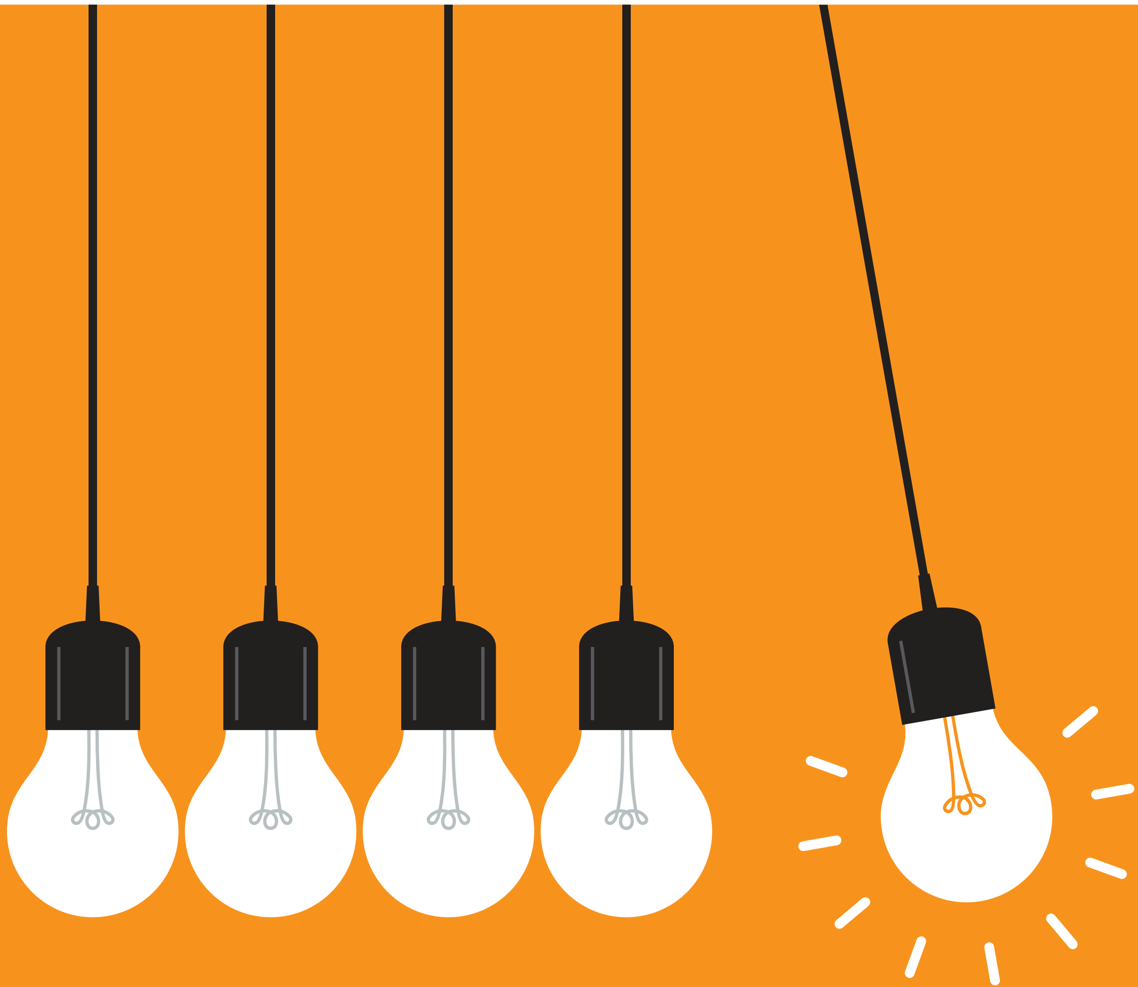
# TAEASS402
# Assess competence
Release 2



## Learner guide

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TAEASS402

# Assess competence

Release 2

**Learner guide**

Aspire Version 1.2

Version control and modification history

| Version | Release date | Modification |
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| Release 1, version 1.1 | January 2017 | First release |
| Release 2, version 1.2 | April 2017 | Updated to Release 2 |

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**TAEASS402 Assess competence Release 2**



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# Contents

# Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *TAEASS402 Assess competence*, 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 *Trainer's and assessor's* guide 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** | ▶ Accesses and interprets procedural and compliance documentation relevant to the assessment process<br>▶ Examines and evaluates assessment evidence |
| **Writing** | ▶ Completes workplace documentation accurately using appropriate language and following organisational requirements |
| **Oral communication** | ▶ Communicates information and assessment process requirements clearly, using techniques appropriate to the audience and environment<br>▶ Interacts appropriately with candidates to build rapport and understanding, and obtain specific information to support the assessment process |
| **Navigate the world of work** | ▶ Identifies, confirms and takes responsibility for adherence to legal and ethical requirements<br>▶ Recognises, and follows, explicit and implicit protocols and meets expectations associated with own role |
| **Interact with others** | ▶ Adjusts personal communication style in recognition of the values and experiences of others to build rapport<br>▶ Cooperates and collaborates with others, and contributes to activities requiring joint responsibility and accountability |
| **Get the work done** | ▶ Uses systematic, analytical processes in complex, non-routine situations, gathering information, and identifying and evaluating options against agreed criteria<br>▶ Organises work according to specific requirements, taking some responsibility for decisions regarding the format of information<br>▶ With guidance, reviews the effectiveness of solutions in relation to the set goals |

# 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: Prepare for the assessment | 1.1 Interpret assessment planning documentation and applicable organisational, legal and ethical requirements for conducting the assessment, and confirm with the relevant people | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 1.2 Access and interpret units of competency that are to be used as benchmarks for assessment, and the nominated assessment tools, to confirm the requirements for the evidence to be collected | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 1.3 Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and document any changes to the assessment instruments, where required | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 1.4 Determine opportunities for evidence-gathering in actual or simulated activities, through consultation with the candidate and relevant personnel | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 1.5 Conduct a candidate briefing and explain, discuss and agree on the details of the planned assessment | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 1.6 Arrange identified material and physical resource requirements | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 1.7 Identify any specialist support requirements for the assessment, and organise if necessary | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| Topic 2: Gather quality evidence | 2.1 Use agreed assessment methods and tools to gather, organise and document evidence in a format suitable for determining competence | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 2.2 Apply the principles of assessment and rules of evidence in gathering quality evidence | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |

| **Topic** | **Key outcomes** | **Rate your confidence in each section** |
|---|---|---|
| Topic 3: Support the candidate | 3.1 Discuss and guide candidates in gathering their own evidence to support the recognition of prior learning (RPL) | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 3.2 Use appropriate communication and interpersonal skills to develop a professional relationship with the candidate that reflects sensitivity to individual differences and enables two-way feedback | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 3.3 Make decisions on reasonable adjustments with the candidate, based on the candidate's needs and characteristics | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 3.4 Access specialist support, if required, in accordance with the assessment plan | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 3.5 Address any workplace health and safety (WHS) risk to a person or equipment immediately | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| Topic 4: Make the assessment decision | 4.1 Assess the collected evidence, and evaluate whether it reflects the evidence required to demonstrate competence | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 4.2 Use judgment to infer whether competence has been demonstrated, based on the available evidence | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 4.3 Make the assessment decision in line with agreed assessment procedures and according to the agreed assessment plan | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 4.4 Provide clear and constructive feedback to the candidate regarding the assessment decision, and clearly document follow-up, if required | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| Topic 5: Record and report the assessment decision | 5.1 Record assessment outcomes promptly and accurately | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 5.2 Complete and submit required assessment documentation, according to assessment procedures and confidentiality conventions | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 5.3 Inform other relevant parties of the assessment decision, according to confidentiality conventions | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |

| Topic | Key outcomes | Rate your confidence in each section |
|---|---|---|
| Topic 6: Review the assessment process | 6.1 Review the assessment process in consultation with candidates and other relevant people to improve future practice | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ Not confident |
| | 6.2 Document and record the review according to relevant assessment system policies and procedures | ☐ Confident<br>☐ Basic understanding<br>☐ 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:

- assessment of at least five candidates within the vocational education and training (VET) context against at least one endorsed or accredited unit of competency according to the organisation's assessment processes and practices
- using recognition of prior learning (RPL) processes in the assessment of at least one candidate (which may be one of the five candidates above)
- making reasonable adjustments in the assessment of at least one candidate.

The assessments must be undertaken under the supervision of a qualified assessor and cover an entire unit of competency for each candidate, including:

- the application of different assessment methods and instruments involving a range of activities and events
- using two-way communication and feedback with the candidate
- exercising judgment in making the assessment decision
- recording and reporting assessment outcomes in accordance with the assessment system and organisational, legal and ethical requirements
- reviewing the assessment process.

You will also need knowledge of:

- competency-based assessment, including:
  - VET as a competency-based system
  - how competency-based assessment differs from other types of assessment
  - competency standards as the basis of qualifications
  - structure and application of competency standards
  - the principles of assessment and how they are applied
  - the distinction between assessment tools and assessment instruments
  - the rules of evidence and how they are applied
  - the range of assessment purposes and assessment contexts, including RPL

  - different assessment methods, including suitability for gathering various types of evidence, suitability for the content of units, and resource requirements and associated costs
  - reasonable adjustments and when they are applicable
  - types and forms of evidence, including assessment instruments that are relevant to gathering different types of evidence used in competency-based assessment, including RPL
  - the training and assessment strategies, including policies and procedures established by the industry, organisation or training authority
- RPL policies and procedures established by the organisation
- cultural sensitivity and equity considerations in assessment activities
- current legislative requirements relevant to the assessor and the assessment process
- work health and safety (WHS) responsibilities associated with assessing competence, including:
  - requirements for reporting hazards and incidents
  - emergency procedures
  - procedures for the use of relevant personal protective equipment
  - the safe use and maintenance of relevant equipment
  - sources of WHS information.

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.<br>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

# Assess competence

## Competency-based assessment

Assessing another person's competence is an important responsibility that requires you to be accurate, fair, flexible and accountable. The more you know about and conduct assessment, the more confidence you will gain.

You can widen your knowledge and experience by:

- actively seeking guidance from experienced assessors
- joining a professional association
- attending assessment seminars and conferences
- reading assessment articles in journals
- participating in assessment validations
- joining online forums.

Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system is competency-based. This means that a person's competence is judged against set criteria. These are commonly the units of competency from an industry training package that indicate the performance criteria, skills and knowledge required by workers to competently undertake specific work tasks and activities. Alternatively, staff at an individual organisation may prepare their own performance standards and outline assessment strategies.

Assessment in a competency-based system is made against these established benchmarks and a person is considered either 'competent' or 'not yet competent' according to whether they have demonstrated they can meet the specified standards.

This is in contrast to norm-referenced assessment, in which candidates are graded against each other, rather than against performance standards or benchmarks. This type of assessment is the opposite of competency-based assessment and has no place in a competency-based system.

## Competency standards

Competency standards have been developed by relevant Service Skills Organisations (formerly by Industry Skills Councils) with industry stakeholders, including employers, unions, peak bodies, professional associations, regulatory bodies, RTOs and other relevant parties. They are packaged into a range of qualifications and presented as a training package.

As an assessor, you need to know how to read and interpret the information contained in the units, including the:

- unit descriptor
- application
- elements
- performance criteria
- foundation skills
- knowledge evidence
- performance evidence
- assessment conditions.

# Assessment

Assessment is a crucial part of any learning and development program as it informs the learner whether they have been successful in gaining the skills and knowledge required by the program they have undertaken.

Assessing competence involves gathering evidence from the candidate and judging whether it is sufficient, valid, current and authentic evidence of their competence to successfully undertake a particular task. These can be determined in the following ways:

- Sufficient – there is enough appropriate evidence to ensure all aspects of competency have been satisfied and competency can be repeatedly demonstrated.
- 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.

An assessment system and the processes involved must ensure no one is disadvantaged because of their age, gender; language, literacy, 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 by the VET Quality Framework, including the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

# VET policies and frameworks

RTOs must meet the requirements of the VET Quality Framework (VQF) or the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), where applicable. These policy documents are a set of quality assurance standards and conditions for training and assessment that RTOs must meet in order to deliver training and assessment services. They include the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) that defines the standards for regulated qualifications. You should be familiar with the *Users' guide to the Standards for registered training organisations 2015*, which explains an organisation's compliance obligations.

Other key framework documents include the training package and implementation guide information available from http://training.gov.au.

# An assessment process

Here is a typical assessment process. It is an example only. Make sure you are familiar with the process you are expected to follow.

1. Through an RTO, a candidate:
    - enrols in a specific course for a qualification
    - enrols to complete one or more units, but not a complete qualification, to receive a statement of attainment
    - applies to have their existing competencies recognised through a recognition of prior learning (RPL) process
    - applies to have their current competencies assessed to fulfil their licensing requirements.

2. The candidate gathers evidence of their competence and essential underpinning skills and knowledge.
3. A qualified assessor examines the evidence and makes a judgment as to whether the candidate has demonstrated that they can perform to the standard expected in the workplace. These standards of performance may be expressed as learning outcomes in an accredited course or established in industry/enterprise competency standards recorded in national training packages.
4. Records of the candidate's assessment outcomes are maintained by the RTO and reported to the candidate, with the opportunity for the candidate to appeal the decision.

## When can assessment occur?

Assessment can be undertaken during the learning program (formative assessment) or at the end of a learning program (summative assessment), or can be a combination of formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment lets the learner know how they are progressing and whether the delivery is suiting their learning style, while summative assessment evaluates the learner's final achievements.

Assessment can be carried out as an RPL process in which the candidate's previously obtained qualifications, work experience and life history are assessed, or as part of a recognition of current competency (RCC), in which a candidate has been deemed competent in the past, but now needs to be reassessed to ensure the competencies have been maintained and are current.

## What this unit covers

The unit of competency *TAEASS402 Assess competence* describes the skills and knowledge you need to assess the competence of a candidate. The candidates you assess may be working their way through a learning program, may have completed a qualification, or may wish to have their existing competencies recognised.

In this learner guide, you will learn how to:

- prepare for the assessment
- gather quality evidence
- support the candidate
- make the assessment decision
- record and report the assessment decision
- review the assessment process.

# Your job role

It is your role to interpret an assessment plan and conduct an assessment according to its intentions.

This learner guide assists you to develop the skills and knowledge required to assess competence in a range of assessment environments. For example:

- You may be employed as a trainer or assessor in an RTO, such as a TAFE, which provides training and assessment to learners who wish to gain nationally recognised qualifications. In this case, 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. In this case, assessment is the responsibility of the RTO, but is 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.

# Essential learning points

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

## Assessment plan

You need to have an assessment plan that records what is going to be assessed, and when, where and how the assessment is to take place. Being well prepared and organised helps you to ensure the assessment is contextualised to meet the individual needs of candidates and foresee any problems that may arise. RTO staff are responsible for preparing the assessment plan, but you may be asked to prepare one or have input into preparing one. When you first start assessing, it is a good idea to look at the assessment plans that have been prepared by more experienced people.

## Benchmarks for assessment

You will learn how to identify the criteria that the candidate is assessed against. In many instances these are competency standards from a training package, although they may be assessment criteria of course curriculum, performance specifications or product specifications.

Knowing how to interpret a competency standard is a crucial skill for assessors.

## Assessment tools

You will learn about the various instruments, and the procedures for gathering and interpreting evidence in accordance with designated assessment methods. You must follow the instruments and methods designated in the assessment plan, but it is important to know why these methods and instruments have been selected and why they are appropriate to the candidate and the situation.

## Specialist support

Assessment is not done in isolation and you may need to secure the services of a range of people to help you. You will learn the type of support that is available, such as online assessment activities for remote or isolated candidates and assessors, and how to call on the services of people such as specialist educators, interpreters, subject matter or safety experts, regulatory authorities or other assessors.

## Assessment methods

Assessors must be familiar with the particular techniques used to gather different types of evidence. In this learner guide, you will learn a range of methods, such as direct observation, structured activities, oral or written questioning, portfolios of evidence, review of products and third-party feedback.

## Individual differences

It is crucial to comply with access and equity requirements. You will learn how to identify and work with candidates with language, literacy and numeracy issues; a physical, mental or intellectual impairment; or a disability or a medical condition (such as arthritis, epilepsy, diabetes or asthma) that may impact on assessment. You will also learn how to make reasonable adjustments when learning difficulties, cultural images and perceptions, or religious and spiritual observances impact on the assessment.

## Feedback

Two-way feedback that is clear and constructive is an essential part of assessment. You will learn the importance of providing feedback before an assessment to confirm outcomes and ensure the candidate understands what is required. Feedback is also expected during and after the assessment to give the candidate the opportunity to ask questions and discuss future action.

## Consultation

An important part of assessment is the review component. You will learn how to consult with other assessors, your supervisor, RPL coordinators, subject specialists and language, literacy and numeracy experts to evaluate the assessment process and identify areas for improvement.

# Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

**1A** **Interpret assessment planning documentation, and organisational, legal and ethical requirements for conducting assessment**

**1B** **Access and interpret units of competency and the nominated assessment tools**

**1C** **Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and document changes to assessment instruments**

**1D** **Determine opportunities for evidence-gathering in consultation with the candidate and relevant personnel**

**1E** **Explain, discuss and agree on the details of the planned assessment**

**1F** **Arrange identified material and physical resource requirements**

**1G** **Identify and organise specialist support requirements for the assessment**

# Prepare for the assessment

Assessment, whether conducted formally or informally, is a crucial aspect of any learning program as it lets the learner know how they have performed.

In Australia, formal assessment is regulated by the VET Quality Framework. Registered training organisations (RTOs) providing national qualifications must have an effective assessment system with comprehensive policies and procedures to ensure they comply with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 and provide quality assessments.

Assessment also represents an important investment in time and effort on the part of candidates and their employers. Candidates expect that the RTO, which is responsible for judging their competence and awarding qualifications, supports them in gathering evidence that demonstrates their competence to perform at the standard prescribed in the units of competency that underpin competency-based training.

Effective assessment begins with thorough and careful planning. You need to consider what actions you are required to take to implement the RTO's quality training system.

# 1A Interpret assessment planning documentation, and organisational, legal and ethical requirements for conducting assessment

Your role as an assessor requires you to review a range of evidence presented by an assessment candidate. You must make a judgment as to whether this is sufficient, valid, current and reliable evidence of their competence.

Quality assessments are based on rigorous planning processes to ensure that all those involved in assessing a candidate know what they are assessing and what is expected of them. The basis for their work is the assessment plan.

Participation in assessment involves a commitment of resources by the RTO, the candidate and, in many cases, the candidate's workplace. Being well organised and prepared helps to ensure these resources (such as time, personnel and materials) are used effectively.

## Understand the assessment plan

Your starting point to prepare for assessment is to source the relevant assessment plan that outlines the assessment of each unit. The overall assessment strategy will have come from the RTO's training and assessment strategy document.

An assessment plan documents each step in the process of assessing a candidate's performance. The assessment plan has usually been prepared using a template or form that has been developed for this specific purpose in your workplace, and may be stored in a printed or electronic format.

You need to be able to read and interpret the information correctly. If you are uncertain about any aspect of the assessment plan, such as terminology used or a particular method you are unfamiliar with, ask your supervisor or talk to an experienced assessor.

In some circumstances you may be asked to develop the assessment plan yourself or assist in its development. Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Assessment plan'; Aspire has included relevant templates in its *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

While assessment plan formats may differ between organisations, an assessment plan usually includes the following components:

- Profile of the target group
- Purpose of assessment
- What is to be assessed
- Evidence required
- When assessment is to take place
- Where assessment is to take place
- How assessment is to take place

# Profile of the target group

The description of the target group is usually part of the training and assessment strategy document. In some instances, the assessment plan will also include a profile of the target candidates. This information ensures you are familiar with the needs of the target group so no candidate is disadvantaged in any way. Sometimes a target candidate profile is prepared as a separate document to the assessment plan, allowing you to match the profiles of learners to the plan.

| **Profile of the target candidates includes:** |
| --- |
| ▶ their position; for example, trainee, apprentice, worker, classroom learner |
| ▶ the purpose of their assessment; for example, assessment that will occur in the workplace if the target group is employed or participating in a work placement |
| ▶ the characteristics that may impact on the assessment, such as having language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) issues, a disability, being in a remote location, being out of the workforce and not undergoing assessment for some time |
| ▶ any adjustments that have been made to satisfy access and equity issues; for example, people with literacy issues may be asked to talk about a photo of them working or a project they have completed instead of writing an explanation. |

# Purpose of assessment

The assessment plan may indicate why the candidate is being assessed.

