other assessors during the development phase.

The following table outlines the key components of a quality assessment instrument.

Key components	Explanation
Assessment context	Assessment context is a description of the target group and purpose of assessment. Characteristics of candidates should be summarised including LLN levels; age; education and work experience.
Competency mapping	Competency mapping describes the relationship between individual parts of the assessment instrument and the unit of competency, and demonstrates the linkages between components of the assessment and the elements, performance criteria, and knowledge and performance evidence identified in the unit of competency. Competency mapping is examined in detail later in this topic.
Information to the candidate	This information comprises the specific task or activities that the candidate must complete and present to the assessor in order for a judgment of their competence to be made. The type of tasks or activities that are most effective for gathering evidence in specific assessment contexts is examined in detail later in this section.
Decision-making rules	These are the rules that the assessor will follow in judging competence.
Range and conditions	These outline any specific conditions that apply to assessment. For example, access to reference material during assessment, assistance that may be sought from other people during assessment, the type and amount of supervision that may be provided during assessment, time limits and number of attempts the candidate may make of a particular aspect of a task or activity.
Assessment tasks	These are the tasks to be administered to the learner. The learner clearly needs to understand the tasks. The instructions provided to the learner should outline the task/s that allow them to demonstrate competency. These instructions will prompt the learner to say, do, write or create something. If the learner needs to clarify the instructions or ask further questions, the instructions may not be valid or reliable. Well-designed assessment instructions minimise the variation between assessors.
Materials and resources required	These outline any materials and resources that may be required to complete assessment.

Key components	Explanation
Reasonable adjustment	<p>The individual needs of the candidate must be considered when selecting evidence-gathering methods and instruments. This is called reasonable adjustment and it means choosing alternative assessment methods or tools to meet the individual needs of candidates. Groups that may need reasonable adjustment in assessment include candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ from rural/remote areas ▶ with a disability ▶ with low levels of education ▶ with low literacy or numeracy ▶ from non-English-speaking backgrounds ▶ who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders ▶ who are mature-age ▶ who are women. <p>Adjustments are considered reasonable if they still allow for a valid and reliable assessment within the resource capabilities of the RTO. The assessment must continue to satisfy the assessment requirements, performance evidence and assessment conditions in relevant units of competency.</p>
Recording requirements	<p>These include the type of information that will be recorded in regard to the outcomes of assessment, including how that information will be stored.</p>

Develop assessment instruments

Make sure you are familiar with the following types of assessment instruments. Techniques for analysing assessment instruments to ensure they are suitable are discussed in the previous section.

In order to gather evidence that is closely related to the unit of competency assessment requirements, write a profile of the acceptable performance measures that you are looking for.

Profiles of acceptable measures can be used by:

- ▶ assessors to promote reliability in judging competence
- ▶ candidates to promote understanding of how their competence will be judged and to support them in preparing materials they can present for assessment
- ▶ industry or enterprises to foster relationship-building with the RTO, promote the development of job opportunities for candidates and to ensure that assessment strategies reflect the needs of industry and enterprises
- ▶ higher education as part of arrangements for articulation from vocational to higher education.

Performance indicators

The following table demonstrates how criteria to define performance levels may be applied for performance indicators for the employability skill of ‘Get the work done’ in this unit of competency, TAEASS401.

Performance level criteria:

- ▶ Plans a range of routine processes and related tasks with logically sequenced steps, according to defined standards or parameters
- ▶ Uses formal decision-making processes, identifying information and evaluating several choices against a limited set of criteria
- ▶ Evaluates effectiveness of planning and design decisions in terms of how well they meet requirements

Templates and proformas

RTOs invest significant resources in developing templates and proformas to create records that clearly demonstrate they are fulfilling their compliance obligations.

You will most likely find a range of templates and proformas are available for you to use in various assessment contexts. The information in the following table can help you confirm that you have the necessary documents available during an assessment process.

Sample documents for assessments

Observation method

- ▶ Observation checklists
- ▶ Instructions for the candidate
- ▶ Instructions for the assessor
- ▶ Advice to the workplace supervisor

Third-party report method

- ▶ Instructions for the third party
- ▶ Third-party observation checklist

Simulation method

- ▶ Simulation scenario
- ▶ Observation checklist
- ▶ Instructions for the assessor
- ▶ Instructions for the candidate

Portfolio

- ▶ Instructions for the assessor
- ▶ Instructions for the candidate that include suggestions for portfolio items

Questioning

- ▶ Prepared questions
- ▶ Benchmark responses (model answers)
- ▶ Instructions for the candidate
- ▶ Instructions for the assessor
- ▶ Form to record responses

Specific questions or activities

Questioning is a particularly effective method of gathering evidence of underpinning knowledge or the process that the candidate has performed in writing an assignment, completing a project, creating a work sample or compiling a portfolio. Refer to the section on questions and structured activities in Topic 2 of this learner guide.

The following information summarises issues you should address when preparing assessment instruments that use questioning or activities.