You need to be clear about the purpose of the assessment to identify the relevant evidence to gather and ensure the appropriate assessment instruments and methods for the candidate’s specific learning and workplace context are used.

Reasons for assessing performance include:

- recognising existing or prior competence of candidates for recruitment, promotion or classification, or as a component of the organisation’s performance appraisal system
- satisfying licensing or regulatory requirements.

## What is to be assessed?


The assessment plan indicates the criteria that the learner's competence is measured against. Competency-based assessment involves systematically gathering and interpreting a candidate's evidence, then making a judgment on their performance based on benchmarks such as industry competency standards and/or learning outcomes. It describes the skills and knowledge that is assessed to judge whether the candidate can perform a specific work activity to the skill level required, based on the information in the unit of competency and the implementation guides for the training package. Section 1B contains further information about the standards that are used to benchmark candidates' performance for assessment purposes.

Benchmarks for performance may be a unit or cluster of units of competency from an industry training package that indicates the specific performance criteria, skills and knowledge required by workers to competently undertake specific work tasks and activities.

## Evidence required

Candidates should understand the purpose and features of evidence. Evidence provides proof that a candidate can demonstrate their competency in the specific job tasks by using the required skills and knowledge, applying problem-solving skills, working well with others and following workplace policies and procedures. They need to do this over a period of time and in different situations.

The assessment plan should describe:

- the evidence that needs to be collected to prove that a person is competent based on the benchmark
- how this evidence is collected
- what is needed to ensure the evidence meets the rules of evidence – being valid, sufficient, authentic and current.

## Rules of evidence

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

| **Sufficient** |
| --- |
| Sufficiency requires that evidence of the learner's competency is demonstrated across all aspects of the unit of competency and has been demonstrated repeatedly. In some cases it will be difficult to gather sufficient evidence using a summative assessment instrument and the assessor should make arrangements to gather supplemental information. This may involve requesting a third-party report where the learner is observed performing a specific skill. |

| **Valid** |
|---|
| Assessment is valid when the process is sound and assesses what it claims to assess.<br>Validity requires that the evidence must cover the skills and required knowledge, 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. |
| **Current** |
| Currency relates to the age of the evidence presented by a candidate to demonstrate they are still competent. Competency requires demonstration of current performance; thus, the evidence collected must be either from the present or the very recent past. |
| **Authentic** |
| You must be convinced that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work and that supporting documents are genuine. |

## Types of evidence

There are two main forms of evidence that are collected from candidates: direct evidence and indirect evidence. These are explained with examples in the following section. Supplementary evidence is requested from a candidate under circumstances where the evidence they have provided is insufficient on its own. Your role may be to gather the evidence and document or prepare it appropriately for the qualified assessor.

| **Direct evidence** |
|---|
| This is evidence that can be observed or witnessed by the assessor. This could include observation of workplace performance, oral questioning, demonstration or a challenge test. |
| **Indirect evidence** |
| This is evidence of a candidate's work that can be reviewed or examined by the assessor. This could include finished products, written assignments or tests or a portfolio of previous work performed. |
| **Supplementary evidence** |
| Supplementary evidence is additional evidence presented to assessors to support a candidate's claim of competence. This could include reports from supervisors, colleagues and/or clients, testimonials from employers, work diaries and evidence of training. For example, the candidate provides a written report or answers questions designed to address the knowledge evidence requirements of the unit of competency. |

## When assessment is to take place


The assessment plan should include information about when assessment takes place or how long it lasts for. This may be dependent on the specific needs of the candidate. For example,  a workplace assessment may be scheduled to allow enough time for students to practise the required skills in a workplace environment.

Knowing this information helps you to explain the process to candidates, either when delivering learning or at the beginning of the assessment process. You may need to discuss arrangements with the candidate's supervisor, training and assessment manger, or the HR manager, especially if the candidate may need to be absent from work to undertake assessment.

## Where assessment is to take place

The location of the assessment impacts on the resources used, the people involved and whether special assessment methods are employed (such as role-plays or appropriate case studies) to satisfy the evidence requirements of the individual unit of competency or training package implementation guides.

The assessment plan identifies where the assessment is conducted.

Assessment may take place:

- in the candidate's workplace
- off the job; for example, in a computer laboratory to assess software skills
- in a group learning environment
- in a simulated work environment, such as a 'model office'
- online
- at a number of locations (combination/blended assessment).

## How assessment will take place

The method of assessment and assessment instruments to be used are a crucial element of the assessment plan. You must understand the assessment process that the candidate is participating in so that you can provide support, information and guidance when necessary.

The plan must clearly describe how the evidence is gathered. Assessment methods are discussed in more detail in Topic 2.

Methods for assessment may include:

- Observation
- Structured activities
- Questioning
- Portfolios
- Presentations
- Third-party feedback

## Required resources and personnel

The plan should indicate the resources required, such as access to tools, machinery, personal protective equipment (PPE), computers, stationery items and checklists.

The plan should indicate others who may be involved in the assessment, such as trainers, assessors, technical experts, disability support staff or workplace supervisors. Their contribution and responsibilities must be clearly described.

## Confirm the plan with relevant personnel

Make sure you are familiar with each component of the assessment plan. You may need to discuss specific aspects with relevant people to ensure you have interpreted the information correctly or can advise them of their responsibilities.

The parties involved may include:

- the RTO manager
- other assessors
- the candidate's workplace supervisor
- trainers
- technical experts
- disability support staff.

You need to consider what information each of these parties needs in regard to assessment and the most appropriate method for distributing this information to them. An example is provided.

| Support requirements |
| --- |
| The plan may provide for adjustments to be made to assist the candidate, such as providing them with a carer, adaptive technology or additional time to complete an assessment – you need to liaise with support staff to confirm these arrangements and prepare for the modification to be implemented. |
| **Online submission** |
| If assessment is to use a combination of online technologies, you need to confirm with the candidate's supervisor the type of evidence that can be collected electronically and methods to gather additional (supplementary) evidence as required. |
| **Reasonable adjustment** |
| If the plan indicates that LLN issues may impact negatively on an assessment, you need to discuss with the candidate's supervisor appropriate ways to ensure the candidate is not disadvantaged. |

# Confirm organisational requirements

You need to understand and confirm the organisational requirements you have to comply with when preparing for assessment. To do this, you need to be able to confidently interpret the information available in your workplace policies and procedures to identify your obligations and responsibilities.

Some candidates may apply to have their prior skills and knowledge recognised. You need to be familiar with your organisation's procedures for RPL. This guide discusses the steps that are followed for a typical RPL process in Topic 3.

You should ensure you are familiar with the following important aspects of the organisation's assessment system and quality management. Your supervisor or manager should explain these requirements in an induction and provide access to written documents.

| Organisational requirements | Application |
|---|---|
| RPL policies and procedures | If you are preparing for an RPL assessment, be aware of the procedures you need to follow and your obligations to the candidate. |
| Reasonable adjustment | It is the assessment agency's responsibility to ensure that no one is disadvantaged because of their age, gender, physical or cognitive abilities, or cultural background. You need to check the candidate profile to see that reasonable adjustments have been recognised in the assessment plan. |
| Work health and safety (WHS) | Ensure that the plans for assessment meet WHS requirements. These may include that the assessment environment is accessible, free from noise and has sufficient light, that personal protective clothing is available; or that a technical expert is available to supervise the assessment. |
| Recording assessment | Confirm how you are expected to record and report assessment outcomes. |
| Assessment validation | Check that the assessment instruments and methods you will use have been recently validated to ensure they are reliable and valid, and produce the required evidence. |
| Complaints and appeals regarding assessment outcomes | Confirm that you understand the process you need to follow to inform candidates of the organisation's complaints and appeals process, and what to do if a candidate complains about the assessment process. |
| Human resources information | Be familiar with the policies and procedures that impact on conducting the assessment, such as allowances for using a car, and conducting the assessment outside business hours. There may also by guidelines on how to brief workplace supervisors on assessment. |

## Confirm legal and ethical requirements


In addition to the requirements established in the Standards for RTOs 2015,  RTOs must ensure that their systems and employees fulfil their obligations in regard to legislation and regulations. The following information summarises the legal and ethical requirements that underpin quality training and assessment practices.

## Copyright and plagiarism

In Australia, copyright law is governed by the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), which is designed to protect creative works from being used without the owner's agreement.

In an assessment context, this means that you have to ensure compliance in two areas:

**When sourcing materials**

You must comply with the Copyright Act when sourcing training and assessment material. RTOs should have procedures in place that are designed to ensure trainers and assessors comply with the Copyright Act when they source training and assessment material. Most RTOs use respected and reliable product developers to ensure that the assessment materials they use are original and do not breach this Act. It is important to check the copyright information for assessment instruments that you source from publishers to confirm how the assessment instrument may be used and how widely it may be shared.

**Materials submitted by candidates**

You need to check that material submitted from a candidate as evidence is their own work and does not contravene the Copyright Act. RTOs invest in tools such as specialised software that they use to detect plagiarism in evidence submitted for assessment by candidates. The RTO's policy in regard to referencing and plagiarism must be included in the assessment instructions given to candidates and in the RTO's general assessment policy.

## Licences for copyright material


In some instances, you do not need to obtain the owner's permission to use or reproduce material. Be aware if this applies to any assessment material that is identified in the assessment plan.

Statutory licences allow RTOs to copy protected material for defined purposes without the need to obtain the copyright owner's permission. The statutory licence allows educational institutions to make copies of copyright works for educational purposes. Limits apply to the extent of copying. Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) is an Australian copyright management company appointed by the federal government as the official collecting society to administer these licences. CAL also manages various voluntary licences with a range of organisations and corporations, allowing them to use copyright material for a fee.

Individual publishers and writers may also offer licences for copying and distributing their copyright material.

## Privacy and confidentiality

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, and how it is stored and ultimately archived or destroyed by the organisation. For example, you must check that confidential information, such as client information or commercially sensitive material, is included in workplace products.

## Duty of care and WHS

Before undertaking any assessment activity, you should conduct a WHS risk assessment. This does not necessarily have to be an involved, formal process; during the planning stage you must identify the hazards that are present in the assessment environment and take appropriate steps to minimise or eliminate them. You should bring any concerns to the attention of the candidate's workplace supervisor, HR manager or health and safety representative (HSR). Your workplace policies and procedures should explain how to report and control risks, both in your workplace and when conducting off-site assessments.

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.

You should also ensure you receive appropriate training to use any specialised PPE, technology or other materials during the assessment process.

## Anti-discrimination

RTOs must comply with anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation, both in 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.

RTOs develop workplace policies and procedures that are designed to promote access and equity in delivery and assessment for their clients.

Be aware of how you can support the RTO and client organisations in their policies of promoting equitable access to learning and assessment opportunities. You should aim to promote cultural inclusivity in your own workplace, in group learning environments and when assessing clients in their workplace.

Example

### Interpret assessment planning documentation and organisational, legal and ethical requirements for conducting the assessment

The format of the assessment plan may differ between organisations. The following example shows how an assessment plan may look for a group assessment. This assessment plan has been developed for units of competency from BSB31215 Certificate III in Library and Information Services.

Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Assessment plan'.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Assessment Plan</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Unit code/s and title/s of competency: BSBLIB303 Provide multimedia support and BSBWHS302 Apply knowledge of WHS legislation in the workplace</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Training organisation name: Respected Training</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Purpose of assessment/s: For newly enrolled students to obtain a qualification</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">RPL assessment: No applicants in this group</td></tr>
<tr><td>Target group details (candidates)</td><td>See candidate profile notes (attached)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Candidates' names and contact details (add list if applicable)</td><td>See attached list</td></tr>
<tr><td>Names and contact details of assessor/s</td><td>Amy Reynolds<br>amyreynolds@plan.com</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other party details (e.g. workplace supervisor), if applicable</td><td>n/a</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date, time of assessment/s</td><td>10 weeks. Assessment in week 11.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Assessment conditions<br>See individual units of competency:<br>Assessment must be conducted in a safe environment where evidence gathered demonstrates consistent performance of typical activities experienced by individuals carrying out WHS duties in the workplace and include access to:<br>▶ organisational policies, standard operating procedures, procedures and plans with information on compliance requirements<br>▶ relevant acts, regulations, codes of practice, licensing requirements and standards<br>▶ guidance materials and alerts issued by the relevant WHS regulator<br>▶ relevant WHS data files<br>▶ appropriate office equipment and resources.<br>Assessors must satisfy NVR/AQTF assessor requirements.<br>Assessment must be conducted in a safe environment where evidence gathered demonstrates consistent performance of typical activities experienced in the library – multimedia technology field of work and include access to:<br>▶ current range of multimedia equipment, programs and associated software applications<br>▶ audiovisual equipment.<br>Assessors of this unit must satisfy the requirements for assessors in applicable VET legislation, frameworks and/or standards.</td></tr>
</table>

| |
|---|
| **Location details**<br>Group learning environment conducted at RTO premises |
| **Methods of assessment**<br>Sample products |
| **Evidence requirements**<br>Candidates work in teams of three to create a website detailing the WHS practices that are to be followed in the workplace. Documents from the workplace or work placement are to be used to develop the website and the downloadable PDF booklet.<br>Layout of two finished products (website) and WHS book. |
| **Assessment instruments**<br>Products (2): website and PDF booklet |
| **Methods of submission (if applicable)**<br>Candidate to supply: hard-copy booklet and internet link for website<br>Assessor to supply: n/a |
| **Resources required**<br>Access to workstation, application software, printer, organisation style guide, bank of images and documents containing relevant WHS information (see assessment conditions from units of competency) |
| **Reasonable adjustment:** Reasonable adjustment includes providing additional time. |
| **Ready for assessment declaration**<br>I confirm that the purpose and procedures of this assessment have been clearly explained to me. I have been consulted about any special needs I might have in relation to the assessment process. The criteria to be used for this assessment have been discussed with me, as have the consequences and possible outcomes of the assessment.<br>I have accessed and understand general assessment information as provided by my training organisation.<br>I have been given fair notice of the date, time, venue and other arrangements for this assessment. I have completed a self-assessment of my performance of the skills and knowledge for this unit and confirm that I am ready for assessment. |
| Candidate signature: |
| Date: |

# Activity 1

This activity is designed to provide you with an opportunity to practise interpreting an assessment plan and identifying the organisational, legal and ethical requirements for conducting assessment with relevant people.

1. Use an assessment plan you have sourced or the example assessment plan provided to complete this table.

| **Assessment plan** | **Summary** |
|---|---|
| What is to be assessed? | |
| When is assessment to take place? | |
| Where is assessment to take place? | |
| How is assessment to take place? | |

2. Review the assessment plan used above to complete this table, indicating how the RTO's organisational, legal and ethical requirements have been met. You may need to access the RTO's assessment framework, policies and procedures, links to legislation, etc.

| **Framework of organisational, legal and ethical requirements** | **Workplace policies and procedures you have to follow** |
|---|---|
| VQF/AQTF | |
| Copyright and plagiarism/licensing | |
| Privacy and confidentiality | |
| Recording information | |
| Duty of care | |
| Anti-discrimination | |
| Workplace relations | |
| Industrial awards and enterprise agreements | |

**Click to complete Activity 1**

# 1B Access and interpret units of competency and the nominated assessment tools

As discussed in the overview and introduction, the foundation of Australia's VET system is competency-based training. This approach relies on outcomes that are judged against specific standards established in the various units of competency that comprise training packages, or the learning outcomes of an accredited course. These standards (commonly referred to as benchmarks) describe the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace.


This section outlines the process of identifying the benchmarks you are required to use to judge the candidate's competence. It will help you to develop the skills and knowledge you need to competently implement the assessment tool prepared by the RTO so that you can gather and evaluate evidence, and report and record outcomes.

## Types of assessment

Assessment occurs when a candidate's ability to meet performance criteria is judged. While an understanding of evidence requirements is crucial to developing and validating assessments, in VET the term 'competency-based assessment' is used more often than the term 'evidence-based assessment'.

### Criterion-referenced assessment and standards-based assessment

These types of assessment assess against fixed criteria or standards. Fixed standards or performance criteria are a set of established benchmarks, which could include:

- units of competency from relevant training packages
- national assessment requirements 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.

### Norm-referenced assessment

Norm-referenced assessment judges candidates against others in their cohort. Those with the best performance receive the highest grades. Norm-referenced assessment is not suitable for use in competency-based training as it does not measure a person's performance against a standard or criterion.

**Formative assessment**

Formative assessment is the term used to describe assessment conducted throughout the learning process. These can include the activities you provide learners with during each session to allow them to practise skills or apply knowledge, or can include discrete tasks that learners need to successfully complete before they can move on to the next stage of learning.

**Summative assessment**

Summative assessment is used to determine the learner's skills and knowledge in a comprehensive manner (i.e. it will take into consideration the entire learning program rather than a single part of it). Summative assessment is the final assessment that an assessor will use to determine the learner's competence or successful completion of the unit, generally at the very end of a learning program.

## Competency-based assessment

In a VET environment, assessment is competency-based. This means that a person's competence is judged against set criteria. These are commonly the units of competency from an industry training package that indicate the performance criteria, and skills and knowledge required by workers to competently undertake specific work tasks and activities. Alternatively, staff at an organisation may prepare their own performance standards and outline assessment strategies.

Assessment candidates are judged holistically as to whether the cadidate is 'competent' or 'not yet competent'. In some cases there are steps to demonstrating competency; for example, individual parts of an assessment tool, such as a questionnaire, may be found to be 'satisfactory' or 'not satisfactory'.

## Judgments in competency-based assessment

Assessment candidates are judged holistically as to whether they are 'competent' or 'not yet competent'. In the lead-up to demonstrating competency, individual parts of an assessment tool, such as a questionnaire, may be found to be 'satisfactory' or 'not satisfactory'.

Competency-based assessment involves a qualified assessor:

- collecting evidence of competence to satisfy the assessment requirements of a unit of competency
- reviewing a range of evidence presented by the candidate that demonstrates their competence, skills and knowledge
- meeting the principles of assessment, including reliability by various assessors, in i.e. judgments are consistent when reviewing the same type of evidence
- making a judgment as to whether the evidence the candidate has provided is sufficient, valid, current and authentic
- ensuring that the candidate has demonstrated they can perform to the standard expected in the workplace over a number of occasions
- recording the candidate's assessment outcomes and reporting them to the candidate.

## Use benchmarks

A key component of planning for assessment is identifying the specific benchmarks you are required to use to judge the candidate's competence. The benchmarks identify the type of evidence you need to collect. You may be asked to assess the candidate's performance against the learning outcomes or performance criteria that are identified in competency standards or course curricula. You should refer to your workplace policies and procedures for information that helps you to determine the benchmarks you need to use for assessment.

In all assessment, you need to ensure the candidate satisfies the dimensions of competency.

To satisfy the dimensions of competency, the candidate must be assessed:

- completing a work activity
- demonstrating their ability to manage multiple tasks
- using problem-solving skills
- working well with others
- following workplace policies and procedures.

## Units of competency

All units of competency follow a set format that provides trainers and assessors with the information they need to prepare and conduct their training and assessment. You need to be familiar with this format and know where to find the information that guides the collection of evidence.

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 that the learner must already be competent in 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 and 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 work 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 (it is quite different from the range statement previously used in older units of competency). |
| Unit mapping information | This field specifies the code and title of any equivalent unit of competency. |
| Links | This field provides a link to the relevant 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. |
| 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, timeframes and assessor requirements. |

# Course curriculum

RTOs may be asked to assess competence for employees in specific workplaces. The RTO will liaise with relevant parties in the organisation (such as frontline managers, training and development managers, HR managers and HSRs) to develop a course of learning and development activities that are designed to achieve the learning outcomes relevant to the specific work context. Large RTOs, such as TAFEs, also develop courses that learners may enrol in to achieve qualifications and statements of attainment. The course documents list the individual core and elective units of competency offered to learners and the relevant learning outcomes. The course document also identifies the performance evidence, resources the learner requires for assessment, assessment methods and details of how their competence is reported.

Course documents that describe delivery and assessment strategies are referred to as ‘curriculum’. In some cases, curriculum is developed to suit a specific context; the RTO includes details in the course curricula of how they intend to contextualise learning and assessment to suit the needs of this particular group of learners.

# Use assessment tools

An assessment tool provides an overview of the entire assessment process and includes all the information and procedures an assessor needs to guide them when preparing for assessment. The components of the assessment tool must be incorporated into the assessment plan (as outlined in Section 1). Make sure you understand the following elements of the assessment tool.

### What is an assessment tool?

An assessment tool is used to guide the collection of quality evidence in the assessment process. It is a term that encompasses:

- the specific instruments for collecting evidence (for example, templates, questions, evidence checklists and recognition portfolios)
- assessment methods (for example, observation, projects and presentations)
- the procedures to be followed in conducting the assessment (for example, instructions to the assessor and the candidate).

### An assessment tool also includes the following components:

- the learning or unit/s of competency to be assessed
- the target group
- the 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).

This term also takes in the administration, recording and reporting requirements, and may address a cluster of competencies as applicable for holistic assessment.

# Quality assessment tools

The following table outlines the key components of a quality assessment tool. You can read more about the development of quality assessment tools at:

- www.asqa.gov.au/verve/_resources/Guide_to_developing_assessment_tools.pdf

| Areas | Components of a quality assessment tool |
|---|---|
| **Assessment context** | A description of the target group and purpose of assessment.<br>A description of the characteristics of the candidate that may impact on the assessment, such as language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) levels, age, education and work experience.<br>A description of the learning environment, such as the workplace, classroom or online. |
| **Competency mapping** | A description of the relationship between individual parts of the assessment instrument and the unit of competency. You must demonstrate the links between components of the assessment and the elements, performance criteria, foundation skills, required knowledge and the assessment requirements identified in the unit of competency. |

| Areas | Components of a quality assessment tool |
|---|---|
| **Materials and resources required** | Outlines any materials and resources that may be required to complete the assessment. |
| **Tasks to be administered** | 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.<br>The assessment method must be appropriate to collect the required evidence; for example, direct observation, structured activities or oral questioning. See 'Reasonable adjustment' in the table. |
| **Evidence required** | 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 of completed courses. |
| **Information to the assessor** | This information includes clear and comprehensive instructions for conducting the assessment, the resources the assessor may need to organise and how to contextualise the unit of competency.<br>It gives 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, and the time limits or number of attempts the candidate may make of a particular aspect of a task or activity.<br>It also includes instructions for saving, filing and storing assessment material and results. |
| **Decision-making rules** | Includes the rules that the assessor will follow in judging competence. |
| **Reasonable adjustment** | 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. Adjustments are considered reasonable if they still allow for a valid and reliable assessment within the resource capabilities of the RTO. The assessment must satisfy the assessment requirements specified in relevant units of competency. |
| **Recording requirements** | The type of information that will be recorded in regard to the outcomes of assessment, including how that information will be stored. |
| **Information to the candidate** | A specific task or activity designed to produce quality evidence that the candidate must complete and present to the assessor for a judgment of their competence to be made.<br>It includes clear and accurate instructions relating to how the candidate should complete the assessment activity. |

## Unpack a unit of competency


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, required knowledge and the assessment conditions for the relevant training package. The evidence required by assessors should be drawn from a range of sources. The evidence may be collected by the assessor only, by the assessor and the candidate, or by 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.

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

## Choose assessment methods

You may find it helpful to prepare a mind map as you plan what and how you will gather evidence. These maps give a visual representation of your ideas, or reflections on a specific topic or statement. Develop the mind map by writing the topic or statement in the centre of the map; for example, 'Opportunities to gather evidence'. Write your ideas, beliefs, suggestions or responses to the topic as spokes or text bubbles off this central idea; for example, simulated activity, portfolio, observation at work.

Assessment methods are discussed in more detail in Topic 2.

Assessment methods may include:

- direct observation
- structured activities
- oral and written questioning
- portfolios
- third-party feedback.

## Target group, context and assessment conditions

Be aware of candidates' characteristics, such as their LLN levels, age, education and work experience. This may impact on the way you gather the evidence so you can meet individual requirements.

Confirm the purpose for the assessment so you can highlight the specific evidence requirements; for example, for an RPL process.

Confirm the assessment conditions that may impact on the evidence you receive and the way it is collected. For example, assessment conditions may state that assessment must occur in a workplace.

Assessment conditions include:

- where the assessment will take place (on the job or in a simulated workplace)
- how it will take place (for example, by observation, asking questions or submitting a portfolio of evidence)
- the time limits for assessment activities
- the amount of supervision permitted
- the resources required.

# Evidence criteria

Check the list of evidence in the assessment plan to confirm what is needed to demonstrate competency. Evidence criteria are the decision-making rules you will follow in judging competence – ensure these are clearly defined.

Knowing the acceptable measures promotes reliability in judging competence as all assessors are judging the evidence using the same criteria. In addition, the candidate knows how they will be judged and this supports them to prepare appropriate material for assessment.

You should ensure that:

- the benchmark performance level is listed on observation checklists
- model solutions are provided
- assessment instructions list a minimum number of documents produced
- the evidence is current
- the candidate is permitted to receive feedback, then resubmit the evidence and still be judged as competent.

# Principles of assessment

Judgments on competency should be able to be applied consistently by all assessors. Assessment judgments made by various assessors in relation to candidates in a range of contexts must be consistent, valid and reliable. These are referred to as the principles of assessment.

When developing all the assessment tools, you need to ensure the principles of assessment are met.

Quality assessments must be:

- **Fair** – assessments should not discriminate or disadvantage the candidate.
- **Flexible** – assessments must meet the candidate's needs and include an appropriate range of assessment methods.
- **Valid** – assessments must assess the required skills and knowledge of the unit/s of competency.
- **Reliable** – there should be common interpretation of the assessments.

Example

### Access and interpret units of competency used as benchmarks for assessment and the nominated assessment tools

The following example shows how an assessment tool has been designed to gather quality evidence that an assessor can use to judge competence.

Miranda has just started work as an assessor. She has been asked to assess a candidate in the unit *CHCDIS004 Communicate using augmentative and alternative communication strategies* from the CHC Community Services Training Package. The candidate is a mature- age person with well-developed language, literacy and numeracy skills.

Miranda knows what is expected of her and immediately checks the competency standard, assessment requirements, assessment instruments, methods and instructions to ensure that quality evidence is gathered to enable her to make a sound judgment on the candidate's competence.

She accesses and interprets the unit of competency, and reads the elements and performance criteria to check the criteria that she will be judging competence against. This also helps her to identify where she can contextualise the assessment.

She accesses and interprets the performance evidence for the unit and sees that the learner must provide the following evidence: develop effective augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) strategies for at least one person with complex communication needs.

She identifies that in the assessment conditions, it outlines the following:

'Skills must have been demonstrated in the disabilities workplace with the addition of simulations and scenarios where the full range of contexts and situations have not been provided in the workplace. These are situations relating to emergency or unplanned procedures where assessment in these circumstances would be unsafe, impractical or threatens the dignity of the person with disability.

'The following conditions must be met for this unit:

- access to AAC devices
- access to individualised plans and any equipment outlined in the plan
- access to relevant organisation policies and procedures relating to AAC.

'The candidate must demonstrate their skills with at least one person with a communication disability.'

She reads the learning activities for this unit, to make sure they are designed to provide an opportunity for the learner to apply the skills and knowledge that underpin each area of learning, and to assist them in gathering evidence that they may submit for assessment. She sees that the learning activities are a combination of written questions, reacting to case studies and preparing work samples. She decides to also prepare some questions to ask orally and a situation in which to observe the candidate. There is opportunity to adjust and contextualise the assessments.

Miranda checks the final assessment activity for this unit. She sees that it includes:

- an observation checklist, which is designed for the candidate to gather evidence in the workplace to show they are competent to perform the performance evidence of the unit
- a third-party report, which is required to verify the assessment done under the supervision of third person
- required knowledge questions and an activity to ensure that quality evidence is gathered on the candidate's ability to apply the knowledge that is identified in the unit as essential to the process of assessing competence
- the opportunity to present a portfolio of evidence.

Miranda checks the instructions with the candidate to ensure they are clear and unambiguous.

# Activity 2

Read the case study, then complete the tasks that follow.

Note: you may wish to discuss with your trainer whether you may modify this activity so that you can use a time when you have assisted a candidate to apply for recognition in your workplace rather than using the case study.

## Case study

Your RTO has been engaged to provide training in teamwork for an organisation's staff. You have been assigned responsibility for assessing the candidate's skills and knowledge for teamwork. The majority of staff will undertake training before being assessed.

Use the internet to obtain a copy of a unit of competency that incorporates benchmarks for teamwork from a training package that is relevant to your current RTO work context (visit training.gov.au).

1. Read and interpret the unit of competency and identify the assessment requirements.

2. What is the purpose of assessment in this case?

3. Describe the context of assessment.

4. Identify the assessment guidelines (if available) in the implementation guides that would apply to this case.

5. Summarise the assessment tool/s that you would use to conduct assessment for staff who are undertaking training.

**Click to complete Activity 2**

# 1C Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and document changes to assessment instruments

The foundation of competency-based training and assessment is real work activity. The work performed in actual workplaces does not usually fall into discrete categories that reflect individual units of competency. Rather, a combination of elements or whole units of competency represent the whole job role. The RTO's assessment policy should encourage assessors to invest time in identifying and exploring opportunities to integrate units of competency into a holistic assessment activity.

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. The assessor forms a picture of how a competent worker would perform a whole work role or function, then selects the most logical and time-efficient way in which to gather evidence for the candidate to demonstrate competency by combining the relevant elements or units to form a comprehensive assessment activity. This is sometimes referred to as co-assessment. In some cases, a number of elements within a unit of competency can be combined to be assessed holistically.

## Skill sets

As a professional assessor you need to have a sound understanding of the implementation guides of the training packages that your RTO assesses. The developers have identified units of competency that together represent whole work activities and grouped them to form a skill set. Skill sets offer an opportunity for integrated assessment.

For example, the BSB Business Services Training Package identifies four units in the *BSBSS00063 Team leader skill set* that lend themselves to an integrated assessment:

- *BSBLDR401 Communicate effectively as a workplace leader*
- *BSBLDR402 Lead effective workplace relationships*
- *BSBLDR403 Lead team effectiveness*
- *BSBMGT402 Implement operational plan*

These may be combined into one assessment activity that might include a project, observation or third-party feedback.

## Implementation guides

You should also check the implementation guides for advice on opportunities to integrate assessment for units of competency. These documents provide a lot of information, including information and guidance on skill sets, mapping and contextualisation. In many cases, the training package developers have recommended co-assessment with other units relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role.

Be careful in implementing integrated assessment as you need to ensure that you gather evidence to satisfy the performance evidence and other assessment requirements for each of the included units of competency.

Your RTO may have a policy of delivering training for integrated units of competency. You need to identify:

- what units are to be delivered together and co-assessed
- what elements within a unit of competency can be delivered and assessed holistically.

## Integrate units of competency

Units of competency are co-delivered because they represent a whole work activity and provide an appropriate opportunity for integrated assessment.

It is important to remember that you do not need to integrate every performance criterion from clustered units of competency. You may decide to integrate individual performance criteria from several units into one assessment instrument and use separate assessment instruments to gather evidence of remaining performance criteria from each unit. For example, you may identify that several units in a skill set include performance criteria that require the candidate to perform a risk assessment. You could develop an assessment instrument that instructs the candidate to perform a risk assessment for a project that is being implemented in their workplace. The remaining performance criteria in each unit that do not relate to risk assessment would then each be assessed using separate assessment instruments.

After deciding on those units of competency that you intend to integrate, you may choose to check the RTO's assessment bank for the assessment instruments that are currently used to assess the individual units. Analyse the existing assessment instruments and decide if they are able to be revised for integrated assessment or whether new integrated assessment tools need to be developed. You may find it helpful to work with at least one other assessor on this process. You need to be confident that you have integrated the combined units of competency accurately, and are developing an assessment instrument that satisfies the rules of evidence and principles of assessment for the performance criteria that you have decided are suitable for holistic assessment.

A number of elements may present themselves as part of a work task, meaning it would be logical to assess them together. For example, for the unit *CHCAGE005 Provide support to people living with dementia* from the CHC Community Services Training Package, the first element is about preparing to plan support, while the third element describes the actual support to provide. These two elements together define the planning work task.

# Identify integrated assessment opportunities

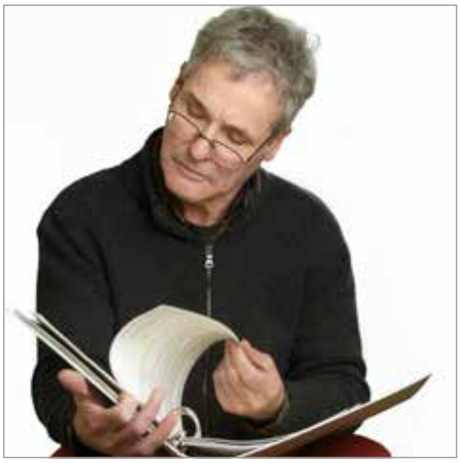
The following steps may help you to identify opportunities for integrated assessment of units of competency so that you can revise and trial appropriate assessment instruments.

Steps for identifying integrated assessment:

- Review the implementation guide for advice regarding integrating units.
- Review the picture of competence and identify the relevant performance criteria from various units.
- Consider the rules of evidence – how to gather evidence that is valid, sufficient, current and authentic.
- Check existing assessment instruments to establish whether they can be modified for integrated assessment.
- Revise existing assessment instruments or develop new integrated assessment.
- Map integrated assessment instruments.

# Change assessment instruments

It may be appropriate for an existing assessment instrument to be changed so that it is able to gather evidence of various assessment requirements for several units of competency.



You need to include information in the assessment instrument for candidates and assessors that explains that they are using an integrated assessment tool, if relevant. You should clearly identify those assessment requirements (i.e. performance criteria, foundation skills, required knowledge and performance evidence) that are being assessed.

Time must be made available to assessors to review the changed assessment; the record-keeping system must be updated; and candidates, assessors and enterprises must be advised of the innovations.

You should complete the appropriate record that demonstrates how you have mapped the various parts of the assessment instrument to assessment requirements 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.

Example

### Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and document changes to assessment instruments

The following example shows how assessment instruments are integrated to assess a number of units holistically.

Malcolm has seven years' experience as a teacher at a TAFE institute and has been given responsibility for coordinating the faculty's external audits. Malcolm decides to undertake the Diploma of Quality Auditing to equip him with the skills and knowledge required to lead audit activities, including audits of RTOs for VQF compliance.

The packaging rules for the diploma state that eight electives must be chosen from different elective groups. Malcolm selects his electives based on his interests and the needs of his RTO.

The assessment conditions for several of his chosen units require that 'assessment must be conducted in a safe environment where evidence gathered demonstrates consistent performance of typical activities experienced in the regulation, licensing and risk…and include access to workplace documentation, including previous quality audit reports, checklists, risk management plans and audit plans'.

After Malcolm has chosen his electives, he studies the performance requirements with his assessor. They both agree that with Malcolm's RTO experience and access to resources from his workplace, a portfolio of evidence will be an appropriate assessment method. The evidence collected in a portfolio may be used for several of the units of competency Malcolm has chosen.

Based on this information, Malcolm and the assessor write a plan that Malcolm can use to gather evidence for several units. His plan requires him to:

- plan and participate in an audit
- prepare, lead and report on two audits
- maintain a learning journal and submit extracts as part of his portfolio
- submit examples of previous auditing exercises he has been part of in his current role.

Other portfolio items will include the lead auditor at the RTO and various other participants in the audits completing observations of Malcolm's performance. Malcolm's head teacher will supply a written report of Malcolm's prior learning and performance.

Malcolm and the assessor have therefore identified documents that need to be completed to demonstrate competence for performance evidence, as well as other assessment requirements for several of the units of competency from the qualification.

# Activity 3

1. Write a description of how you would integrate at least two units of competency for assessment. You do not need to assess all performance criteria from the selected units of competency using a single assessment instrument. However, you must clearly demonstrate the aspects of the assessment requirements that are to be integrated. This can be done in a mapping document that shows which assessment requirements map to which assessment instrument.

2. Submit an appropriate assessment instrument in your assessment portfolio. Arrange for a small group to review your suggestions for integration and the assessment instrument to give you feedback regarding the effectiveness and appropriateness of the proposed integration.

3. Record the feedback from this group as a reflective statement in your learning journal. You may wish to use the various processes and checklists implemented in your RTO for assessment validation to conduct this review. If you believe there is an opportunity for the RTO to adopt your proposal and assessment instrument for use, ensure that correct validation of the assessment tool is performed. Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Validation activity checklist'.

**Click to complete Activity 3**

# 1D Determine opportunities for evidence-gathering in consultation with the candidate and relevant personnel

As previously discussed, the candidate needs to be informed about the assessment process. There may be a number of opportunities for collecting evidence, so you need to discuss with the candidate how and when you will gather different types of evidence so they know what methods you are using and can be prepared.

## Coordinate assessment-gathering activities

Depending on the candidate's situation, some of the evidence may be collected in the workplace in real time, while other evidence may be gathered using simulated activities. Candidates who have applied for recognised prior learning (RPL) need to know how they are to present their evidence.

Discuss with the candidate the need for them to be observed on a number of occasions over a period of time or, if they are an RPL candidate, the need to answer additional questions or provide further third-party reports.

## Identify opportunities

You should discuss the need to collect supplementary evidence if the candidate has not provided sufficient evidence of underpinning knowledge or has not provided evidence in regard to every performance criterion or authenticity of evidence.

For example, the candidate may need to provide a written report or answer questions that are designed to address the required knowledge competent of the unit of competency. Testimonials from employers may need to be obtained. You may arrange for several performance criteria to be assessed in the candidate's workplace, with supplementary evidence being gathered using a knowledge questionnaire. The assessment candidate may also need to produce some work samples to demonstrate their competence.

The following are some suggestions for identifying opportunities to gather the evidence:

- Set up simulated activities.
- Arrange specific simulated role-plays.
- Arrange to watch the candidate at work and ask questions either as they work (for example, while they are operating a piece of equipment) or after the activity (for example, after they have conducted a meeting).
- Identify projects that can involve a number of criteria.
- Organise a time for the candidate to make a presentation.
- Organise a meeting with the candidate and their workplace supervisor.

- Use a combination of online and face-to-face meetings each semester.
- Discuss the development of a portfolio, including what goes into it and when it needs to be presented.

## Arrange assessment times

In some situations assessment may be disruptive to the candidate, trainer or employer, so you need to discuss the best times to conduct the assessment.

You should identify with the candidate and their supervisor the best time for you to:

- observe the candidate
- receive a report
- watch a presentation
- ask questions
- speak to a subject matter expert to gain third-party feedback.

If using a third party in the assessment process, you need to discuss their role with them to ensure they understand their obligations; are available when you need them; and have the time to complete any forms or checklists.

Candidates also need sufficient notice of assessment requirements to ensure they make time available to gather the evidence. They may need to organise for specific materials or resources to be available. Candidates for assessment at higher AQF levels may also need to undertake revision or research before they can complete the assessment. You should confirm that candidates have read the assessment instrument instructions, and answer any questions they may have.

## Confirm WHS arrangements


Check what arrangements need to be made for risk assessment and work health and safety (WHS) during an assessment. Legal obligations require you to ensure all assessments are carried out in a safe environment. WHS risks during assessment processes are discussed in detail later in this learner guide.

Example

**Determine opportunities for evidence-gathering in consultation with the candidate and relevant personnel**

Always discuss the type of evidence needed for assessment with the candidate. In this example, an assessor identifies an opportunity for a candidate to apply for RPL.

Janelle has recently enrolled in a business course with the goal of improving her technology and customer service skills following five years' absence from the paid workforce. She has previously worked for eight years as a receptionist in a real estate office.