Written questions

- ▶ What is the rationale for using written questions for assessment?
- ▶ Are they written at an appropriate AQF level?
- ▶ Have you considered the assessment experience, language and literacy levels, and cultural background of the candidates?
- ▶ How clearly are the questions linked to the evidence requirements of the unit of competency?
- ▶ What opportunity is there for reasonable adjustment to suit the individual needs of candidates?
- ▶ How will you ensure reliability of assessment?

Interviews

- ▶ How is this assessment method linked to the assessment purpose and context?
- ▶ What format will you use for the interview; for example, individual or panel interview?
- ▶ At what stage will the candidate be given the interview questions; for example, will they have an opportunity to read the questions prior to the interview?
- ▶ How will you record the candidate's responses?
- ▶ How will you ensure reliability in judging competence using this format?
- ▶ What opportunity is there to provide reasonable adjustment?

Verbal questioning

- ▶ What is the rationale for using this assessment method?
- ▶ What opportunity will the candidate have to prepare their responses?
- ▶ How will you record the candidate's responses?
- ▶ Will you use verbal questioning for formative or summative assessment (or both)?
- ▶ Is there an opportunity to use probing questions? If so, how will you ensure reliability in judging competence?
- ▶ What method will you use to map questions to the performance evidence?

Questionnaire

- ▶ What is the rationale for using this method of assessment?
- ▶ How will you accommodate requests for reasonable adjustment?
- ▶ How will you ensure the authenticity of the candidate's responses? Is there a need to gather supplementary evidence?
- ▶ What benchmarking criteria will you use to judge the candidate's responses?
- ▶ Are the questions written at an appropriate AQF level?

Oral or written examination

- ▶ Is the format you have selected for the examination appropriate for the AQF level of the unit of competency? For example: multiple choice, true/false questions and simple case studies are most appropriate for Certificates I and II; short-answer questions and case studies are appropriate for Certificates III and IV; and essays and complex case studies are most appropriate for Diploma level.

Activities

- ▶ What is the rationale for the specific type of activity that forms the basis of the assessment instrument?
- ▶ How much instruction will the candidate require?

Evidence and observation checklists

Observation is a very effective method of assessment as you gather firsthand evidence of the candidate performing the various aspects of the unit of competency.

You should have a checklist to record your observations. Your workplace may have an observation checklist or you may need to develop one. If you have developed your own, you should have it validated to ensure it is reliable and will collect sufficient evidence over a period of time.

The checklist should include questions you must consider as you are conducting the observation to ensure the candidate meets the performance criteria. Questions should reflect the principles of assessment and follow the rules of evidence. For example, does the observation item assess the performance evidence presented by the individual learner; that is, is it valid?

Sample questions include:

- ▶ Does the candidate check all the safety features before operating the equipment?
- ▶ Does the candidate follow the rules when conducting a meeting?
- ▶ Is the candidate wearing personal protective equipment as required?
- ▶ Did the candidate prepare the appropriate resources before carrying out the task?

The quality test of an observation form is in the detailed mapping of the form with the unit of competency. You should ensure that the candidate receives a copy of the checklist before the observation and understands what is involved; for example, whether the observation is announced or unannounced; and the period of observation. Decide also if you are going to record your observations as the candidate performs the task or after the observation period.

Observation checklists

The context and duration of the observation help the learner understand how they can prepare for the observation. The checklist must be more than just a replication of the performance criteria from the unit of competency; it must include observable behaviours. For example, details about the type of equipment used in an observation guides the learner in their preparation for the observation assessment.

Compare the observation checklist you have selected against the following quality indicators.

Checklist quality indicators may include:

- ▶ identification of the candidate
- ▶ assessor details
- ▶ benchmarking criteria (or units of competency)
- ▶ identification of prerequisite competencies
- ▶ work health and safety issues relevant to assessment
- ▶ planning time for the candidate and the workplace to set up the resources required, such as particular customer/client activities that need to occur
- ▶ the specific task or activity to be performed
- ▶ the number of observations required
- ▶ the standard of performance used to judge competence
- ▶ a description of any supplementary evidence that is required
- ▶ the length of time over which the observations will take place and when these should occur in the timing of the course
- ▶ comments for feedback
- ▶ results/outcomes
- ▶ dates and signatures of all parties.

Refer again to the 'Observation assessment instrument checklist' template.

Checklists for the evaluation of work samples

Each criterion used to evaluate work samples should be mapped to the relevant sections within the units of competency. You require a method for recording the process you followed in judging competence based on the work sample. A checklist is suitable for recording this information.

The instructions for creating or producing the work sample should have been explained to the candidate prior to assessment. The evidence criteria must be applied to the work sample and should be clearly specified and communicated to the candidate prior to the assessment. Clarify with the candidate whether only the final work sample will be assessed or whether the process of creating or producing the work sample is also a component of assessment. The candidate may need advice on how the work sample will be presented for assessment. Your workplace may prefer to have candidates collate into a portfolio all documents they are submitting as work samples for assessment; this is generally the preferred method for RPL candidates.



In those cases where you also assessing the creation or production process, you may need to agree with the candidate on how you gather evidence of the process. You may decide that reading their work journal or asking questions may be effective.

Other instruments – simulations

Where assessment in an actual workplace is not possible, a simulated work environment is appropriate. Such an environment is useful where learners are studying in an off-the-job environment but require exposure to experiences that reflect those in the workplace. RTOs make arrangements to secure access to a simulated environment such as a warehouse, training room, office or retail store. Online learning technologies have the potential to offer enhanced simulations. Simulations offer additional benefits to the RTOs such as a controlled assessment environment, greater flexibility in timing and cost savings in travel costs for assessors.



Simulations must be supported with an outline of what the candidate is required to do, the resources needed and what criteria the assessor is looking for on which to base their judgment of competence.

You will need a scenario and form or template to record your observations of the candidate's performance in the simulation. You should also consider whether you need to plan a series of questions that could be asked during the simulation to gather evidence of the candidate's underpinning knowledge.

Role-plays

Role-plays require much less preparation and cost less to establish than a simulated work environment. They are often the preferred method of assessing competency in regard to behaviours and interpersonal skills such as communicating with customers, participating in a team meeting or resolving conflict. They are useful when a candidate's cultural setting is used, such as with Indigenous candidates.

Some candidates may feel threatened by role-plays and be concerned that their acting skills may undermine their demonstration of competent performance. You can allay these fears by sharing the checklist you will use to record evidence during the role-play with candidates. Providing role-play cards or briefings on the scenario will also guide the learner. The criteria on the checklist should be clearly mapped to the assessment requirements of the unit of competency.

Online learning technologies are increasingly offering new methods for collecting evidence from distance learners with candidates being able to upload audio or visual evidence of role-plays they have undertaken in remote locations.

Third-party evidence

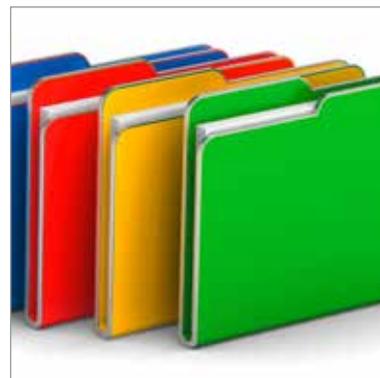
Third-party evidence is gathered from the candidate's workplace supervisors and peers; in some cases, customers, suppliers or community members may be able to comment formally on the candidate's performance. Third-party reports are usually supplemented with additional evidence such as a quiz that gathers evidence of the application of knowledge evidence and observations completed by a qualified assessor. Sample third-party reports can be used as a guide for the learner to show what may be required in a report.

The instructions to the learner in a third-party report is often overlooked. It needs to include details on the quantity of evidence to collect, especially since supervisors are usually very busy. There must be a focus on key tasks and skills. Additionally the qualifications and competence of the third party writing the report needs to be verified and made available before the assessment goes ahead. A logbook is a good way to record the activities that take place, especially when there needs to be evidence of the frequency or range of situations in which assessment took place.

Candidates who present a portfolio for recognition purposes will generally include at least one third-party report. Ask your trainer for the 'Third-party report' template from Aspire's *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

Recognition portfolios

As discussed in a previous section, a portfolio is a collection of items of evidence that demonstrates the candidate's competence in regard to the assessment criteria. You may need to negotiate to determine whether there is enough scope in a candidate's job role to gather sufficient evidence of their competence in this manner. You may agree on an assessment process that requires the candidate to provide supplementary evidence by completing a quiz on the knowledge evidence component of the unit of competency or arranging for a testimonial from their employer about their performance of a specific aspect of competence.



You must develop very clear guidelines to follow when evaluating the portfolio submitted for assessment. Consider the following:

- ▶ How will you know that a specific item satisfies the rules of evidence?
- ▶ How will you ensure that other assessors would interpret and judge the items in the same way?

You may address these aspects of reliable assessment by collaborating with relevant stakeholders to develop the rules you will use to make decisions. You may decide to develop an evidence checklist to record how you have applied the decision-making rules. Ask your trainer for the 'Evaluation of RPL assessment process checklist' template from Aspire's *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

Candidate self-assessment materials

Self-assessment allows candidates to collect and provide evidence on their own performance against identified units of competency, and may be a component of the evidence gathered in support of an application for RPL. Self-assessment is often used as an instrument to help the assessor and candidate determine what evidence is

available and where any gaps may be. The assessor can then decide what assessment method could be used to gather supplementary evidence; further training may need to be undertaken to address the gaps.

The RTO will usually make self-assessment instruments available in printed or electronic format to candidates. These are usually in the form of a checklist that identifies each of the assessment requirements. The candidate reflects on their performance and records the evidence they have to present. They are usually required to record specific examples of how they perform each aspect of the work activity on the checklist. Ask your trainer for the ‘Self-assessment record’ template from *Aspire’s Trainer’s and assessor’s guide* for this unit.

Example

Develop assessment instruments to meet the required standard and specific workplace/candidate needs

Manuel has been given responsibility this semester for assessing candidates against the assessment requirements and evidence for the unit *CHCLEG001 Work legally and ethically* from the CHC Community Services Training Package. The majority of candidates Manuel will be assessing are completing their course in a group learning environment; several will be assessed in their workplace.