Ava, the trainer/assessor, believes that Janelle should consider applying for recognition of her current competence in relation to her communication skills. Ava and Janelle agree to meet the following week to review the RTO's recognition of prior learning candidate pack.

At the meeting, Ava explains the types of evidence that Janelle is able to provide for each of the assessment requirements. Ava tells Janelle that she should also complete a challenge test for the word processing unit to confirm that she satisfies the evidence requirements.

Ava and Janelle then work together to find opportunities to address the gaps in Janelle's performance. From this they develop a training plan.

# Activity 4

Using the following guidelines, role-play with two other people; have one act as the candidate and the other as the candidate's supervisor. You can also use an assessment candidate you are working with as an example.

In the role-play:

- Use a unit of competency of your choice and identify the evidence you need to gather.
- With the candidate and their supervisor, discuss and agree on the opportunities for gathering evidence.
- Submit the benchmarks (unit of competency), the required evidence and the records of your consultation. Include the information provided to candidates on the criteria for the assessment so they know what will be assessed.

# 1E Explain, discuss and agree on the details of the planned assessment

An important part of your responsibilities while preparing for assessment is to explain the assessment plan to candidates that will be implemented to gather evidence of their competence. In this section, you will develop the skills and attributes needed to enable you to gain the candidate's agreement to the assessment plan and the process you use to record their agreement.

## Explain the assessment plan

You must obtain the candidate's formal agreement to the assessment plan. The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 requires an agreement between the client and the RTO that describes the training, assessment and client services that are to be provided. The RTO has policies and procedures you must follow prior to the assessment to:

- explain, discuss and confirm the details of assessment with the candidate
- explain their rights and obligations
- provide an opportunity for them to ask questions about the assessment plan.

In many cases, candidates are given this information prior to or immediately after enrolment.

Follow your workplace policies and procedures for advising candidates of this information; for example, you may be required to have the candidate sign a form or send an email that confirms they have received information about assessment arrangements.

## Understand the candidate's background

Assessment may be a stressful or challenging experience for candidates. You should be mindful that candidates will have varying levels of existing knowledge of assessment processes. Older candidates, for example, may be unfamiliar with the term 'assessment' as they completed their learning in an education system that relied solely on tests and formal examinations. Recent school leavers may also be accustomed to an education system that focuses on assessing learning outcomes rather than judging competence.

## Confirm information in the assessment plan

The RTO's procedures identify the information that you must share with candidates. This information includes all assessment arrangements and the candidate's responsibilities, as outlined in the following table. You should have a copy of the assessment plan, units of competency and the RTO's assessment policy available to you during this discussion. Candidates who have less experience of assessment, who have a disability or who do not speak English as their first language particularly benefit from an opportunity to ask questions regarding the assessment process.

| Details of the assessment plan | What to explain to the candidate |
|---|---|
| **Timing of the assessment** | Explain when the assessment takes place; for example, during learn ing (formative), at the end of learning (summative) or a combination of both. Explain that they need to demonstrate their competence on a number of occasions in different situations. Explain that they will be given notice of the assessment well in advance. |
| **The location of the assessment** | Explain where the assessment takes place; for example, at their workplace, off site or online. Discuss access if appropriate. |
| **Benchmarks** | Explain the benchmarks that are used to judge competency.<br>It is essential that the evidence criteria which will be applied to the evidence is clearly specified and communicated.<br>Discuss the specific performance criteria, the required knowledge and the foundation skills that need to be demonstrated. |
| **Evidence for assessment** | Discuss the evidence-gathering process with candidates at the beginning of learning and again at the beginning of the assessment process.<br>Explain the type of evidence they are expected to collect or demonstrate; for example, work samples, answering questions, demonstrating a task or providing a portfolio. You may give them exemplars to help them.<br>Ensure the candidate understands the assessment instructions; for example, how to collate a portfolio or how to self-assess.<br>The candidate may also need advice on how evidence is presented for assessment; for example, if they are submitting a work sample, clarify with the candidate whether only the final work sample is assessed or whether the process for creating or producing the work sample is also a component of assessment. |
| **Assessment methods** | Explain the methods used to gather the evidence; for example, asking them questions; getting them to discuss the articles in their portfolio; watching them demonstrate a task or asking a third party, such as their supervisor, for comments about their work. |
| **Information to the workplace supervisor** | Explain the appropriate tasks to be undertaken, including documentation such as third-party reports and checklists of observations and/or logbooks. |

| Details of the assessment plan | What to explain to the candidate |
|---|---|
| **Materials or resources needed for assessment** | Explain if they need to bring any specific materials or resources to the assessment or if they are arranged by the RTO or the workplace supervisor. This might include personal protective equipment or an audio tape. |
| **Support services available** | Explain whether support is available if needed, such as an interpreter, a carer, or a community service worker able to help with language or cultural issues. |
| **Reasonable adjustment** | Explain how you will adjust the assessment to help them while retaining the integrity of the competency. Reasonable adjustment might include:<br>▶ using an audio tape<br>▶ allowing them to answer the questions orally<br>▶ having an interpreter or community service worker explain the assessment to them<br>▶ allowing extra time to account for fatigue or taking medication<br>▶ rewriting questions to allow for language or literacy issues. |
| **Recognition of prior learning (RPL)** | Explain the opportunity for assessment of their prior learning.<br>The RPL process may be confusing to candidates who are unfamiliar with the process and the concept of gathering evidence of previously obtained qualifications, work experience and life history. |
| **Complaints and appeal procedures against the outcomes of assessment** | You have a legal obligation to inform candidates of the organisation's complaints and appeals process, and what to do if they want to complain or appeal the assessment process. |
| **Workplace health and safety during assessment** | Explain the health and safety precautions that will be present for the assessment, if appropriate. |
| **Confidentiality** | Explain that any information that the candidate supplies in regard to a disability is treated with confidence.<br>Explain that the candidate's evidence and assessment results are also confidential. |
| **Reporting** | Explain how assessment is recorded and reported. |
| **Contact information** | Check that the contact information for the candidate is correct. Make sure the candidate has contact details for the RTO or assessor so they can contact them if needed. This is particularly important for distance candidates. |

## Record the candidate's agreement

You need to familiarise yourself with the form or template used by the RTO to record the candidate's agreement. This document forms part of the evidence that the RTO would need to present during an audit of their compliance with the Standards for RTOs 2015. Standard 5 is about ensuring that each learner is properly informed and protected. In addition, one of the principles of assessment refers to fairness where the candidate must be guaranteed access to assessment that does not discriminate on any basis. This may require the reasonable adjustment of assessment methods.

The key characteristics of a fair assessment process are:

- clear communication of the assessment process to the candidate
- the candidate's agreement to the assessment process
- an opportunity for the candidate to challenge the assessment result and for reassessment to occur if necessary.

Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Assessment agreement'.

Example

### Conduct a candidate briefing to explain, discuss and agree on the details of the planned assessment

This next example shows how an assessor explained the assessment process to a candidate.

Mark is about to assess Troy, who is an apprentice in the construction industry. Troy has been given the assessment plan for *AHCMOM213 Operate and maintain chainsaws*.

**Benchmarks**

Mark carefully explains to Troy that competence in this standard requires evidence of the ability to:

- assist in the preparation of a worksite
- recognise and apply workplace safety procedures
- perform cross-cutting operations
- check and prepare a chainsaw
- operate a chainsaw
- complete and check chainsaw operation.

Troy also needs to present evidence of foundation skills and required knowledge, such as safe operating procedures, relevant Australian Standards concerning chainsaw operation, and components of chainsaws and their respective functions. Mark explains that Troy must show him he knows how to estimate and measure dimensions and calculate volumes, and the need for WHS requirements for the operation of a chainsaw, including wearing required PPE, exercising caution, and using and recognising hazard signs and symbols.

Mark explains to Troy that his skills and knowledge required to operate and maintain chainsaws must be transferable to different work environments on a number of different occasions.

**Assessment methods**

Mark shows Troy the part of the assessment plan that identifies he will be assessed using the following methods:

- Check and prepare chainsaw: demonstration/observation, third-party report or logbook
- Operate chainsaw: demonstration/observation, third-party report or logbook
- Recognise and apply workplace safety procedures: multiple-choice quiz

**Assessment location**

Troy is to be assessed in his workplace.

**Agreement**

Mark and Troy have both signed the document required by the RTO's policies and procedures that records Troy's agreement to the assessment plan.

# Activity 5

For this learning activity, you need an assessment plan and a partner to role-play with. Arrange for your assessor or an appropriate third party, such as your workplace supervisor or a trainer, to observe your performance in the role-play and give you written feedback. This feedback could be recorded on an observation checklist or summarised by you in your learning journal. Candidates should receive clear criteria upfront so they know what will be assessed. You can include a record of the feedback in your assessment portfolio, if applicable.

Role-play a meeting with a candidate where you explain the assessment plan. Record their agreement to the plan on an appropriate assessment agreement form. Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Assessment agreement'.

**Click to complete Activity 5**

# 1F Arrange identified material and physical resource requirements

This section examines the strategies you can use to ensure that the materials and resources specified in the assessment plan are available to conduct the assessment. You are responsible for using the RTO's resources effectively, efficiently and safely. You also need to consider how you will use materials and resources in the candidate's workplace.


You will need to use your research and evaluation skills to interpret the organisation's assessment system and policies in regard to resource use and access to required resources for assessment.

## Prepare the material

You can identify the material you need for an assessment from written sources, such as workplace policies and procedures, the assessment plan and the assessment tool. In addition, you should confirm requirements with your workplace supervisor. It is a good idea to prepare a checklist that identifies the materials you need to assemble prior to the assessment.

If you are conducting group assessments, you may need to organise for printing bulk assessment materials.

The materials you may need include:

- the relevant training package
- assessment policies and strategies
- the unit of competency
- assessment instruments
- assessment instructions
- forms or templates that the candidate will use to record their response; for example, an examination booklet
- forms or checklists to be completed during assessment by the assessor or a third party, such as a workplace supervisor
- equipment and workplace samples and tools
- forms for giving feedback to the candidates
- benchmark solutions you can use to judge competence
- support material for candidates with special needs, such as a braille computer/text, audio tape or text translated into their first language.

You should also consider whether it is necessary to securely store the materials prior to assessment. Consider seeking advice from the appropriate regulatory authority.

You may also be responsible for assessing candidates whose results enable them to gain or maintain membership of a professional association. In these cases, you need to contact the relevant professional association or industry body to confirm their requirements.

## Prepare physical resource requirements

The evidence guide in the unit of competency and information in the assessment plan will help you to determine the physical resources that are required for assessment. The assessment conditions of many units require assessment to be conducted in an actual workplace. Where this is not possible, a simulated work environment is appropriate. A simulated work environment is useful when learners are studying outside of work, but require exposure to experiences that reflect those in the workplace. In some cases RTOs invest resources or partner with industry to secure access to a simulated work environment, such as a warehouse, training room, model office or retail store. In addition, online learning technologies have the potential to offer enhanced simulations.

You need to communicate with the candidate's workplace supervisor, learning and development specialist in the workplace, or HR manager to coordinate a time for assessment and ensure the candidate has access to the various resources and materials that are needed to perform the specific work activity that forms the basis of assessment.

Carefully read instructions in the assessment instrument to identify any equipment, technology, PPE (such as visors or gloves), documents, forms or items that the candidate needs immediate access to during assessment.

## Arrange personal protective equipment for workplace assessment

You may be responsible for checking the physical resources to confirm that they are safe to use. For example, if you are conducting the assessment of a person completing a unit of competency from the HLT07 Health Training Package, you may need to observe the candidate handling chemical substances. You need to ensure the candidate has access to actual or simulated workplace policies and procedures, PPE (such as a visor and gloves), chemicals and an appropriate container for disposal of the substances at the completion of assessment.

Example

### Arrange identified material and physical resource requirements

Carlos has been asked to assess group learners in a simulated workplace against the benchmarks in the unit *SHBBMUP003 Design and apply make-up for photography.* He reads, interprets and understands the unit of competency and carefully examines the assessment conditions. He summarises the assessment criteria on the assessment plan and identifies the evidence the candidate needs to gather.

Carlos intends to use the following assessment methods:

- written and/or oral questioning to assess underpinning knowledge and understanding of relevant make-up techniques for photography, including film stock and lighting, and relevant legislation and policy
- a portfolio of workplace documentation relevant to the design and application of make-up for photography
- an observation checklist of required skills completed during the candidate's demonstration of the task.

Carlos books a suitable space in the RTO's premises that has been designed for simulations when assessing units from the SHB50115 Diploma of Beauty Therapy. He sources appropriate beauty and make-up products that are purchased from a preferred supplier at a substantially discounted price. He has performed a risk assessment as required by the RTO's WHS policies and procedures. Carlos has also organised for cleaning staff to be available to clean the simulated workspace immediately after the assessment.

# Activity 6

Read the case study, then complete the task that follows.

Note: rather than using the case study, you may wish to discuss with your trainer whether you can modify this activity so that you can use a time when you have arranged materials and physical resources for assessment in your workplace.

## Case study

You have been asked to conduct assessment in a large organisation following WHS induction training. Candidates for the assessment have recently been employed in various positions in the organisation. Their induction training had the following assessment requirements.

Knowledge of:

- duty of care and legal frameworks for WHS
- workers' obligations under WHS legislation.

Performance evidence of:

- correct use of PPE
- completing hazard identification checklists
- completing incident reports
- emergency procedures for recognising alarms, signals and signs for emergency equipment, such as fire extinguishers.

Prepare an action plan that identifies the various materials and physical resources you will need to conduct assessment at the end of the induction training.

Click to complete Activity 6

# 1G Identify and organise specialist support requirements for the assessment

Individual candidates bring a range of characteristics to the assessment process that may impact on their performance during assessment. You have a responsibility to assist candidates in sourcing specialists who are able to help them participate equitably in the assessment process. You may also need to access specialist knowledge yourself about aspects of assessment that may be related to specific assessment contexts and methods.

In this section, you will examine the various specialist support providers that may help you in preparing and implementing assessment tools and instruments.

## Identify specialist support requirements

As an assessor, you must ensure that assessment activities are contextualised to the learner's work environment and are adjusted to ensure access and equity for their individual needs. You may need to speak with the candidate personally and observe them, either in their workplace or in group learning environment, to gather sufficient information about them prior to assessment.

If you have been involved in delivering learning and development activities for a candidate, you will already have an understanding of the candidate's background as you progress through various learning activities. In some cases, you may only come into contact with candidates occasionally; for example, workplace trainees who complete most of their learning online, or use a learner guide with the support and guidance of their supervisor. In all cases, the candidate profile you or the RTO staff develops helps you identify any specific support the candidate may need for their assessment.

Gather sufficient information about the candidate, including:

- the candidate's context for assessment
- their LLN levels
- whether English is their first language
- whether they have a disability (it is the candidate's choice whether they wish to disclose a disability)
- their access to resources for assessment.

# Candidate circumstances

Consider candidates' individual circumstances to identify the support service that would suit their needs. In the case of LLN, it is important to identify the performance standards of LLN that are reflected in the assessment requirements, including the foundation skills of the units of competency that are being assessed. Also refer to the Australian Core Skills Framework, which describes levels of performance in learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy, and can be used to identify the skill level of a unit of competency.

Needs of candidates:

- Does the candidate live or work in a remote location?
- Does the candidate have a disability; for example, a learning disability, sensory impairment, psychiatric disability or physical disability?
- Does the candidate speak a language other than English or a dialect other than Standard English?
- Does the candidate require additional support in regard to LLN?
- What impact could the candidate's cultural background have on assessment? For example, candidates in Indigenous communities often prefer group assessment as they may not be comfortable with the competitiveness of individual assessment.
- What impact does the candidate's previous education have on assessment? Candidates who have completed their earlier education and training in cultures that prefer rote learning and knowledge tests may face additional challenges when assessment involves observation and case studies.
- Could the candidate's religious beliefs impact on the assessment process? For example, candidates may not be available to participate in assessment at specific times due to their religious obligations to fast or pray.
- What have been the experiences of older candidates? You may need to discuss the candidate's previous educational experience and work history with them. They may need an assessor to offer additional explanations and support with the assessment process.

# Apply workplace policies and procedures

Apply your workplace policies and procedures for sourcing specialists who have the skills, knowledge and resources to support candidates during assessment. Your RTO may have developed relationships with specific specialists that they prefer to partner with during assessment. Alternatively, you may need to use your networking and research skills to find an appropriate specialist. Contact them to gather information about:

- the services they offer
- their target clients
- their areas of operation
- any fees or charges that may be involved.

Retain the information that you gather in a resource folder.

It is essential that you comply with the RTO's policies and procedures that relate to maintaining the privacy of candidates' personal information when working with specialist support providers. For example, you may identify a candidate who you believe would benefit from specialist support, but the candidate is reluctant to accept the support that is available to them. You need to check your workplace policies and procedures for advice on how to proceed in this situation. Larger RTOs, such as TAFEs, have student counsellors and specialist disability support units that are available to advise trainers and assessors in various aspects of arranging specialist support for learners.

## Third-party assistance

Learners with disabilities may require additional support from their carer during assessment. You need the candidate's permission to contact their carer. It would be helpful if you could meet with both the candidate and their carer during the planning stage of the assessment process to discuss any special requirements with them. The carer may be able to share important information about:

- scheduling assessment
- augmentative aids that may be required
- access to the assessment venue
- important safety issues that may relate to the use of equipment and technology.

For example, the carer may need to arrange to be available to accompany the candidate during assessment, or may explain to you that the candidate should be assessed in short intervals as they tire easily during physical activity.

Check your access and equity workplace policies and procedures to confirm what support the candidate is able to receive from their carer during assessment. For example, while candidates with vision impairment may have their carer word process their responses in a quiz, you need to ensure the carer is not supplying the correct responses to the candidate.

Candidates who do not speak English as their first language or who have a hearing impairment may require support from translators or interpreters. Larger RTOs, such as TAFEs, may have a team of interpreters who are available to support candidates during assessment.

## Specialist educators

Specialist educators vary in the support that they are able to offer candidates.

You may wish to conduct your own research by meeting with the specialist educators whose services your RTO uses to discuss with them the types of services they offer; the process you must follow to make arrangements for them to attend assessment activities; and what information you need to give them prior to assessment. Specialist educators can also advise you on the types of adaptive equipment available to candidates, and can help you to select the equipment that best suits the requirements of assessment.

The following is a list of the types of support that may be available.

Support available to candidates may include:

- pre-course or assessment counselling
- assistance to identify the most appropriate assessment support and assessment modifications
- access to adaptive technologies, sign language interpreters, note takers or disability assistants
- accessibility inspections at a campus or assessment location with the candidate and assessor
- mobility training
- advice about organising attendant care.

## Support for remote or isolated candidates and assessors

You may need to conduct assessment in remote communities. Candidates for assessment in remote or isolated communities are often Indigenous. Various government departments can offer support and advice in local communities that is useful to candidates and assessors alike. Additionally, specialist teachers working in remote communities may be willing to share their experience of providing support to learners with you. You should also consider forming relationships with community leaders and workers who may be able to help you conduct assessment activities. Your RTO may need to arrange access to local workplaces that offer suitable computers and equipment that could be used during assessment.

Candidates in remote or isolated areas may have additional needs that relate to:

- poor access to technology and equipment
- low bandwidth and internet speed for online learning and assessment
- lack of peer support
- cultural influences on their performance in assessment
- low levels of LLN
- the need to travel to attend assessment; for example, the time and cost of travelling to an assessment centre
- lack of available childcare while during assessment
- lack of knowledge on the part of assessors in regard to cultural influences on approaches to assessment.

## Challenges for assessors in remote locations

As an assessor working in a remote location, you have your own needs that should be addressed. Talk with the HR manager and senior managers in the RTO to discuss the support they are able to provide you with. You should also use the internet to research opportunities for you to undertake distance education and to participate in online communities of practice.

Challenges for assessors in remote locations may include:

- lack of access to necessary equipment and technology
- poor access to computers or the internet

- barriers to participating in assessment validation activities, professional communities of practice or undertaking professional development
- poor access to libraries
- insufficient opportunities to undertake 'return to industry' experiences as part of professional development
- social isolation
- costs of transport and accommodation.