Manuel has unpacked the unit of competency and prepared an assessment plan. Here is an extract from the plan that was prepared using a template that had been developed in his workplace to suit their needs.

Aspect	Explanation
Assessment requirements and evidence required to demonstrate this unit of competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The individual being assessed must provide evidence of specified knowledge and performance evidence. ▶ This unit will be most appropriately assessed in the workplace or in a simulated workplace and under the normal range of workplace conditions. ▶ It is recommended that assessment or information for assessment will be conducted or gathered over a period of time and cover the normal range of workplace situations and settings.
Context of and specific resources for assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This unit can be assessed independently; however, holistic assessment practice with other community services units of competency is encouraged. ▶ Resources required for assessment include access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – an appropriate workplace and/or simulation of realistic workplace setting where assessment can take place – relevant organisation policy, protocols and procedures – current legislation, regulations and codes of practice.
Methods of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Observation in the workplace ▶ Written assignments/projects ▶ Case study and scenario analysis ▶ Questioning ▶ Role-play simulation

Manuel decides to gather evidence of the elements and performance criteria using observation/ demonstration. He will use a template to record his observations. He prepares the following assessment instrument for this purpose.

Performance evidence	Explanation
Demonstrate how you completed workplace activities in accordance with legal and ethical requirements in at least three different situations.	Show your trainer/assessor how apply legal and ethical requirements into your workplace activities and tasks.
Demonstrate how you developed appropriate responses to at least three different legal or ethical issues relevant to the work role.	Show your trainer/assessor how you determine whether a problem is of an ethical or a legal nature and relevant to the work role. Show how you respond to this issue.
Demonstrate how you identified and communicated at least two potential work practice improvements designed to enhance workplace responsiveness to legal and ethical requirements.	Show your trainer/assessor how you identified work practice improvements that would enhance responsiveness to legal and ethical requirements. Show how you communicated information about these improvements.

Activity 11

Prepare an assessment instrument that you can use to gather evidence to judge competence in regard to an individual element in a unit of competency, or holistically for all of the assessment requirements. Ask an experienced assessor to assist you by reviewing the instrument and providing you with feedback. You may wish to develop an assessment instrument based on the assessment plan you developed in Activity 5. Retain a copy of your completed assessment instrument.

[Click to complete Activity 11](#)

4C Map assessment instruments against the unit or course requirements

When developing your own assessment instruments or using instruments that are commercially available, you must ensure the following.

Assessment instruments should:

- ▶ be benchmarked against the relevant unit/s of competency or relevant organisational performance criteria
- ▶ be reviewed as part of the validation of assessment strategies
- ▶ meet the assessment requirements expressed in the Standards for RTOs 2015.



Match to course requirements

RTOs that assess candidates' competence against the benchmarks established in a training package or accredited course must study the unit of competency carefully and take the following components of the unit of competency into account when designing assessment instruments.

Components of a unit of competency include:

- ▶ application
- ▶ elements
- ▶ performance criteria
- ▶ foundation skills
- ▶ assessment requirements
- ▶ performance evidence
- ▶ knowledge evidence
- ▶ assessment conditions
- ▶ an implementation guide or companion volume for information on contextualising, foundation skills, etc.

Map to course requirements

The assessor documents must show how each aspect of the assessment process gathers evidence of each of the assessment requirements including the knowledge evidence and the performance criteria.

Your workplace will have developed policies and procedures that describe the methods you should use to document the relationship between the assessment process and the assessment requirements (including the knowledge required and foundation skills). The process you follow to identify and document these relationships is termed 'mapping'.

The mapping document forms an important component of the RTO's quality management system as it demonstrates that the individual assessment instruments are designed to satisfy the rules of evidence. It is not a mandatory requirement to use mapping, but if used correctly, it can be a useful tool.

You should check your workplace policies and procedures for information about the format you are required to use for mapping purposes. Ask your trainer for the 'Assessment mapping' template from *Aspire's Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

Map assessment instruments

Follow your workplace policies and procedures when mapping an assessment instrument against unit or course requirements. You may find it beneficial to discuss with experienced assessors the method they find most effective to prepare mapping information. With experience, you will develop your own approach to this task that reflects your work practices, the context of assessment and the tools you have available to work with in preparing the mapping document.



You may find, for example, that you are happy to work entirely electronically, viewing the unit of competency and assessment instrument on-screen and recording the mapping information onto an electronic form or template.

Alternatively, you may prefer to work with printed copies of the necessary documents and annotate the assessment tool with the relevant assessment requirements that are later transcribed to an electronic format. The mapping document should be stored with the assessment instrument and presented with the instrument during assessment validation processes.

Subjective mapping

Mapping is subjective in nature. Your interpretation of the performance evidence influences how you see the relationship between the assessment instrument and the unit of competency. In order to minimise or eliminate the risks posed by subjectivity in mapping, you should collaborate with relevant stakeholders in the planning stage of assessment. This will ensure that you consider how other people interpret the unit of competency and their ideas about the types of evidence that are required to demonstrate competence.

The reliability of the mapping process is also enhanced when you partner with at least one other person to complete the mapping or have your colleagues review the completed mapping document.

Check the mapping

There are consequences to various stakeholders when the mapping process is not undertaken accurately. For example, an RTO may be found to be non-compliant in regard to aspects of the Standards for RTOs; candidates may find that they need to provide supplementary evidence to substantiate their claim of competence; or the reputation of the RTO may be damaged.

You may prepare a checklist to use to ensure that you have considered all the relevant components of the unit of competency during the mapping exercise. The checklist may include the following questions.

Questions to ensure accuracy in mapping:

- ▶ Does the assessment instrument address the entire UOC including the unit of competency document and the assessment requirements document?
- ▶ Are the foundation skills implicit in the assessment instrument?
- ▶ Does the completed mapping document demonstrate that the candidate will need to supply supplementary evidence?
- ▶ Is there evidence of underpinning knowledge?
- ▶ Is the evidence gained from different types of activity, in line with a variety of different criteria and knowledge, being assessed as specified in the relevant unit or training package?
- ▶ Does the assessment instrument gather evidence that the candidate can 'bring it all together' using the performance evidence and knowledge evidence in a holistic way (if applicable)?

Example

Map assessment instruments against the unit or course requirements

In an earlier example, Tony was preparing to deliver and assess units of competency in the Frontline Management qualification. Tony has now conducted a mapping exercise of the assessment methods he intends to use for the unit of competency *BSBLDR402 Lead effective workplace relationships*. Part of his mapping exercise is reproduced here.

In the template that Tony has created, he uses 'KEQ' to represent separate knowledge evidence questions and case study scenarios that assessment candidates are required to complete. The 'WP' in the table refers to a workplace project that assessment candidates must undertake. Tony has placed a tick in the checkbox to demonstrate which assessment instrument gathers evidence of each performance criterion. He will also need to choose an assessment task for practical assessment of skills in the performance criteria and evidence, such as an observation. After the mapping is done he can clearly see which performance criteria are not covered by an assessment instrument.

Compare and contrast this summary of a mapping document with those used in your workplace.

BSBLDR402 Lead effective workplace relationships	Learner guide	KEQ	WP	Supervisor checklist
Collect, analyse and communicate information and ideas				
Collect relevant information from appropriate sources and analyse and share with the work team to improve work performance	✓			✓

BSBLDR402 Lead effective workplace relationships	Learner guide	KEQ	WP	Supervisor checklist
Communicate ideas and information in a manner that is appropriate and sensitive to the cultural and social diversity of the audience and any specific needs	✓		✓	✓
Lead consultation processes to encourage employees to contribute to issues related to their work, and promptly relay feedback to the work team in regard to outcomes	✓		✓	✓
Seek and value contributions from internal and external sources in developing and refining new ideas and approaches	✓		✓	✓
Implement processes to ensure issues raised are resolved promptly or referred to relevant personnel as required	✓		✓	✓
Develop trust and confidence as a leader				
Treat all internal and external contacts with integrity, respect and empathy	✓		✓	✓
Use the organisation's social, ethical and business standards to develop and maintain effective relationships	✓		✓	✓
Gain and maintain the trust and confidence of colleagues, customers and suppliers through competent performance	✓		✓	✓
Adjust interpersonal styles and methods to meet the organisation's social and cultural environment	✓		✓	
Lead and encourage other members of the work team to follow examples set according to the organisation's policies and procedures	✓		✓	✓

BSBLDR402 Lead effective workplace relationships	Learner guide	KEQ	WP	Supervisor checklist
Develop and maintain networks and relationships				
Use networks to identify and build relationships	✓		✓	✓
Use networks and other work relationships to provide identifiable benefits for the team and organisation	✓		✓	✓
Manage difficulties into positive outcomes				
Identify and analyse difficulties, and take action to rectify the situation within the requirements of the organisation and relevant legislation	✓		✓	✓
Guide and support colleagues to resolve work difficulties	✓	✓		✓
Regularly review and improve workplace outcomes in consultation with relevant personnel	✓		✓	✓
Manage poor work performance within the organisation's processes	✓		✓	✓
Manage conflict constructively within the organisation's processes	✓		✓	
Knowledge evidence	✓		✓	✓
Performance evidence		✓	✓	✓
Foundation skills (see separate employability skills matrix for additional mapping information)	✓		✓	✓

Activity 12

Select an assessment instrument and complete a mapping exercise. If your workplace has not developed forms or templates for mapping units of competency, you may wish to use the Aspire 'Assessment mapping' template. Alternatively, you could develop your own document.

Once you have completed the mapping exercise, ask a colleague to map the same assessment instrument. The suitability of the assessment instruments with the mode of delivery and details on the target group should be discussed beforehand. Compare and contrast your findings. Discuss with your trainer how you can accommodate any differences in mapping exercises in order to ensure consistency and reliability in assessment judgments. You should also reflect on how your workplace's assessment validation procedures can support consistency in mapping exercises.