## Support from subject matter or safety experts

You may be expected to use assessment instruments to gather evidence in a work environment that uses work practices or procedures, equipment or technology that you are unfamiliar with. Consider seeking advice from appropriate professional associations, industry bodies, union representatives or workplace supervisors. They should all be able to help you with expert information about the application of performance criteria in specific work environments.

You may also need to have the subject matter specialist with you when you conduct a demonstration or observe a candidate so you can obtain their specialised input into the candidate's competence; for example, it may be advantageous to engage the services of an LLN expert when assessing candidates who have issues in these areas.

When assessment is to be conducted in a candidate's workplace, you must perform a risk assessment to identify and address any WHS issues. The organisation's occupational health and safety community, health and safety representative, union representative or workplace supervisors are ideally placed to provide specialist information about potential health and safety hazards, control measures and forms or reports that are used to record relevant information. You may also be required to participate in induction training with the organisation's health and safety team or workplace supervisor before conducting on-site assessment.

## Advice from regulatory authorities

Some industries and occupations require workers to have a licence to perform a particular function or role. The performance criteria used to assess competence may be established in legislation or regulations, or by the licensing authority. This type of assessment may be found in construction, warehousing or real estate offices. You should be able to find information relating to licensing and regulations that impact on assessment in the evidence conditions of the unit of competency or training package implementation guides.

State, territory and federal governments, and industry regulators offer information and advice on their websites and in various publications. You may also be able to speak to an adviser by phone.

## Assessment teams and panels

Assessors are ideally positioned to provide feedback about their experience in implementing an assessment system and designing assessment instruments. In many cases, assessors are required to attend workshops or panels where various stakeholders collaborate to review assessment instruments and aspects of the assessment process, such as assessor judgment, reporting and version control. This process is referred to as assessment validation and is explored in detail in the unit *TAEASS403 Participate in assessment validation*.

Effective assessment validation relies on participants communicating constructively and positively with a view to identifying opportunities to improve the evidence-gathering methods used by RTOs to achieve enhanced outcomes for stakeholders. You need to utilise your communication skills to build relationships with your assessment validation partners, and to promote an atmosphere that encourages participation and the free exchange of ideas.

## Support from lead assessors

RTOs must ensure their assessors comply with the implementation guides and evidence requirements of training packages and the relevant units of competency to ensure they meet VQF/AQTF obligations.

The training and assessment approach adopted by an RTO must accord with the needs of their learners, current industry requirements and the requirements of the training package. As a professional assessor, you have a responsibility to ensure the assessment tools and instruments you implement comply with the RTO's policies and procedures and the VQF/AQTF Standards. Your work colleagues and the RTO's management team are able to support you in ensuring you fulfil your compliance obligations. You may also have an opportunity to participate in assessment validation sessions, which involves formally evaluating the quality of the RTO's assessment system.

During internal and external audits, you may have an opportunity to speak to the lead auditor and members of the audit team about opportunities to enhance assessment tools and instruments. They may be able to offer advice on certain areas, such as assessment mapping, interpretation of benchmarking standards, reasonable adjustment, and other access and equity issues.

Example

**Identify and organise specialist support requirements for the assessment**

This example describes how a candidate, trainer and assessor can all receive support.

Bill has enrolled in ICT20115 Certificate II in Information, Digital Media and Technology. His case manager recommends the course to help Bill reach his goal of working full time in an office environment. Bill has a vision impairment that limits his ability to achieve good results at school. Since leaving school three years ago, Bill has completed various short courses and has gradually improved his confidence and self-esteem.

His trainer asks the TAFE education consultant to prepare an individual learning plan for Bill immediately after his enrolment. The consultant supports the trainer by preparing the learning plan and meeting with Bill and the assessor to explain the plan, and confirm that it satisfies Bill's individual needs and helps the assessor to gather quality evidence.

Bill completes the various units of competency using adaptive technology that enables him to effectively use computer technology. Bill is soon to be assessed for the unit *ICTICT205 Design basic organisational documents using computing packages*. The terminal that he uses during assessment has software installed that allows Bill to increase the font size and select a background colour to suit his individual needs. He answers questions about WHS verbally as this supports him in relation to his lower levels of language and literacy. The consultant supports the assessor by ensuring they receive training on the use of the adaptive technology.

# Activity 7

In this section, you have examined a range of specialist service providers that are available to support assessors and candidates. A resource folder which contains information about various specialist services that are relevant to the needs of your RTO's clients is a very useful reference.

Develop a resource folder that includes contact details and service information for each of the types of services examined in this section. You should talk to other assessors about their experience using specialist service providers and include their recommendations in your resource folder.

# Summary

1. Assessment is the process of gathering evidence and making judgments on whether the candidate has demonstrated that they can perform 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.
2. Your starting point in preparing for assessment is to source the relevant assessment plan that has been developed by the RTO. An assessment plan documents each step in the process of assessing a candidate's performance.
3. You need to understand the organisational, legal and ethical requirements that govern assessment, and ensure that the information in the assessment plan meets these requirements.
4. The foundation of Australia's VET system is competency-based training. This approach relies on outcomes that are judged against specific standards which are established in the various units of competency that comprise training packages.
5. You need to prepare a checklist that identifies the materials you need to assemble prior to assessment. The information comes from various sources, such as workplace policies and procedures, assessment plans, assessment tools, workplace supervisors, regulatory authorities, professional associations and industry bodies.
6. An assessment tool includes the instrument and the procedures for gathering and interpreting evidence in accordance with designated assessment methods. It also includes the instructions that must be given to assessors and candidates.
7. Your workplace policies and procedures may include specific advice about the assessment methods that your RTO prefers to use in specific contexts of assessment. Your workplace may have a bank of assessment instruments that have been validated for specific assessment contexts.
8. The assessment conditions in the unit of competency and information in the assessment plan help you determine the physical resources that are required for assessment. The assessment conditions of most units of competency require assessment to be conducted in an actual workplace. Where this is not possible, a simulated work environment is appropriate.
9. You are responsible for analysing the information that has been gathered from candidates and identifying any specialist support they may require; for example, candidates who are in a remote location or require third-party assistance from a carer or interpreter. As an assessor, you may also require specialist support, such as a subject matter expert or technical expert.
10. Integrated assessment relates to holistic assessment (i.e. assessment that occurs within a unit by combining several elements or performance criteria) and co-assessment (i.e. assessment that assesses several units rather than assessing individual units or elements).
11. The RTO has implemented procedures that you must follow to explain, discuss and confirm the details of assessment with the candidate. The candidate must formally agree to the assessment plan. You may be required to have the candidate sign a form or send an email that confirms they have received information about assessment arrangements.


# Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

**2A** **Use agreed assessment methods and tools to gather, organise and document evidence**

**2B** **Apply the principles of assessment and rules of evidence to gather quality evidence**

## Gather quality evidence

Assessors are responsible for helping candidates gather quality evidence with the support of workplace supervisors and other people who can assist, such as technical experts, subject matter experts and other assessors.

Assessors need to prepare and implement assessment tools that address the individual needs of candidates, meet the objectives of the assessment plan and are appropriate for the context of assessment.

To assess effectively, you need to clearly understand the purpose of assessment in competency-based training, available sources of evidence and the attributes of quality evidence.

# 2A Use agreed assessment methods and tools to gather, organise and document evidence

The assessment plan you have reviewed will have identified the assessment methods and instruments you need to employ to gather the prescribed evidence. Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Assessment plan'; Aspire has included relevant templates in its *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.


It is now your job to gather evidence in a format suitable for determining competence, following the policies and approach required by the RTO.

## Administer the assessment

Check the following when administering assessment:

- The assessment tasks the candidate must complete have been prepared (for example, respond to questions, undertake a role-play, write a report, prepare meeting minutes, do a presentation, complete a project, present a portfolio of work samples and third-party reports).
- Confirm that the assessment tasks will enable the candidate to provide the evidence you require.
- Check that the assessment method suggested to obtain the evidence is appropriate; for example, direct observation, structured activities or oral questioning.
- Check that the assessment instrument for collecting evidence is appropriate; for example, an observation checklist, model answers and/or specific questions.
- Check that the activities include clear instructions to the assessor about the conditions, resources, assessment instruments and strategies to be used.
- Ensure that the instructions to the candidate about how to approach the assessment and submit evidence are unambiguous and written to their LLN level.

## Gather the evidence

After identifying the evidence requirements, you must determine how the evidence will be collected. Evidence can be gathered through:

- Formative assessments – assessment is progressive throughout the learning process and validated along the way by the trainer.
- Summative assessments – assessment is an exercise or simulation at the end of the learning process.

You also need to ensure that the evidence-gathering methods you select are consistent with the training and assessment strategy developed by the RTO and that they have been explained to the candidate.

To select the most appropriate combination of evidence-gathering techniques, consider:

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

# Use assessment instruments

You must conduct assessment using the assessment instruments that have been selected for implementation by the RTO. The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 and the AQTF Standards do not prescribe a specific format for assessment instruments. It is up to the individual RTO to design assessment instruments that are effective in gathering the appropriate evidence.

The following table provides a summary of assessment instruments.

| Assessment instruments and procedures | Type of evidence | Gathering the evidence |
|---|---|---|
| Profile of acceptable performance measures | It is essential that the judgments of competence made by assessors are reliable and valid. This means that various assessors judging the same evidence must arrive at the same decision regarding competence.<br>RTOs must, as evidence of their VQF/AQTF compliance, implement procedures that promote consistency in judgments of competence.<br>RTOs develop profiles of acceptable performance measures as benchmarks that may be used as a reference when evaluating evidence. | ▶ Evidence includes:<br>– Model answers<br>– Solutions<br>– Sample products<br>– Sample portfolios<br>– Marking rubrics<br>– Assessment validation reports |
| Templates and proformas | The RTO's assessment system includes various templates and proformas that have been developed for use by assessors, candidates, third parties and RTO administration staff. They are commonly used to record observations of the candidate's performance and the responses to knowledge questionnaires. They are useful as a tool for providing feedback to candidates and reporting assessment outcomes. | ▶ Evidence includes:<br>– Assessment plans<br>– Observation checklists<br>– Assessment outcomes<br>– Candidate feedback<br>– Third-party evidence forms<br>– Workplace logbooks |

| **Assessment instruments and procedures** | **Type of evidence** | **Gathering the evidence** |
|---|---|---|
| Specific questions or activities | Questioning (both oral and written) and structured learning activities are commonly used for gathering evidence. They are very popular as they are easier to mark than other forms of assessment and results can be quantified. Questioning is particularly useful as a means of gathering supplementary evidence or to assess that the candidate has the relevant underpinning knowledge described in the unit of competency. | ▶ The assessment instrument for questioning may include:<br>– Verbal questioning<br>– Written questions<br>– Interviews<br>– Questionnaires<br>– Self-assessment questionnaires<br>– Oral or written examinations<br>▶ When using questioning, assessors need a form to record the candidate's responses. They also need a tool that has exemplar responses. |
| Evidence and observation checklists | The RTO must implement tools that are designed to eliminate or minimise the risk of bias of assessor judgments. The checklists must be designed to reflect the assessment requirements. | ▶ Determine whether the candidate is to be given a copy of the evidence or observation checklist.<br>▶ Ensure you understand the checklist instructions.<br>▶ Confirm the other forms of evidence that will be used to judge competency. |
| Checklists for evaluating work samples | Work samples may be used as evidence of competence of all the aspects of assessment, and to satisfy industry or licensing requirements. The RTO will implement checklists that are designed to ensure reliability and consistency in assessor judgments. | ▶ Check the instructions on the checklist to confirm that they use plain English and incorporate diagrams or examples to enhance usability.<br>▶ You also need a sample to use as a benchmark to evaluate the work submitted by the candidate. |

| **Assessment instruments and procedures** | **Type of evidence** | **Gathering the evidence** |
|---|---|---|
| Candidate self-assessment materials | The RTO may have developed a self-assessment tool that relies on written questions to guide the candidate through the process of self-assessment. | ▶ Check whether the candidate is required to submit supplementary evidence.<br>▶ Check the instructions to the assessor and the candidate, and the benchmarks you use to evaluate the evidence. |
| Procedures, information and instructions | The RTO has policies and procedures that trainers and assessors can refer to when implementing assessment strategies.<br>Make sure that instructions for collecting evidence do not have higher levels of LLN than required for the unit. | ▶ Ensure you are familiar with the following aspects of the RTO's assessment procedures:<br>– Assessment polices<br>– Assessment strategies<br>– Recognition procedures<br>– Credit transfer procedures<br>– Complaints and appeals procedures<br>– Student feedback<br>– LLN procedures<br>– Recording outcomes of assessment |

## Select appropriate assessment methods

Check that you are familiar with the assessment methods listed in the assessment plan and understand why they help you gather evidence that is valid, sufficient, authentic and current (these criteria are known as the rules of evidence and are discussed in detail in the following section).

There is a range of assessment methods that you may select from when conducting assessment, such as real work/real-time activities, simulated activities, observation, third-party reports and structured activities. The evidence you collect is direct (observation, questioning, etc.) or indirect (feedback from others, certificates, minutes of meetings, etc.). Supplementary evidence can be gathered using either of these methods.

The assessment method to be used may have been recorded on the assessment plan before you became involved in the assessment process. Alternatively, the RTO procedures may stipulate individual assessors to determine the assessment method they believe offers the best opportunity to gather evidence.

If you have to select appropriate methods yourself, check your workplace policies and procedures for advice about the assessment methods to be used in specific contexts of assessment. Your workplace may have a bank of assessment instruments that have been validated for specific assessment contexts.

Assessment methods may include:

- direct observation
- structured activities
- oral and written questioning
- portfolios
- third-party feedback.

# Factors to consider in assessment

Consider the following when selecting which assessment method to use.

1 **Assessment requirements**
Consider evidence requirements of the competency standards/benchmarks; for example, if the candidate has to operate a machine, direct observation is an appropriate method.

2 **The candidate's location**
For example, the candidate may be in a remote location, and the assessment may take place online.

3 **Feedback**
Feedback gathered from industry and enterprise representatives regarding workplace practices, culture, environmental issues, and emerging trends and technology helps you identify when a method may be inappropriate. For example:

- Workplace assessment may not be possible as the candidate's work role does not include the tasks that must be assessed.
- Assessors should consider whether appropriate technology is available to the candidate to support online assessment.

4 **Opportunities for evidence-gathering**
For example, you may have to advise a recognition of prior learning (RPL) candidate of the ways in which they can collect evidence and present a portfolio.

5 **Legal and ethical considerations**
Ensure you meet all legal, ethical and work health and safety (WHS) requirements; for example, you need to make sure the method you select is safe, does not require the candidate to do anything illegal and does not convene any code of conduct.

6 **Available resources**
To determine RTO resources, consider the time available for assessment, costs of assessment and materials.

7 **Individual needs**
Consider the candidates' individual needs; for example, you may have to adjust the assessment method to take into account a candidate's disability, language needs or cultural background to ensure the assessment meets access and equity principles. Sharing this information needs to conform with privacy and confidentiality requirements.

8 **AQF level**
Consider the AQF level being assessed to ensure the assessment requires the candidate to gather evidence of work that would be performed by a person at the appropriate level in the workplace.

9 **LLN demands**
The LLN demands of the particular unit of competency and the candidate's job role so any instructions for collecting evidence do not have higher levels of LLN than that required for the unit.

10 **Regulatory requirements**
Ensure you meet licensing and regulatory requirements so that any requirements established by professional associations, industry groups or government bodies are satisfied.

11 **Clustering**
Consider opportunities to cluster units of competency for assessment so assessment is logical, reflects workplace practice and saves time.

12 **Appeals process**
Candidates must be provided with information on how to appeal assessment outcomes before they begin the assessment process

Information in the following sections summarises the key attributes of various assessment methods. This helps when selecting the assessment method that is most likely to gather appropriate evidence.

## Evidence from direct observation

The training package determines the evidence that is required. Implementation guides or/companion volumes in some  training packages require assessors to gather firsthand evidence that the candidate is able to apply a specific skill in a work context rather than self-reporting their skills or describing their use of skills in a written assessment.

Direct observation is an effective method of gathering firsthand evidence of the candidate using the required skills to complete a specific work activity. It is also a very effective method for gathering evidence of foundation skills.

The assessment plan may indicate whether you are to observe the candidate performing:

- a task that is part of their usual work activities
- an activity you have designed specifically for assessment purposes
- a series of tasks or activities in a simulated work environment.

The assessor must have access to a document that describes competent performance. During the observation, the assessor or a third party watches the candidate performing a process or series of tasks to gather evidence, then uses a form or checklist to record their observations.

## Quality observation checklists

Your workplace may have an observation checklist or you may need to develop one. Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Observation assessment instrument checklist'.

The quality test of an observation form is the detailed mapping of the observation form with the unit of competency. You need to ensure the candidate receives a copy of the checklist before the observation and understands what is involved. You also need to decide if you are going to record your observations while the candidate performs the task, or after the observation period.

Web technologies, such as those used for social networking, provide an opportunity for candidates to submit recorded visual evidence of their performance. Supplementary evidence, such as a knowledge test, may also be required.

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

An observation checklist could include:

- identification of the candidate
- assessor details
- benchmarking criteria (or units of competency)
- identification of prerequisite competencies
- context of the observation assessment
- WHS issues relevant to assessment
- the specific task or activity to be performed
- the number of assessments to be observed
- types of clients and other assessment conditions
- the standard of performance used to judge competence
- a description of any supplementary evidence that is required
- the result and comments for feedback.

## Challenges of observation

You need to address challenges when gathering evidence using observation.

These challenges may include:

- arranging access and scheduling times for observation in the candidate's workplace
- accessing the materials and resources needed for assessment
- ensuring you have prepared a comprehensive observation checklist
- allowing for the duration and number of times a task must be observed
- ensuring the criteria are observable and that the performance criteria isn't just re-written
- developing an appropriate list of questions you can use to gather supplementary evidence (particularly in regard to required knowledge)
- writing a document that lists detailed evidence criteria for each aspect of performance that assessors can refer to when judging competence (this will promote reliability of the instrument).

You can read more about other parties collecting evidence through checklists at:

- www.asqa.gov.au/news-and-publications/publications/fact-sheets/using-other-parties-to-collect-assessment-evidence.html

# Evidence from structured activities


A structured activity is a task or a series of tasks with a defined outcome. They are particularly well suited for formative assessment as the assessor may give feedback at various points during the assessment process. Structured activities may be completed independently or by small groups of candidates.

Structured activities include:

- projects
- presentations
- activity sheets
- essays and reports.

When determining what type of structured activity may be appropriate, carefully consider the AQF level of the unit of competency that is being assessed. You should also plan how you will gather evidence of the candidate's use of foundation skills, as structured activities may provide limited opportunities to gather this type of evidence.

Consider the advice given to the assessor to judge the evidence provided by structured activities, such as projects or essays. It may be necessary to develop rubrics or 'model answers' as a benchmarking tool for assessors.

# Evidence from oral or written questioning

Questioning is an effective method for assessing underpinning knowledge and may be used in conjunction with simulations, projects, observations or case studies. There is a range of question formats that may be suitable for use in specific formats, including multiple choice questions, true/false questions, written short answer or interviews.

Questioning can also be used to satisfy a candidate's need for reasonable adjustment. Questions need to be specific and ask about the application of knowledge and not just the facts. They need to include clear instructions, the length of the response expected and whether the questioning will be open book or closed book.

It is essential that you consider the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) levels of candidates and the AQF level being assessed when determining whether to use oral or written questions as an assessment method. You will need to use additional evidence-gathering methods to satisfy all of the performance evidence as oral or written questions are not usually able to gather sufficient evidence of the candidate's competence when used on their own.