[Click to complete Activity 12](#)

4D Write clear instructions for the candidate and assessor regarding the use of assessment instruments

It is good practice to include the instructions in the assessment plan and repeat them in the assessment instrument. Before the actual assessment occurs, you must ensure that the candidate understands the following:

Ensure the candidate knows:

- ▶ the assessment method being used
- ▶ the assessment instrument/s being used
- ▶ any provisions/reasonable adjustment for people who have special needs
- ▶ opportunities for RPL (this will have been described at enrolment)
- ▶ how their performance will be reviewed, if required
- ▶ materials and resources that are required for assessment.

Write clear instructions

The process of writing instructions for using assessment instruments should be candidate focused. This means that although you are required to write instructions that comply with the RTO's VQF/AQTF obligations, your primary focus should be:

What do you need to do to make sure the assessment instructions are understood by the candidate in order for them to have the best possible opportunity to provide evidence of their competence?



A candidate-focused approach to writing instructions means addressing:

- ▶ the AQF level of the unit of competency that is being assessed
- ▶ the context of assessment
- ▶ where the assessment will occur – in the workplace, in a group learning environment, online or in a simulation; this will impact on the style and amount of detail that may be required in the instructions
- ▶ what support and advice will be available to the candidate when they are interpreting the instructions; candidates who do not have direct access to an assessor may require more detailed instructions; for example, candidates completing assessment online or in a remote community
- ▶ the language, literacy and numeracy levels of the candidates
- ▶ how to accommodate the learning style of candidates; for example, provide instructions that incorporate aspects of various learning styles, or include diagrams or illustrations in your advice to candidates for people who prefer pictorial rather than written instructions

- ▶ how to accommodate any special needs that candidates may have in reading and interpreting instructions; you may need specialist assistance when writing instructions for candidates who do not speak English as a first language or who have a disability
- ▶ whether you need to consider cultural issues.

Clear communication

You need to consider the level of anxiety the candidate may have about assessment. Their anxiety may be higher when they are undertaking summative rather than formative assessment or when they have not participated in an assessment process for some time.

The style of language and tone you use in the instructions should be appropriate to the target group. For example, people who are undertaking a course of study to prepare them to re-enter the workplace after many years at home caring for children may feel more comfortable when instructions are less formal and offer as much step-by-step task information as possible.

Remember that ultimately the candidate is the judge of whether the instructions you have written in the assessment tool are effective. The instructions you provide to candidates usually explain the assessment process in much greater detail than is required to address these key questions. However, you may find it helpful to begin the task of writing the instructions to candidates by addressing these questions first.

Candidates will base their judgment on how clearly you have communicated the following information to them:

- ▶ why they are being assessed
- ▶ what they need to do for assessment
- ▶ when they need to do it
- ▶ the conditions under which the assessment will be conducted
- ▶ how their performance will be judged and rewarded.

Explain the assessment process

Not all candidates comprehend things in the same way. For this reason, you need to use a range of strategies to support the candidates to understand the requirements of assessment. The first area you can offer support with is confirming what will happen during the assessment.

In the instructions to candidates, focus on:

- ▶ the steps involved in the assessment
- ▶ when the assessment will take place
- ▶ the time and place of assessment
- ▶ the purpose behind assessment
- ▶ the performance measures used to judge competence
- ▶ any terms used in the assessment task that may cause difficulties and need to be clearly explained
- ▶ materials and resources required for the assessment.

Plagiarism

Your workplace may also choose to include an extract from their policy regarding authenticity of the candidate's submission. For example, you may include a discussion on the software you use to detect plagiarism (copying work that is not their own and presenting it as their own) and the repercussions for candidates who submit non-original work for assessment.



Exemplars

Check your workplace policies and procedures to identify whether it is appropriate for you to share examples of former candidates' assessments or model solutions with current candidates. You may need to seek permission from learners to use their work as exemplars. Some RTOs develop a bank of exemplar solutions or model answers that are available to candidates. This practice may be particularly helpful to distance, online or RPL candidates who do not have the benefit of regular communication with their assessor and other learners. Remember, exemplars provide information to candidates about the scope of a project or length of an assignment; they are not samples of answers to be copied.

Your workplace policies and procedures will provide guidance on your obligations in regard to ensuring that the candidate agrees to the assessment arrangements. Your workplace may have developed a form that the candidate needs to sign to indicate their agreement. Ask your trainer for the 'Assessment agreement' template from *Aspire's Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

Grading performance

While certainly not in line with competency-based assessment, some organisations may choose to provide candidates with a graded result, which is norm-based assessment. This means that in addition to being recorded as 'competent' or 'not yet competent' the candidate receives formal advice that describes their performance standard in relation to others.

When candidates are to receive a graded result, a marking scheme should be included with the assessment instrument. Grading advice can be in the form of a marking rubric. A simple marking rubric awards marks to the candidate for performing at a particular level; for example, a basic response to a question may be awarded marks between 1 and 3, a more-detailed response may receive a mark of between 4 and 6, and a superior response may be marked between 7 and 10. Marking rubrics can be challenging to develop and implement. You should consider partnering with a more experienced colleague on your first attempts to prepare a marking rubric.

The following information is included here as it may affect some learners.

There is a range of reasons for giving candidates a graded result.

Reasons for giving graded results include:

- ▶ satisfying the requirements of industry and professional associations
- ▶ accommodating the demands of universities for articulation purposes
- ▶ licensing requirements

- ▶ determining rewards for participants (some RTOs, including TAFEs, offer awards to candidates who achieve the highest standard of performance determined by a final mark)
- ▶ attracting international students (related to university and learner expectations).

Explain verbally

Wherever possible, particularly with candidates being assessed in Certificates I–III, you should explain the assessment instructions verbally. This provides an opportunity to answer candidates' questions, stress any workplace health and safety information that is relevant to assessment, and enables you to confirm that the candidate understands the instructions. You may find that less-experienced candidates require advice regarding seeking help during assessment and whether they are allowed to use reference material while completing assessment activities. Refer to your workplace policies and procedures for advice in this area.

The appeals process

Written instructions should also include information about what candidates must do if they wish to appeal an assessment decision. This is usually explained to learners at the beginning of the course delivery and forms part of the RTO's assessment policy. The candidate needs to know the following about the appeals process available at the training organisation.

Candidates should know:

- ▶ how to appeal against a perceived unsatisfactory result
- ▶ who they can appeal to
- ▶ the time period available for that appeal
- ▶ the process for repeating the assessment
- ▶ what happens when they demonstrate competence for only some of the assessment requirements.

Example

Write clear instructions for the candidate and assessor regarding the use of assessment instruments

Jillian has been asked by her senior head teacher to write the instructions for an assessment instrument that has been developed for use with a group of learners who are completing a series of workshops to achieve a statement of attainment in financial literacy. A charitable organisation has used government funding to pay the RTO to facilitate workshops for learners from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Jillian collaborates with members of the charity and other assessors to develop a profile of the candidates. She finds that candidates range in ages; have low levels of language, literacy and numeracy; only a few have completed post-school education; and they generally live in socially and financially disadvantaged circumstances.

The units of competency in the statement of attainment are AQF level 2. The assessment instrument comprises true/false questions and short-answer questions with responses provided verbally.

Here is the information Jillian will tell the candidates face to face. She will then provide them with a document copy for their information.

Consider if you think these instructions are suitable for this group of candidates? If not, how might you adjust them?

Assessment instructions

Instructions to candidates

What you need:

- ▶ This assessment booklet
- ▶ Pens with black or blue ink, pencils, a ruler and an eraser (rubber)
- ▶ A calculator
- ▶ Bilingual dictionaries (if applicable)

Details of assessment

Time allowed – 1 hour for true/false questions and 20 minutes per student for oral questioning

There are two parts to this paper:

- ▶ Part 1 – True/false (25 marks)
- ▶ Part 2 – Short-answer questions with oral responses (25 marks)

Instructions to candidates

For true/false questions:

- ▶ Write your personal details (name, address, candidate number, course) in the spaces provided in your booklet.
- ▶ Do not open this task booklet until you are told to do so by the assessor.
- ▶ Read each question carefully and attempt all questions.
- ▶ Write in black or blue ink only.
- ▶ Make sure you clearly show a true or false response.
- ▶ Hand your assessment booklet to the assessor at the end of the assessment.

For oral questioning:

- ▶ Pre-read the questions in preparation for the oral responses.
- ▶ Listen carefully to each question.
- ▶ Take your time to respond to each question.
- ▶ Allow time for the assessor to record your responses.

What is required

To complete this activity successfully you need to:

- ▶ complete both parts of the paper
- ▶ write clearly so your work can be easily understood
- ▶ show all your working out.

4E Check and confirm that draft assessment instruments meet required standards and specific workplace/candidate needs and record outcomes of checks

A vital aspect of assessment is ensuring that the assessment instruments are validated, so assessors can be sure they meet all the rules of evidence and principles of assessment.

Validation is a quality review process that involves checking that the assessment instrument produced valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgment to be made as to whether the requirements of the relevant aspects of the training package or accredited course have been met.



The VQF/AQTF Standards for RTOs require that they conduct a validation of assessment strategies by reviewing, comparing and evaluating the assessment processes, instruments and evidence contributing to judgments made by a range of assessors against the same standards.

Your role as an assessor requires you to participate in assessment validation processes where you collaborate with your colleagues (other trainers and administration staff), learners and industry or enterprise representatives to review the assessment processes that are implemented by the RTO. You must follow the assessment validation policies and procedures that have been developed for your individual workplace when participating in validation processes. You will find a detailed examination of validation processes in the Aspire learner guide for TAEASS403 *Participate in assessment validation*.

You can find out more about conducting validation at:

- ▶ www.asqa.gov.au/media-and-publications/conducting-validation1.html

Conduct a trial

An important component of quality assessment involves trialling draft assessment instruments to ensure they satisfy the rules of evidence; to identify potential risks that may lead to non-compliance with the RTO's VQF/AQTF obligations; and identify aspects of the assessment instrument that could impact negatively on candidates.

Trialling the draft instrument is an example of a risk-management approach. The following information outlines who should be involved in a trial.

Industry and enterprise representatives

RTOs are required to ensure that the assessment methods they implement are relevant to the needs of industry and enterprises. They must maintain partnerships with stakeholders who can provide advice on workforce skills, how competence 'looks' in the workplace and trends, and influences and innovations that impact on their industry or individual enterprises.