The following table summarises some of the issues that should be addressed when preparing assessment instruments that use questions or activities.

| **Questioning method** | **Issue** |
|---|---|
| Written questions | ▶ What is the rationale for using written questions for assessment?<br>▶ Are the questions written at an appropriate AQF level?<br>▶ Have you considered the language and literacy levels of the candidates?<br>▶ How clearly are the questions linked to the evidence requirements of the competency standard?<br>▶ What opportunity is there for reasonable adjustment to suit the individual needs of candidates?<br>▶ How can you ensure reliability of assessment? |
| Interviews | ▶ How is this assessment method linked to the assessment purpose and context?<br>▶ What format will you use for the interview; for example, individual or panel interview?<br>▶ 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?<br>▶ How will you record the candidate's responses?<br>▶ How will you ensure reliability in judging competence using this format?<br>▶ What opportunity is there to provide reasonable adjustment? |
| Verbal questioning | ▶ What is the rationale for using this assessment method?<br>▶ What opportunity will the candidate have to prepare their responses?<br>▶ How will you record the candidate's responses?<br>▶ Will you use verbal questioning for formative or summative assessment (or both)?<br>▶ Is there an opportunity to use probing questions? If so, how will you ensure reliability in judging competence?<br>▶ What method will you use to map questions to the evidence guide? |
| Oral or written examination | ▶ Is the format you have selected for the examination appropriate for the AQF level of the competency standard? For example:<br>– multiple choice, true/false questions and simple case studies are most appropriate for Certificates 1 and 2<br>– short-answer questions and case studies are most appropriate for Certificates 3 and 4<br>– essays and sophisticated case studies are most appropriate for Diploma level.<br>▶ Have you considered the language and literacy levels of the candidates?<br>▶ What is the rationale for a formal examination? |

## 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 if the candidate does not have access to an actual workplace or if the activities to be performed pose a health and safety risk. Simulations and role-plays allow the assessor to more easily control the conditions of assessment.

## Portfolios of evidence

A portfolio is a collection of evidence that shows a person's learning journey over time and demonstrates their abilities.

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. Portfolios are also a popular choice for candidates that present for assessment of their current competence or prior knowledge. This cohort should be given advice about the items that would be suitable for inclusion, and a copy of the performance criteria and assessment requirements they need to satisfy in order to demonstrate competence. You must consider the context of assessment when providing guidance to candidates about the types of evidence they could present in their portfolios and ensure you have access to a document that describes competent performance.

A major challenge in using portfolios of evidence as an assessment method relates to ensuring consistency and reliability in the judgments made by assessors of the material presented in the portfolio. The RTO needs to supply assessors with appropriate tools to judge competence. You should also check the RTO's procedures for authenticating the evidence presented in the portfolio.

Items in a portfolio may include:

- a collection of work samples compiled by candidate
- products with support documentation (the evidence guide may require the candidate to submit products they have created or manufactured)
- the candidate's résumé, certificates, awards and qualifications
- testimonials from work colleagues, supervisors, customers and suppliers
- work completed as a learner in other courses of study
- video or photographic evidence
- journals or log books
- testimonials from groups where the candidate has worked as a volunteer or where they have contributed as a member of a sporting or community group.

## Evidence from a review of products

Candidates may include products in a portfolio presented for assessment or as an individual component of assessment. Wherever possible, the assessor should attempt to observe the candidate's involvement in the process of creating the product.

The type of product that the candidate presents for assessment is determined by the context of assessment (their work role and the requirements of the assessment criteria).

You will need to have a checklist or samples of completed products that you may use as a guide in judging competence.

The items on the evaluation checklist vary to reflect the specific evidence. For example, criteria could include design features, time taken to complete the sample, accuracy, how closely the sample satisfies the brief and creativity.

## Evidence from third-party feedback

Third-party evidence is gathered from the candidate's workplace supervisors, technical experts, subject matter experts and peers. In some cases, customers, suppliers or community members may be able to formally comment on the candidate's performance. You may wish to ask for the qualifications in the form of a resume from stakeholders, if applicable.

Third-party reports are usually supplemented with additional evidence, such as a quiz that gathers evidence of the application of 'required knowledge' and observations completed by a qualified assessor. Candidates who present a portfolio for recognition purposes will usually include at least one third-party report.

The third party needs to record their observations in a form or checklist and ensure that the evidence provided is clearly mapped to the relevant components of the unit of competency.

You should arrange a meeting with the third party to explain the assessment process. It may be appropriate for you to explain relevant procedures to them, such as those related to privacy of the candidate's information, anti-discrimination, culturally inclusive practice and workplace health and safety. In addition, there may be commercial-in-confidence material from the workplace that needs to be considered.

You can obtain more information on third parties collecting evidence from:

- www.asqa.gov.au/news-and-publications/publications/fact-sheets/using-other-parties-to-collect-assessment-evidence.html

## Evidence from 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 the project in their workplace, to use a case study or to undertake research.

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

You should also consider working with a peer to review the project so you can 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 of the evidence required. Alternatively, the candidate can waste time gathering and researching evidence that is not required as a part of the unit of competency assessment requirements.

You may find it beneficial to have candidates submit their projects for feedback at several stages to ensure that relevant evidence is being gathered.

## Evidence from self-assessment materials

Self-assessment allows candidates to collect and provide evidence on their own performance against identified units of competency. Self-assessment is often used as a tool to help the assessor and candidate determine what evidence is available and where the gaps may be. The assessor can then decide what assessment method could be used to gather supplementary evidence, or whether further training needs to be undertaken to address the gaps.

Candidate self-assessment is often a component of the evidence gathered in support of an application for recognition of prior learning or current competency. They are useful when the leaner needs to demonstrate reflective and evaluative skills.

The RTO usually makes self-assessment instruments available to candidates in printed or electronic format. 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 a sample 'Self-assessment record' template.

## Collect evidence

You need to understand the principles of assessment when collecting evidence; i.e. the assessment must be fair, flexible, valid and reliable. You also need to know the rules of evidence; i.e. whether the evidence collected is valid, sufficient, authentic and current. These are discussed in detail in the following section.

You need to determine the opportunities for gathering evidence from the candidate. This may be real work/real-time activities through observation and third-party reports, or structured activities. In some instances you may be able to integrate opportunities to gather evidence.

## Organise and document collected evidence

The RTO's assessment procedures may describe the assistance you are expected to give candidates to organise and document evidence. Remember that some candidates require greater levels of support to organise and document their evidence.

The assistance you provide is largely determined by the RTO's policies and procedures and the time you have available to support individual candidates. When your time is limited or you believe you do not have the required skills, you may wish to involve specialist support. Refer to the list of specialist support services in Topic 1.

Candidates who may require support include:

- RPL candidates
- recent school leavers
- those who are new to vocational training and assessment, and presenting for assessment for the first time
- those being assessed at AQF levels 1, 2 or 3
- people who have a disability
- older assessment candidates
- candidates with lower levels of language and literacy
- candidates who do not speak English as their first language
- candidates who have not previously been successful in school education.

## Ensure instructions are clear

The instructions included in assessment instruments should clearly explain the evidence that candidates are required to submit. Consider the types of information needs the candidates have. You can help to limit confusion by explaining any new or unusual terms and avoid using specialist or technical language. Wherever possible, particularly for units at lower AQF levels, include diagrams, examples or flow charts to explain the process of gathering evidence.

The instructions in assessment instruments should include advice about the format the candidate should use to present their evidence.

Instructions to candidates could include:

- the approximate word limit of an essay
- time frames for the submission of assessments
- the layout of business reports
- how documents should be ordered in a portfolio
- verification of third-party reports
- the time limit on presentations
- the software that should be used to create documents
- information on plagiarism and re-assessment (if required)
- the method they should use to submit product samples.

## Contact the candidate

You should also make provision for contacting or meeting with candidates individually to check their progress during the assessment process. Discuss the strategies they are using to gather evidence and share tips with them on how to check their evidence, use their time more effectively and collate their evidence into a suitable format. Where appropriate, you should:

- give the candidate feedback on the evidence they have gathered
- help them to identify any gaps in their evidence
- agree on the types of additional evidence and potential sources they can use to address those gaps.

## Record the evidence

Follow your organisation's procedures for documenting the evidence you have gathered from the candidate. This prepares you for judging it. There may be a specific form you have to complete or a mapping document that shows the evidence collected and the benchmark or performance evidence it is judged against. You may need to:

- map which assessment methods you used
- map which activities helped you to identify whether the performance criteria, required knowledge and foundation skills were assessed
- supply an assessment summary.

Ask your trainer for a sample 'Assessment mapping' template.

Example

### Use agreed assessment methods and tools to gather, organise and document evidence

The following is an example of a plan developed by an assessor responsible for guiding candidates to gather quality evidence for the unit *NWPGEN009 Perform laboratory testing* from the NWP National Water Training Package.

| Evidence plan | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Unit:** *NWPGEN009 Perform laboratory testing* | | |
| **Work activity:** Perform laboratory tests and procedures using standard methods and with access to readily available advice | | |
| **Assessment context** | **Assessment method** | **Evidence requirements** |
| Workplace laboratory | ▶ Observation of performance<br>▶ Third-party reports from experienced practitioners | ▶ Adopting hygienic work practices<br>▶ Limiting hazards and contamination to self, work area and environment<br>▶ Using laboratory safety equipment and personal protective equipment<br>▶ Interpreting laboratory test methods<br>▶ Interpreting policies, procedures and standards<br>▶ Using potentiometric, ion selective, spectrophotometric, volumetric and gravimetric laboratory equipment<br>▶ Performing sub-sample and testing products<br>▶ Labelling samples for testing<br>▶ Registering and preserving samples<br>▶ Selecting the correct equipment and checking equipment performance<br>▶ Maintaining a safe work environment |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Written and/or oral questioning to assess knowledge and understanding | Operational knowledge of:<br>▶ purpose of tests<br>▶ principles of the standard method<br>▶ calibration and/or pre-use equipment checks and their basis<br>▶ relevant standards and specifications and their interpretation<br>▶ source of uncertainty in measurements and methods for control<br>▶ importance and appropriate use of certified reference materials<br>▶ procedures for recognition of unexpected or unusual results and likely causes<br>▶ WHS for sample and testing<br>▶ safety data sheets. |
| | Completion of workplace documents and reports produced as part of routine work activities | ▶ Comparing sample description with the specification, recording results and reporting discrepancies<br>▶ Producing laboratory reports and logs<br>▶ Interpreting and recording test results, including calculation of results from test data, where required |

Reasonable adjustment methods, when appropriate, include:

- simplifying the language used for the oral assessment task
- providing extra time
- using an interpreter
- using adaptive technology.

# Activity 8

1. Select a unit of competency from any training package. You may use a unit of competency that you are responsible for assessing for your RTO or you may wish to use *BSBCMM201 Communicate in the workplace* from the Business Services Training Package. Read and interpret the unit of competency and prepare a plan for gathering evidence that addresses several of the assessment requirements, such as:
   - elements
   - performance criteria
   - performance evidence
   - foundation skills
   - required knowledge.

   Include the assessment tools and method for gathering evidence.

2. Identify any potential barriers and processes relating to the assessment tool and method.

3. Gather evidence by implementing the assessment instrument in an actual or simulated work environment. Retain a copy of the gathered evidence (without the candidate's identifying personal details) in your assessment portfolio if you complete the evidence-gathering in a real workplace. Retain the evidence for use in other learning activities in this learner guide.

4. Describe how you will organise and document the evidence in a format suitable for determining competence.

5. Record a reflective statement regarding your experience in gathering quality evidence.

**Click to complete Activity 8**

# 2B Apply the principles of assessment and rules of evidence to gather quality evidence

The evidence collected in a competency-based assessment system must satisfy the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence. These are outlined in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, which establishes RTOs' obligations to ensure these rules and principles are complied with.

## Check the assessment conditions

The assessment conditions in a unit of competency provide advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, foundation skills, required knowledge and the implementation guides for the relevant training package.


You should also check the evidence guide for important information about any workplace and regulatory requirements that may impact on assessment. For example, workers who perform meat inspections may decide to undertake a course of study that includes units of competency related to inspecting particular types of meat, such as game. As an assessor, you should be aware from reading the units of competency in the AMP Australian Meat Processing Training Package that all assessment must be conducted against Australian meat industry standards and regulations.

# Satisfy the rules of evidence

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

There are four rules of evidence that guide the collection of evidence. These are described in the following table.

| Rule of evidence | Definition | Example |
|---|---|---|
| **Valid** | Assessment is valid when the process is sound and assesses what it claims to assess.<br>Validity requires that the evidence must cover the required skills and knowledge, and be integrated with the candidate's practical application.<br>Evidence used for assessment must have been gathered on a number of occasions and in a range of contexts using different assessment methods. | **Processing a payment for a customer in a retail store**<br>The assessor reviews the unit of competency and assessment conditions, and lists what a competent person would do to process a payment for a customer.<br>The assessor identifies that they will 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 answers 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. |
| **Sufficient** | Sufficiency requires that evidence of the learner's competency is demonstrated across all aspects of the unit of competency and has been demonstrated repeatedly.<br>In some cases it is difficult to gather sufficient evidence using a summative assessment instrument and the assessor needs to make arrangements to gather supplementary information. This may involve requesting a third-party report when the learner is observed performing a specific skill. | **Website design and development**<br>A candidate has compiled a portfolio of evidence of the various websites they have created as they progress through the course.<br>The candidate will be completing a final case study where they are holistically assessed against the assessment requirements, including the required knowledge component of the relevant unit of competency.<br>Teamwork is identified as a required skill in the unit of competency, so the assessor organises for the candidate's supervisor to complete a third-party report to gather evidence of the candidate's competence to work as a member of a team. |

| Rule of evidence | Definition | Example |
|---|---|---|
| **Authentic** | You must be convinced that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work and supporting documents are genuine. | **Certificate IV in Bookkeeping**<br>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, and helps them to meet the requirements of the Board of Taxation in relation to competence in preparing business activity statements. |
| **Current** | Currency relates to the age of the evidence presented by a candidate to demonstrate they are still competent. Competency requires demonstration of current performance; thus, the evidence collected must be from the present or the very recent past. | **Policy**<br>The Vue Interior Design Academy assessment policy requires that evidence must be no more than five years old. |

## Apply principles of assessment

Strategies you can use to ensure you comply with the principles of assessment are outlined in the following table.

| Principle of assessment | Strategy |
|---|---|
| **Fair** | An assessment system and its processes must not disadvantage anyone. All eligible candidates must be guaranteed access to assessment that 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:<br>▶ clear communication of the assessment process to the candidate<br>▶ the candidate's agreement to the assessment process<br>▶ an opportunity for the candidate to challenge the assessment result and for reassessment to occur if necessary. |
| **Flexible** | The methods selected to gather evidence must reflect the candidate's individual needs and circumstances. You may need to make adjustments to the assessment process, such as rewording instructions, contextualising to suit the candidate's culture, and focusing on oral responses or demonstration rather than written work. You may need to provide additional time for an assessment or timetable the assessment to suit the candidate. You must also implement an assessment strategy that supports recognition of competencies that have been demonstrated by the candidate. |

| Principle of assessment | Strategy |
|---|---|
| **Valid** | Assessment is valid when the process is sound and assesses what it claims to assess. 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 the units of competency are interpreted and applied consistently from person to person and from context to context. Judgments of competence should be made consistently by various assessors relying on the same types of evidence. |

Example

### Apply the principles of assessment and rules of evidence to gather quality evidence

The following example demonstrates the information that assessors can expect to find in the assessment conditions section of a unit of competency, which can help them to identify the various pieces of evidence that could be assembled by candidates.

Imogen is employed at Excel Hair and Beauty College. This semester she is responsible for assessing the unit of competency *SHBHCUT008 Design and perform creative haircuts*. Imogen has read and interpreted the unit of competency as a key part of her process in visualising how a person would perform this work activity.

Imogen is halfway through the process of listing the types of evidence she needs to collect from assessment candidates when she is approached by Jack, another hairdressing teacher who has assessed this unit in his previous workplace. Jack explains to Imogen that it is very important to check the performance evidence and assessment conditions to determine the specific evidence required for this unit. The evidence guide for this unit is quite extensive.

On checking the assessment requirements, Imogen finds that to demonstrate competence, the candidates must:

- write a brief report on current and emerging trends
- develop a portfolio of six creative haircuts and a design analysis for each for a range of looks
- consult with at least four clients and complete an analysis covering a variety of factors
- complete creative haircuts on the above clients that each combine at least two of the identified features
- use at least four of these cutting techniques cumulatively across the haircuts completed
- record details of the hair-cutting service for each client in their own portfolio.

The assessor must:

- read relevant WHS legislation and regulations, and workplace policies and procedures, and ensure these are available and that the candidate understands them
- arrange for a salon or simulated salon environment
- ensure they have the relevant qualification outlined in the assessment conditions of this unit.

Jack suggests the following methods of assessment:

- developing a portfolio
- observing the learner performing a range of tasks with a range of clients in an actual or simulated workplace to demonstrate different techniques; observation should be conducted over sufficient time to demonstrate the candidate can handle a range of different scenarios
- presenting a log book or third-party report to verify and record tasks performed in the workplace.

# Activity 9

Using the unit of competency and the evidence you collected in Activity 8, complete a table similar to the following. Use either a template that is used in your workplace for this purpose or this table.

In the first column, list the assessment method you used, then, using dot-points, explain how the method satisfies the rules of evidence and principles of assessment.

| **Evidence-gathering method** | **How this satisfies the rules of evidence**<br>**(valid, sufficient, authentic, current)** | **How this satisfies the principles of assessment**<br>**(fair, flexible, valid, reliable)** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

| **Evidence-gathering method** | **How this satisfies the rules of evidence (valid, sufficient, authentic, current)** | **How this satisfies the principles of assessment (fair, flexible, valid, reliable)** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

**Click to complete Activity 9**

# Summary

1. To select the most appropriate combination of evidence-gathering techniques, you must consider the nature of the work activity, the evidence requirements, the individual characteristics of the candidate and the assessment context and purpose.
2. You must conduct assessment using the assessment tools that have been selected for implementation by the RTO.
3. The assessment requirements document for a unit of competency specifies the evidence required, and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, foundation skills and the implementation guide (where applicable information on assessment is provided) for the relevant training package.
4. Evidence is information that provides proof of competency. There are four rules of evidence that guide the collection of evidence. The assessments implemented by the RTO must be sufficient, valid, authentic and current.
5. The principles of assessment require assessment to be fair, flexible, valid and reliable.
6. Assessment instruments are used to gather evidence from candidates.
7. Assessment instruments may be implemented in an actual workplace or in a simulated workplace, depending on the unit (sometimes assessment must take place in an actual workplace).

# Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

**3A** **Discuss and guide candidates to gather their own evidence to support the recognition of prior learning**

**3B** **Use appropriate communication to develop a professional relationship with the candidate that reflects sensitivity to individual differences and enables two-way feedback**

**3C** **Make decisions on reasonable adjustments based on the candidate's needs and characteristics**

**3D** **Access specialist support in accordance with the assessment plan**

**3E** **Address any WHS risk to a person or equipment immediately**

# Support the candidate

Effective and successful assessment is candidate-centred. The assessment system and the various policies, procedures and assessment plans that the RTO implements as part of that system should be designed to support the candidate to present the best possible evidence of their competency against the relevant benchmarks. In your role as a professional assessor, you will meet a wide range of assessment candidates that vary significantly in the support and guidance they require.

You must be equipped to support candidates with information about the RTO's policies and procedures for reasonable adjustment and recognition of prior learning (RPL). These areas are often particularly challenging for candidates, so you will need to provide them with clear and timely advice.

You also have an important role to ensure that assessment is conducted safely and that any risks or emergencies are managed in accordance with health and safety policies and procedures.

# 3A Discuss and guide candidates to gather their own evidence to support the recognition of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is an assessment process that involves judging evidence the candidate has provided of the skills and knowledge they have developed through previous formal and informal learning against learning outcomes or units of competency. Some candidates may find the process of gathering evidence for RPL daunting. Many candidates rely on the assessor to clearly explain the process to them and support them as they gather their evidence. Many are not aware of the range of evidence that may be suitable for their portfolio, and need advice regarding the action they should take when evidence is not easily obtained or when they are unable to supply evidence for each learning outcome or critical aspect of assessment.

Use your expertise in interpreting competency standards and selecting appropriate assessment instruments, and your knowledge of the RPL application process to guide and support candidates as they gather and organise evidence. You also need to develop mutual respect and rapport with the candidate, and use language that the candidate understands and responds to.

## Understand the recognition process

The recognition process is where learners match their previous training, work or life experience with the performance criteria and knowledge evidence outlined in a qualification. This process is known as recognition of prior learning (RPL).