Arrange for representatives of this key stakeholder group to participate in a trial of assessment instruments your workplace has developed to review:

- ▶ the clarity of the instrument
- ▶ content accuracy in regard to equipment, technology, legislation and quality standards are referred to in the instrument
- ▶ identification of risks related to compliance and work health and safety relevance
- ▶ mapping to the unit of competency
- ▶ appropriateness to the industry and workplace culture.

Assessors

In order to demonstrate that the assessment tool will be used reliably by other assessors, you should involve several assessors in the trial process. Participation in this type of activity should be considered part of the ongoing professional development of assessors and may form evidence in a quality audit of the RTO's continuous improvement processes.

Pilot group

In order for the trial to gather data that can be used to evaluate whether the assessment instrument satisfies the performance evidence, you should assemble a pilot group that has similar characteristics to the target group (potential candidates). These similarities could relate to language, literacy and numeracy levels; education; socioeconomic background; and work experience. For example, it would be inappropriate to trial an instrument that is designed for summative assessment of Certificate II level competencies with a group of Diploma learners.

Candidates

Candidates who have used an assessment instrument previously can provide valuable feedback, particularly in regard to the instructions to candidates.

Record results of the trial

The goal in conducting the trial is to gather data you can use to evaluate whether the instrument achieves the following.

Check that the instruments are:

- ▶ cost effective to implement
- ▶ engaging and interesting to potential candidates
- ▶ able to produce evidence to satisfy the performance evidence and other assessment requirements
- ▶ appropriate to the characteristics of potential candidates
- ▶ equitable and inclusive
- ▶ able to produce evidence that addresses the purpose of assessment identified in the assessment plan
- ▶ able to be reported using descriptors that are relevant to key stakeholders.

Meet set criteria

A trial checklist can be used to confirm the assessment instrument meets set criteria. Ask your trainer for the 'Trial and review an assessment instrument' template from Aspire's *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

Once the trial of the draft instrument is completed, you should adjust the instrument to address any issues, gaps or problem areas that have been identified. Remember to retain the various draft versions of the assessment instrument in the RTO's record-keeping system as evidence of their continuous improvement processes. You may wish to conduct a trial of the revised instrument with a smaller pilot group to ensure the instrument satisfies the relevant criteria.

Example

Check and confirm that draft assessment instruments meet required standards and specific workplace/candidate needs and record outcomes of checks

Charles is a member of the learning and development team at a bank. He has been working with a team of instructional designers to develop a refresher course that is designed to inform staff of their compliance obligations. It has been a very big project and the team has struggled to reach their completion date.



Charles is responsible for developing the assessment instrument. He decides, in consultation with the team, to use multiple-choice questions as the assessment method.

Due to the time constraints and the bank's obligation to conduct refresher training before a particular date, Charles decides not to trial the assessment instrument.

The first group of assessment candidates to use the online multiple-choice assessment instrument do not achieve competency at the rate that had been expected. A significant number of candidates do not complete the multiple-choice quiz, complaining that they were not given adequate time. Informal feedback from candidates includes complaints that they did not understand how the information in the learning section of the course applied to their job role. Many candidates found the language used in the multiple-choice statements confusing and could not make a selection.

Charles and the team decide to postpone further assessment until the assessment instrument is revised and trialled with a pilot group that represents an appropriate sample of candidates. Charles realises that he should have trialled the assessment instrument before assessing candidates.

Summary

1. An assessment instrument is the specific questions, checklist or activity used to assess competence by the assessment method selected.
2. RTOs are audited to ensure they comply with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 and the VQF/AQTF's Conditions and Standards for Registration. During an audit, the audit team will examine the various documents that comprise the RTO's record-keeping system, including its assessment instruments.
3. Simple assessment instruments may include profiles of performance measures; templates and proformas; specific questions or activities; evidence and observation checklists; checklists to evaluate work samples; recognition portfolios; and candidate self-assessment materials.
4. You should analyse assessment instruments to see whether they are appropriate for your assessment purpose, or if they need to be modified to suit a specific assessment environment or the needs of a candidate.
5. Make sure it is clear when the assessment took place and who was involved. This can be done with dates and signatures of the assessor and the candidate. For third-party reports, include information about their job position and qualifications to demonstrate the validity and authenticity of records.
6. You may need to modify an assessment instrument following your analysis. Modifications to assessment instruments should be made in accordance with your workplace policies and procedures.
7. The process of writing instructions for using assessment instruments should be candidate-focused. Instructions should be clear and easily understood by all candidates. They should explain the purpose of the assessment, when and where it will take place, what they will have to do and the resources they will need.
8. Validation is a quality review process that involves checking that the assessment tool produced valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgment to be made as to whether the requirements of the relevant aspects of the training package or accredited course have been met.
9. An important component of quality assessment involves trialling draft assessment instruments to ensure they satisfy the rules of evidence. Trialling the draft instrument is an example of a risk-management approach.
10. As part of the assessment validation process or quality audit, you may be asked to supply information about the procedures you have implemented to trial draft assessment tools.