To have their skills and knowledge formally acknowledged, a learner must supply a range of evidence to verify competency. The assessor then needs to assess this evidence against the criteria for the qualification.

Evidence of competency may include work samples, journals and third-party testimonials. The candidate may be asked to produce evidence of their competency from certificates or awards. They may also need to be observed undertaking specific tasks and/or answering set questions.

In many cases, candidates apply for recognition prior to the commencement of learning and development activities. However, it may become apparent as a learner progresses through the delivery stage of learning that they have the skills, knowledge and competency that are required to satisfy the performance evidence aspects of assessment for an individual unit or for a cluster of units of competency. You may also encounter candidates who are able to provide evidence of their competency in regard to individual elements in a unit of competency. Refer to your workplace policies and procedures for advice on how to process partial recognition for a candidate. You will then need to organise gap training and assessment for the remaining elements of the unit of competency.

# RPL processes

The following is an example of a typical RPL process; however, remember that each RTO may approach this differently.

**RPL process**

Candidate approaches RTO with inquiry about RPL assessment.

**OR**

Trainer identifies during training that a candidate already has the skills and knowledge.

RTO provides information about RPL, including an overview, self-assessment checklist, third-party assessment form and application form. (This could be included in the student handbook.)

Candidate completes a self-assessment checklist and lodges RPL application.

Assessor makes initial assessment and provides advice to candidate.

The assessor may determine (in consultation with the candidate) that they are not suitable for RPL and may develop a plan for the candidate to undertake learning.

Where it appears that the candidate may be suitable for RPL assessment for all or some performance criteria in a unit of competency, the assessor provides advice to the candidate about how to gather evidence for RPL.

Candidate gathers evidence for RPL.

Candidate submits RPL evidence for assessment.

Assessor reviews RPL evidence and makes a decision. They may determine that it is necessary to gather supplementary evidence or the candidate may need to undertake 'gap' learning.

The candidate may gather and submit additional evidence when gaps have been identified.

The assessor judges evidence and makes a decision.

# The role of the assessor in RPL

Your role as an assessor requires that you provide clear and accurate information on recognition entitlements to candidates. Follow your workplace policies and procedures to ensure you fulfil your obligations in regard to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

You need to be familiar with the RTO's policies and procedures in regard to each of these components of the RPL process. You should also check the RTO's assessment bank for instruments that can be used for RPL assessment. Confirm that the instructions on the assessment instrument are clear and appropriate for RPL assessment candidates.

In some cases, you may need to develop self-assessment tools and RPL exemplar evidence to be used by candidates. These tools must be reviewed as part of the RTO's validation process prior to and after their implementation.

You are also responsible for counselling the candidate about the impact that a successful application for recognition may have on the final transcript of the competencies that they receive. For example, in some cases RTOs grade the result that a candidate is awarded even though this is not part of competency-based training. Candidates may prefer to complete the assessment activities and receive a graded result rather than having a result code that identifies they were assessed using a recognition process.

Your obligations could include:

- advising and assisting the candidate to apply for recognition
- determining the type of recognition the candidate should consider applying for
- assisting the candidate to complete the correct document
- offering a range of assessment methodologies to meet their individual needs
- encouraging the candidate to self-assess their skills and knowledge before applying for RPL
- offering opportunities for the candidate to discuss their application with you
- processing recognition applications in a timely manner
- providing meaningful feedback.

# Strategies to assist a candidate

Follow your workplace policies and procedures when deciding the level and type of support you are able to provide to candidates. You should meet with the candidate to explain the RPL process to them in some detail, preferably face-to-face, but by phone or online where appropriate. To prepare for this meeting, you should:

- read and interpret the relevant training package implementation guide
- read and interpret the units of competency
- source appropriate assessment instruments.

Use the meeting as an opportunity to develop a professional relationship with the candidate. You can achieve this by explaining the RPL process using language that is appropriate to the candidate's needs. Remember, many candidates are not familiar with units of competency, assessment and the principles of gathering evidence. You should explain these terms using appropriate examples.

Always make yourself available by phone, email or in prearranged meetings to give feedback to the candidate on the evidence they are collecting and assembling it into an assessment portfolio. Most candidates require help annotating the evidence with links to the benchmarks that are being used for assessment.

## Support for RPL

Where appropriate, check the assessment plan to familiarise yourself with the candidate's individual needs. You should consider the candidate's workplace, previous education, language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) levels and the units of competency they are enrolled in.

Here are some questions candidates often ask and some ideas for responding to them.

**What is RPL?**

- Explain the RPL process in clear terms that the candidate will understand. Emphasise that it is there to help and support the person and to make the recognition process easy.
- Provide general advice about the process.
- Send a self-assessment checklist. Ask your trainer for a sample 'Self-assessment record' template; Aspire has included relevant templates in its *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

**How can I apply?**

- Discuss the process your organisation follows.
- Ask the candidate to complete an application form. Explain that the form asks them to submit appropriate evidence.

**What evidence do I need?**

- Explain that the evidence must show the candidate has the skills and knowledge for the unit/s they wish to have recognised. Provide a list of evidence, such as:
  - samples of work and an explanation of how these were produced
  - actual or video demonstration of a task
  - third-party reports, such as a statement from a previous employer
  - challenge tests
  - interviews.
- Explain the RTO's policy for authenticating evidence.

| **How can I supply the evidence?** |
| --- |
| ▶ Explain that evidence is often submitted in a portfolio.<br>▶ Give the candidate instructions for collating the portfolio and any tools or checklists that can help them to ensure the evidence they submit satisfies the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment. Provide third-party report templates. Ask your trainer for a sample 'Third-party report' template. |
| **How much evidence is required?** |
| ▶ Explain that the evidence has to be sufficient to demonstrate competency, so the candidate generally has to supply at least two types of evidence. This may include a demonstration, an interview or a knowledge quiz. |
| **What is an example of evidence so I know what to collect?** |
| ▶ Provide situations and exemplars of evidence to give the candidate an idea of the breadth and depth of the evidence required. |
| **What if I have trouble collecting evidence?** |
| ▶ Discuss strategies the candidate could use to collect evidence.<br>▶ It may be appropriate to attend their workplace or organise a simulated workplace where you can observe the candidate's performance of a task. This is particularly useful when the unit of competency requires them to demonstrate a specific skill that is not readily observed in the candidate's workplace. |

## Collate a portfolio

Portfolios are a collection of items of evidence collected by the candidate that demonstrate their competency in relation to assessment criteria, including the skills and knowledge, attitudes and abilities, and foundation skills that contribute to competency. The portfolio may include paper and/or electronic evidence.

Your task is to guide the candidate to help them determine what evidence their portfolio should include and how this evidence should be presented.

Candidates seeking recognition for their existing competency usually present a portfolio of evidence for the assessor to review. 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 by arranging for a testimonial from their employer about their performance of a specific aspect of competency. Ask your trainer for a sample 'Portfolio assessment instrument checklist' template.

The following outlines the instructions usually included in a portfolio assessment instrument.

### Types of items that could be collated in the portfolio

- These include:
  - employment records
  - work diaries or logs (personal reflections on their progress via an ongoing learning journal)
  - records of workplace training
  - assessments of current skills, including foundation skills
  - assessments of current knowledge
  - third-party reports from current and previous trainers, managers and customers or clients about how they have applied skills and knowledge
  - previous qualifications
  - confirmation of relevant unpaid or volunteer experience
  - examples of work products
  - responses to activities they have undertaken
  - responses to a final assessment
  - samples and an analysis of relevant forms, documents and other material used in their workplace
  - any additional records they have developed for their job.

### How to ensure currency of the evidence

- You need to give the candidate advice on how recent the evidence should be; for example, evidence should not be older than five years.

### How to ensure authenticity

- Help the candidate understand how they can demonstrate the procedures they followed to produce a specific portfolio item; their personal contribution to the task or activities (as opposed to the team's contribution); and what they would do to improve the way they performed a specific task or activity.
- In most cases an employer or supervisor would need to verify records to ensure they are authentic.

### Show linkages

- Explain the methods the candidate can use to show the link between individual portfolio items and the performance evidence items.

### Strategies to address gaps in competency

- Explain that the candidate may need to complete gap training.

### Presentation methods

- Give advice on how best to present the information in the portfolio to enhance readability, and to help the assessor see the relationship between portfolio items and the unit of competency.
- Explain that the candidate should highlight evidence of foundation skills to the assessor (for example, through a reflection on their own performance).
- Suggest that the candidate presents the evidence systematically by using an index and clearly identifying the element/s or performance criteria their evidence applies to.

Example

### Discuss and guide candidates to gather their own evidence to support recognition of prior learning

Casey is currently completing TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment from the TAE Training and Education Training Package. She has worked as a trainer for several years at a private RTO and has previously completed the TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. In her role as an assessor, she has participated in numerous assessment validation panels. Casey is keen to apply for RPL for the unit.

Casey's assessor advises that she needs to complete a form to apply for RPL assessment. She needs to present her evidence in portfolio format. Each item in the portfolio must be annotated to show how it is linked to the assessment requirements for the unit. Her and her assessor then set a date for a competency interview so she can present her portfolio items and demonstrate her knowledge.

Casey's assessor suggests that she include the following items in her portfolio:

- Validation schedule
- Validation action plan
- Summary of assessment approach
- Validation materials
- Validation materials cover sheet
- Explanation of assessment requirements for two units of competency
- Document checklist
- Evidence of Casey's performance in two validation sessions
- Observation record of Casey's participation in a discussion of validation findings
- Third-party report from the RTO quality manager
- Trainer and assessor capability record with VET and industry currency details
- Professional development plan

Casey's assessor meets with her to give her feedback on the portfolio and her responses to the knowledge questions that formed the competency interview. Her assessor suggests that Casey needs to:

- provide supplementary evidence by completing a quiz on the knowledge evidence component of the unit
- undertake gap training to develop her knowledge of quality assessment instruments that address the individual needs of candidates with language and literacy issues.

# Activity 10

The performance evidence for this unit of competency, *TAEASS402 Assess competence,* requires you to demonstrate you are competent to assess a candidate for RPL. You may conduct this assessment in an actual or simulated workplace.

Arrange to conduct RPL assessment with the support of your trainer/assessor. You should include:

- the relevant assessment plan
- the assessment method and instrument
- the evidence that was gathered from the candidate (with their personal information removed)
- a reflective statement on your judgment of competency in your assessment portfolio.

Clearly identify that these items are being submitted as evidence of your competency to guide candidates to gather their own evidence, and of your competency to judge RPL assessment.

**Click to complete Activity 10**

# 3B Use appropriate communication to develop a professional relationship with the candidate that reflects sensitivity to individual differences and enables two-way feedback

Establishing a participative and collaborative relationship between the candidate and the assessor based on confidentiality, accountability and sensitivity builds confidence in assessment methods. It also gives candidates the opportunity to ask questions about the assessment process. To develop a professional relationship you need a range of skills and knowledge, as outlined below.

Skills and knowledge for a professional relationship include:

- analysis and interpretation skills to identify candidate needs
- communication and interpersonal skills to establish a working relationship with candidates, and give clear and precise instructions
- cultural sensitivity and equity considerations, including those related to anti-discrimination, racial vilification and disability discrimination.

## Identify the candidate

Your specific job role establishes the professional relationship you have with candidates. Where you have been involved in delivering learning and development activities, you will have developed an understanding of the candidate's background as you progressed through various learning activities. In some cases, you may only come into contact with the candidate occasionally; for example, workplace trainees who complete most of their learning online or remote learners who use a learner guide with the support and guidance of their workplace supervisor.

You must develop a profile of the candidate prior to assessment. As an assessor, you are obligated to make sure that assessment activities are contextualised to the learner's environment and are adjusted to ensure access and equity so you can provide the relevant support.

For example, you need to know whether:

- your candidate has LLN issues
- English is not their first language
- the candidate is Indigenous
- the candidate is in a remote location
- the candidate is unable to access resources for assessment
- the candidate has any issues, such as a disability, that may impact on their ability to provide evidence as required.

Remember, it is the candidate's choice whether they wish to disclose any disability. You may need to speak with the candidate personally and observe them (either in their workplace or in group learning environment) in order to gather sufficient information about them prior to assessment.

## Develop rapport with the candidate

Rapport is the ability for people to understand each other and work together harmoniously. If the candidate has sufficient information about your role as an assessor and your previous work history, this will help them to understand the skills and knowledge you bring to the process of assessing their competency.

You may wish to explain the assessor's role to them in your initial meetings, such as how you can:

- support them in gathering evidence for assessment
- provide reasonable adjustment
- coordinate access to specialist support.

You should also explain how the privacy of their personal information is maintained by the RTO.

You may decide it is appropriate to share some information with candidates about your professional experience as an assessor and your work experience in various industries to give them confidence of your ability. Check your RTO policies and procedures to decide which information to share about your experience in industry with candidates.

## Communicate clearly

Explain the process of assessment in language that is appropriate to the education and experience of candidates to build trust and rapport. Candidates need to feel that you are sensitive to their individual needs and current level of competency. Encourage candidates to share their previous experience of learning and assessment with you. Let them know you value them sharing this personal information. This further encourages candidates to discuss any fears or concerns they may have about assessment. Remember, the candidate is often the best source of strategies that could be used to address their fears and concerns.

Take advantage of any opportunities that present themselves for discussing assessment with candidates. Ask questions to build a profile of their assessment needs, and individual strengths and weaknesses. For this strategy to be successful, you need to have developed a relationship in which the candidate is willing to trust you with their personal information. A key method for building this type of trust is to be careful not to divulge personal or private information about other candidates, particularly in a group learning environment or during discussions with other trainees or learners in the candidate's workplace.

Explain the RTO's assessment strategies and how these can be implemented to suit the candidate's individual needs. For example, a candidate may disclose to you that they are a single parent who is working part time and have undertaken training to improve their opportunities for securing full-time employment. The candidate may be concerned about juggling work, training and family responsibilities, and finding sufficient time to gather evidence for assessment. The RTO's assessment strategies may allow for evidence to be gathered by observing the candidate in their workplace and integrating competency standards for assessment, significantly reducing the time that the candidate needs to spend completing assessment instruments.

## Sensitivity to individual differences

You are responsible for assessing candidates with a range of individual differences that need to be considered to support them during the assessment process.

The various individual differences that may act as barriers to implementing assessment strategies are summarised in the following table.

| Individual differences | Possible issues/impact | Assistance to provide |
|---|---|---|
| **LLN barriers** | ▶ Difficulties with:<br>– interpreting content (including instructions) in assessment instruments<br>– conducting research to complete assessment<br>– reading and interpreting workplace policies and procedures<br>– contacting assessors (for example, by phone or email). | ▶ Provide verbal assessment.<br>▶ Ensure instructions are clear and easy to understand; they may be written in the learner's language, if applicable.<br>▶ Include diagrams and images in instructions.<br>▶ Provide access to specialist support. |
| **Physical impairment or disability** | ▶ Difficulties with:<br>– interpreting content (including instructions) in assessment instruments<br>– accessing the assessment environment<br>– using equipment, materials or technology<br>– conducting research to complete assessment<br>– reading and interpreting workplace policies and procedures<br>– contacting assessors (for example, by phone or email). | ▶ Make appropriate reasonable adjustments.<br>▶ Provide access to specialist support.<br>▶ Modify the work/ assessment environment.<br>▶ Provide access to adaptive equipment and technology. |

| Individual differences | Possible issues/impact | Assistance to provide |
|---|---|---|
| **Intellectual impairment or disability** | ▸ Difficulties with:<br>– interpreting content (including instructions) in assessment instruments<br>– coping with fatigue or stress<br>– interpersonal relationships and group assessment<br>– using equipment, materials or technology<br>– conducting research to complete assessment<br>– meeting optimum performance times due to medicating regime<br>– reading and interpreting workplace policies and procedures<br>– contacting assessors (for example, by phone or email). | ▸ Conduct assessment over short durations and at times to suit optimum performance.<br>▸ Include images and diagrams in instructions.<br>▸ Use verbal questioning.<br>▸ Provide access to specialist support.<br>▸ Allow time for medication. |
| **Medical condition that may impact on assessment, such as arthritis, epilepsy, diabetes or asthma** | ▸ Difficulties with:<br>– work, learning and assessment due to fatigue<br>– meeting optimum performance times due to medicating regime<br>– using equipment and machinery safely because of medication. | ▸ Seek specialist advice.<br>▸ Introduce a flexible time frame for assessment.<br>▸ Modify equipment and machinery where appropriate.<br>▸ Establish online assessment where appropriate.<br>▸ Allow time for medication. |
| **Learning difficulties, mental or psychological disability** | ▸ Difficulties with:<br>– interpreting content (including instructions) in assessment instruments<br>– coping with fatigue or stress<br>– interpersonal relationships and group assessment<br>– using equipment, materials or technology<br>– conducting research to complete assessment<br>– meeting optimum performance times due to medicating regime. | ▸ Conduct assessment over short durations and at times to suit optimum performance.<br>▸ Include images and diagrams in instructions.<br>▸ Use verbal questioning.<br>▸ Provide access to specialist support. |

| Individual differences | Possible issues/impact | Assistance to provide |
|---|---|---|
| **Religious and spiritual observances** | ▸ May not be able to use certain materials required in assessment.<br>▸ May not be able to attend assessment on specific days or at specific times. | ▸ Organise assessment times that are suitable for the candidate's religious and spiritual observations.<br>▸ Make appropriate reasonable adjustment to assessments. |
| **Cultural images and perceptions** | ▸ Candidate's confidence may be at risk.<br>▸ May experience bullying or harassment due to stereotypes. | ▸ Make sure assessment tools do not include stereotypes and do not require specific cultural knowledge for completion. |
| **Age** | ▸ May have:<br>– fatigue<br>– lack of experience<br>– limited technology skills<br>– lack of confidence. | ▸ Use a range of assessment methods (for example, portfolio assessment is an appropriate and comprehensive assessment instrument).<br>▸ Use verbal questioning and interviews. |
| **Gender** | ▸ May experience bullying/discrimination (for example, if the job role is not usually performed by people of this gender).<br>▸ Different gender to the assessor could lead to bias or discrimination. | ▸ Use assessor of the same gender, if appropriate.<br>▸ Make sure assessment tools do not have gender-specific content. |

## Encourage two-way feedback

Give the candidate feedback about their performance during the assessment process. Your goal should be to provide appropriate support to the candidate to enable them to present the best possible evidence for assessment.

The following section explains feedback that you may need to give the candidate to overcome various barriers they may encounter during assessment. Providing feedback to candidates is also discussed in Topic 4.

## Ensure understanding

Candidates, particularly recent school leavers or those who have not previously undertaken vocational training, may need additional information on:

- competency-based training
- the support available to them
- the process of gathering quality evidence
- the method that will be used to judge competency.

RPL candidates appreciate you going through the process step-by-step, especially if they have not been involved in an assessment for a number of years. If a candidate is being assessed online and through a video link, they need to have clear understanding of their responsibilities to ensure they are prepared and that the assessment process works smoothly.

## Address candidate concerns

Make yourself available to confidentially discuss any concerns candidates may have regarding assessment, and partner with them to develop an appropriate action plan. You should check the RTO's policies and procedures for ensuring candidates' concerns are addressed. In some cases, you may be able to refer the candidate to specialist support, such as specialist educators or counsellors. Make sure they are aware of the complaints and appeals process.

## Enable questions and answers

The RTO may use various forums for candidates to discuss issues regarding assessment processes with trainers, assessors and other candidates. You should check that candidates have sufficient information to access the method used by your RTO. These methods could include email, online forums or personal interviews.

When a candidate contacts you with a question, ensure they receive a response as promptly as possible and make a personal commitment to follow up their questions.

## Confirm outcomes

Topics 4 and 5 examine in detail the methods used by RTOs to give formal feedback to candidates and to record the outcomes of assessment judgments. While preparing for and conducting assessment, discuss with candidates:

- the process that will be used to judge evidence
- how the outcome is reported
- how their results may contribute to gaining a qualification or statement of attainment.

# Identify further evidence to be provided and confirm gap training

After reviewing the candidate's assessment portfolio or completed assessment instrument, you may identify that they have not satisfied the rules of evidence or principles of assessment in relation to specific assessment criteria. Check your RTO's policies and procedures for giving advice to candidates about providing further evidence to address these gaps, including:

- a time line
- the additional information to be provided
- the form in which it is to be presented.

You should arrange to meet with the candidate (in person or online) to agree on an action plan to address the gaps in their performance that require additional training.

# Discuss action plans

You may find it helpful to develop an action plan that the candidate can refer to when collecting evidence. Schedule times to review the implementation of the action plan with the candidate.

An action plan may:

- list the various assessment instruments that the candidate is scheduled to complete over a certain period of time
- provide a schedule for the different components of a project to help the candidate monitor their progress and achieve milestones
- provide a summary of:
  - assessment instrument requirements
  - resources required
  - evidence sources
  - support available
  - time scheduled for completion.

# Suggest improvements

Candidates benefit from being given exemplars or samples of 'best practice' methods of presenting evidence. You may need to provide additional support to candidates to ensure they are able to clearly link their evidence to the assessment requirements.

# Appeal processes

Candidates must be given information about the process for appealing their assessment results. This is most likely to be given to them during induction or in their student handbook. You should confirm with candidates that they understand the process for appeals. It may be timely to do this when you are giving them feedback about their summative assessment.

Example

### Use appropriate communication to develop a professional relationship with the candidate that reflects sensitivity to individual differences and enables two-way feedback

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

Louis contacts Wendy, an Indigenous candidate living in a remote community, who is completing her course as an external student. Louis uses an online meeting technology that he organises through a community centre in Wendy's local community.

Louis has completed training that helps him understand the issues that could impact on Wendy's learning and assessment.

In his first meeting with Wendy he carefully explains the assessment process. Wendy has not undertaken any training since leaving school and is, therefore, unfamiliar with competency- based training. Louis describes the process of gathering evidence and explains the process he will use to judge the evidence she provides.

Louis allows a reasonable amount of time in the initial meeting for answering Wendy's questions. He understands that she is not familiar with RPL assessment, assessment reporting or the appeal process.

Wendy realises that Louis is committed to helping her achieve the best possible outcomes from her training. She shares her concerns with him about her ability to understand written English. Louis agrees to put her in touch with a support worker in her local community who is able to help her improve her language and literacy, and can also support her as a scribe and interpreter.

Wendy is also worried about finding childcare while she visits the local library to use the computer. Louis finds that a crèche is available at the library that provides free child-minding services.

Louis and Wendy agree on an action plan for monitoring Wendy's progress. They keep in touch by email and meet online once a month. Louis also keeps in touch with the support worker to understand the types of additional support Wendy may need as she gets closer to assessment. Wendy will be completing the learner guide activities to test her understanding, and Louis has agreed that he will organise for verbal feedback to be sent to her using MP3 recordings. This means Wendy will not have issues understanding the feedback on her work.

# Activity 11

This learning activity is designed to provide you with an opportunity to practise your skills, either in your workplace or as a role-play with another learner or work colleague.

Have your trainer/assessor or a third party (such as your workplace supervisor) observe you in a meeting with a candidate. The purpose of this meeting is to identify specialist support that the candidate may require and any reasonable adjustment that may be required for assessment. You may also identify that the candidate should apply for RPL for all or part of the unit of competency.

The observation checklist (recording materials) completed by your assessor or third party can be included in your assessment portfolio if it has been completed in a real assessment environment. You should also ask the candidate to give you feedback on your interpersonal and communication skills. For example, you may ask them for feedback on your skills in explaining the process of gathering quality evidence.

# 3C Make decisions on reasonable adjustments based on the candidate's needs and characteristics

The candidate's individual needs must be considered when selecting methods and instruments to gather evidence. This is called reasonable adjustment. Adjustments are considered reasonable if they allow for a valid and reliable assessment within the resource capabilities of the RTO. The assessment must continue to satisfy the assessment requirements of the unit of competency. For example, if the outcome of a unit of competency is for a person to be able to interpret instructions written in English, it would not be appropriate to have the assessment presented in another language.

## Reasonable adjustment

Providing reasonable adjustment for learners is based on legislative and regulatory requirements, and the purpose of the organisation providing vocational education and training. The assessment process should not prevent any person from demonstrating their competency, skills or knowledge because the design of the assessment failed to take account of their requirements. The term 'reasonable adjustment' in legislation relates only to people with a disability. However, all learners benefit from inclusive practice that tailors assessment to individual learner requirements.

Groups that may need reasonable adjustment in assessment include:

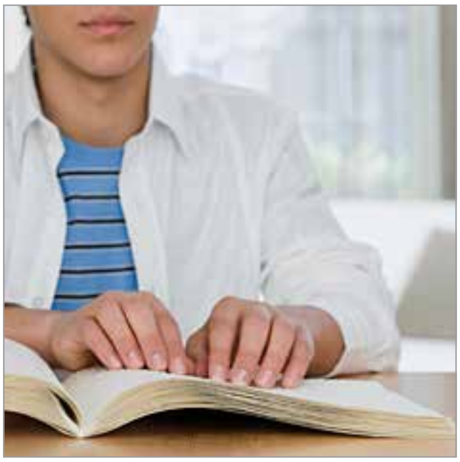
- candidates from rural/remote areas
- candidates with a disability
- candidates with low levels of education
- candidates with low levels of literacy or numeracy
- Indigenous candidates
- candidates from non-English-speaking backgrounds
- older candidates
- female candidates.

## Inclusive practice

Inclusive practice involves:

- taking a candidate's LLN requirements into account
- flexible assessment sessions to allow for fatigue or administering medication
- equity checks and revision where necessary of proposed assessment methods and tools
- considering a candidate's age and gender
- considering cultural beliefs, traditional practices and religious observances
- reasonable adjustment, where required.

## Assess individual needs



RTOs develop procedures that trainers and assessors must follow to provide reasonable adjustment. For example, you may be required to check each enrolment form for any indication the candidate may require reasonable adjustment.

Remember, not all candidates disclose a disability. Some disabilities, such as mental illnesses and psychiatric disabilities, are not visible or obvious (these are sometimes referred to as 'hidden disabilities'). The RTO should implement procedures to ensure that trainers and assessors are aware of candidates' individual needs and learning styles, and that they approach candidates sensitively when there are indicators the candidate may require additional support or adjustment.

When it is likely that reasonable adjustment will be needed, arrange to meet with the candidate to discuss their individual circumstances and agree on an assessment plan that addresses their individual needs. You also need to gather information about any workplace modifications that would be required for the candidate to perform tasks identified in the performance criteria of specific units of competency. For example, a candidate who has a physical disability may require equipment that helps them to lift or move materials in the workplace.

Remember, in competency-based training you are assessing the candidate's ability to perform in a workplace. You need to have a good knowledge of the candidate's individual assessment needs; the scope of modification and adjustment that may be required for assessment; and whether this may be reasonably transferred to the workplace. You may need to seek advice from industry representatives to decide what types of adjustment are appropriate for assessment.

## Make reasonable adjustments

You must consider reasonable adjustment in the context of your legislative responsibilities as a trainer or assessor. You need to be mindful of the resources available to the RTO, including:

- access to funds to pay for any modifications to equipment
- payment for specialist support
- purchase of specialised equipment, such as augmentative technology
- maintaining the authenticity of work practices and the work environment once adjustments are made.

When modifying assessment instruments, you need to confirm the requirements in the assessment conditions. Decide what types of adjustment can be made that enable you to maximise outcomes for candidates, while satisfying the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment that apply to competency-based training.

Reasonable adjustment is generally associated with:

- personal support services, such as providing a reader, an interpreter (including an Auslan interpreter) or a scribe
- assistive technology or special equipment; for example, a modified keyboard that has keys four times larger than a standard keyboard to be used by a person with limited hand function
- the format of assessment materials; for example, electronic or oral assessment
- including diagrams or pictures in instructions or assessments
- adjustment of the physical environment.

## Adjust assessment instruments

The information in the following table summarises a range of adjustments you may consider using with assessment instruments to various candidate issues.

| **Mental illness or psychiatric disability** |
| --- |
| ▶ Use multiple short tests or allow frequent rest periods.<br>▶ Use online assessment.<br>▶ Limit distractions – select an appropriate venue.<br>▶ Coordinate assessments with their medication regime to optimise performance.<br>▶ Use graphics and images to augment the written word.<br>▶ Select an assessment method other than a written, formal exam.<br>▶ Offer assessment options that the candidate is comfortable with.<br>▶ Minimise group work where possible.<br>▶ Avoid role-plays that are conducted in front of an audience.<br>▶ Offer opportunities to use electronic technology for sending responses, such as via email or SMS. |

| **Intellectual disability** |
|---|
| ▶ Provide an assessment coach.<br>▶ Use graphics and images to augment the written word.<br>▶ Offer assessment options, such as role-plays.<br>▶ Use physical prompts to support instructions and questioning.<br>▶ Arrange for flexible assessment sessions to allow for fatigue.<br>▶ Coordinate assessments with medication regime to optimise performance.<br>▶ Use voice recognition software response, where possible.<br>▶ Use a scribe. |
| **Hearing disability** |
| ▶ Use adaptive technology or special equipment to support the candidate.<br>▶ Coordinate access to an Auslan interpreter or scribe.<br>▶ Offer opportunities to use electronic technology for sending responses, such as via email or SMS. |
| **LLN issues** |
| ▶ Provide personal support services, such as a reader, an interpreter or an attendant carer.<br>▶ Use a scribe or a member of the community.<br>▶ Include diagrams, photos or pictures in assessments. |
| **Vision impairment** |
| ▶ Use adaptive technology or special equipment to support the candidate, including voice recognition software.<br>▶ Use braille in a printed assessment instrument.<br>▶ Coordinate access to a scribe.<br>▶ Provide aural information and accept oral responses.<br>▶ Check the available lighting and augment if necessary. |
| **Poor mobility** |
| ▶ Ensure easy access to the assessment venue.<br>▶ Allow additional time for the assessment. |

Example

### Make decisions on reasonable adjustments based on candidates' needs and characteristics

In the next example, an assessor evaluates how she can provide reasonable adjustment and gather quality evidence.

Gabrielle assesses candidates who are undertaking SIT30816 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery. Learners attend the RTO's premises four days a week during the delivery stage of the unit and undertake assessment in the RTO's kitchens. Many of the students speak English as a second language, live in shared accommodation and do not currently work in the hospitality industry.

Because all the candidates have similar difficulties with the assessment, Gabrielle speaks with other assessors to confirm how she can modify the assessment to make sure no one is disadvantaged and that she is still be able to conduct a valid and reliable assessment.

Gabrielle prepares by checking the candidate profiles again, reading the assessment instruments developed by the RTO, and analysing the feedback she has received from previous candidates and representatives from industry that she has spoken to during conferences and at trade shows.

Gabrielle has prepared the following summary of the key points that drive the adjustments she makes:

- Many candidates are not familiar with the use of portfolios for assessment. Gabrielle will hold a session to explain the purpose of a portfolio and what they are required to do. Instructions to develop a portfolio must be much simpler. She will give candidates examples of portfolios.
- The assessment includes a quiz to gather evidence of the candidate's knowledge of food items, safety issues and food-quality indicators. This is proving very difficult for candidates who are able to speak English well, but who have problems reading and writing English. Gabrielle believes that she should be able to conduct the quiz verbally and record the candidates' responses.
- Gabrielle decides to allow additional time to complete the quiz.
- Gabrielle will also suggest that as part of the RTO's continuous improvement program, they offer additional LLN support.

# Activity 12

Read the case study, then complete the tasks that follow.

Note: you may wish to discuss with your trainer whether you may modify this activity so that you can use a candidate you are currently preparing for assessment rather than using the case study.

## Case study

You are meeting with Barry, who has enrolled in a retail course with the goal of improving his likelihood of securing full-time employment. Barry is a 30-year-old man who is hoping to return to full-time work following rehabilitation for back and neck injuries sustained in a car accident. Barry receives support from a specialist rehabilitation case officer organised by his motor vehicle insurer. Although Barry has undertaken significant physiotherapy, he still has chronic neck pain if he stands for extended periods. He is also restricted in the amount of manual lifting he can perform. He is on strong medication that affects his ability to operate plant and equipment.

Prior to his accident, Barry was employed as a warehouse supervisor. So far, he has successfully completed three customer service and point of sale units form the SIR Retail Services Training Package.

You have been asked to assess Barry against the performance evidence for the unit *SIRRINV001 Receive and handle retail stock*.

1. Access the unit of competency from http://training.gov.au and prepare a summary of the quality evidence that Barry needs to supply.

2. Select an appropriate assessment method.

3. Identify the stakeholders who can help you to ensure that Barry's assessment plan addresses his individual needs.

4. Explain any reasonable adjustment that you believe should be made when assessing Barry.

**Click to complete Activity 12**

# 3D Access specialist support in accordance with the assessment plan

Topic 1 examined a range of specialist services, which offer various services and assistance to support candidates during the delivery and assessment stages of their course. This section examines the methods that may be implemented to access these services in accordance with your workplace policies and procedures, to make sure the specialist support services are ready to help when you need them.

## Follow RTO policies and procedures

Individual RTOs have policies and procedures for their staff to follow when accessing specialist support services.

Check the RTO's policies and procedures for any criteria that may apply to a candidate's access to specialist support. This type of criteria will most likely apply when specialist support is being provided in-house or when financial assistance may be available to help pay for the cost of using the service, or the equipment and technology. The RTO's WHS procedures should also be checked to identify whether there are any specialist arrangements that need to be made in regard to modifying the learning or assessment environment.

In most cases, RTOs do not develop forms for referrals. They are more likely to use the form provided to them by the individual specialist service providers. This method of referral allows each provider to ask the RTO for the specific information they need to support the client. The form must be completed in accordance with your workplace procedures for maintaining privacy and confidentiality, such as securing the candidate's permission before disclosing information to a third party. Your RTO may prefer that the candidate personally completes the form to ensure they control what information is disclosed.

You should also confirm the RTO's procedures for working with children checks. In any situation where carers or external parties, such as specialist educators or interpreters, are engaged to work with young assessment candidates, you need to complete forms for checking by regulatory bodies.

These policies and procedures are designed to:

- secure the most appropriate support for the individual candidate's needs
- ensure that support is available in a timely manner
- provide the candidate with full and complete information regarding specialist support (including any costs involved)
- protect the privacy and confidentiality of information.

## Record support information

There are a range of forms and templates you can use to contact specialist services, and record details of the support they provide during learning and assessment.

Your first step when accessing specialist support is to check the assessment plan. This important document should identify the candidate and list any additional assessment needs they may have. When specialist support has previously been arranged, the details of the service provider should be recorded on the assessment plan. If arrangements have not yet been made, you need to check the candidate's enrolment form to identify their individual needs. The candidate has the key source of information about their needs and the types of support services they have found most effective in the past. You should arrange a suitable time to meet with them to discuss the various options you may be able to arrange to maximise their performance in assessment.

## Types of support

RTOs vary in the types and level of services they are able to offer in-house to candidates. For example, large training providers, such as TAFEs, have a wide range of services available to candidates without having to source support from external providers. When you need to arrange for a third party's services, be mindful of the cost and privacy implications involved. The general types of services that may be offered by third parties are listed below.

Support services include:

- Conducting skill assessment at the time of enrolment.
- Developing an individual learning and assessment plan (including goals, sequencing of learning, support required, learning and assessment strategies, and resources).
- Providing specialist learning centres or small group tutorials to help candidates develop learning and assessment skills, such as essay writing, revision techniques and LLN support.
- Providing support in group learning environments.
- Coordinating access to specialist resources, including equipment and technology.
- Providing support for assessors in flexible delivery, classroom support and assistance during the implementation of assessment instruments.

## Information for the candidate

You may act as the conduit between the candidate and the specialist service provider. This is more likely to be the case when the candidate has a disability, speaks English as a second language, or when they are young and/or vulnerable. Check your RTO procedures for information on your role in facilitating access to specialist support.

Keep in mind that specialist services vary significantly in the types of support they offer.

Candidates may require information on:

- services offered
- eligibility criteria
- qualifications or experience of staff
- costs

- resources required
- protection of their private information
- availability of services; for example, is there a waiting list?
- logistical arrangements; for example, will the specialist travel to the assessment environment?
- experience of the specialist in supporting people doing a similar course
- assistance with costs (funding, health insurance, Medicare, etc.).

Example

**Access specialist support in accordance with the assessment plan**

The following is an example of the access and equity policy that is implemented by On Track Training.

Megan is a trainer in an Institute of TAFE where she delivers and assesses units of competency from the TLI Transport and Logistics Training Package. Megan is concerned about the progress of several students in her Certificate III class. She suspects that at least three students will struggle to complete the required class work that is used for formative assessment as they have had high levels of absenteeism. She has noticed they do not participate in group discussions, are disruptive to other students and rarely complete assigned tasks.

When being assessed, they are required to complete a written quiz and participate in a work placement to complete their course. They also need to submit a reflective journal as part of their assessment submission.

Megan checks the students' enrolment forms and realises that none of the students has disclosed any type of disability. She arranges to meet with each student individually to discuss her concerns about their progress and future assessment activities. She hopes that she is able to encourage the students to agree to meet with the TAFE's disabilities coordinator or counsellor to discuss support options.

# Activity 13

Read this continuation of the case study from Activity 12, then complete the task that follows.

## Case study

You have developed a professional relationship with Barry during the process of planning for his assessment. Barry tells you he left school when he was in year nine because he was told he had dyslexia, and specialist LLN support was not available to him as he lived in a remote area of Australia.

Barry asks you to put him in touch with specialists who could support him in the assessment process and in undertaking learning in the remaining units of this course.

Prepare a folder of information you could give Barry that describes the specialist support services that may be able to assist him. Include names, contact details and the types of support available.

**Click to complete Activity 13**

# 3E Address any WHS risk to a person or equipment immediately

This section examines the methods you could use to address WHS risks and respond to any emergencies that may occur. Any actions you take in relation to WHS, including completing various documents, must comply with the RTO's and the candidate's workplace policies and procedures.

As an assessor, you are responsible for:

- identifying any hazards that may occur during an assessment
- evaluating the likelihood of the hazards occurring (risk)
- taking action to eliminate or minimise the hazards
- remaining alert during the assessment process for additional hazards and risks that may occur (this is particularly important when you are conducting assessment in an actual or simulated workplace involving the use of technology and equipment).

## Follow WHS regulations


Commonwealth, state and territory bodies control health and safety in the workplace. Each Australian state and territory has WHS laws that require employers to provide safe and healthy working conditions for employees. These legal requirements also set out the duties of health and safety officers or representatives.

Supporting the WHS laws are regulations, codes of practice, standards and guidance notes. WHS legislation promotes the health and safety of people at work by reducing and controlling workplace risks and hazards.

On 1 January 2012, the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) came into effect, replacing the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* (Cth). This model legislation was developed by the Commonwealth government to harmonise WHS laws across Australia.

According to the Explanatory Memorandum – Model Work Health and Safety Bill (Safe Work Australia, 2016), the objects of harmonising work health and safety laws are to:

- protect the health and safety of workers
- improve safety outcomes in workplaces
- reduce compliance costs for businesses
- improve the efficiency of regulator agencies.

There are also specific WHS requirements as specified in the National Standard for Licensing Persons Performing High Risk Work (ASCC, 2006) and other standards that might be declared from time to time.

# Follow WHS policies and procedures

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.

All workplaces have WHS policies and procedures you are expected to follow. Refer to the RTO's policies and procedures to find information regarding your obligations in relation to risk assessment.

Be familiar with your obligations and responsibilities concerning:

- conducting risk assessments
- reporting hazards
- emergency procedures
- using personal protective equipment (PPE)
- maintaining equipment
- completing documentation
- consulting with WHS specialists.

# Risk assessment

Before undertaking any assessment activity, conduct a WHS risk assessment to determine whether the assessment environment is safe and, if not, what measures should be taken to make it as safe as possible. The employer has a legal requirement to provide and maintain, so far as reasonably practicable, a working environment that is without risks to health or safety.

A risk assessment does not necessarily have to be an involved, formal process. During the planning stage, you must identify the hazards that are present in the assessment environment and take appropriate steps to minimise or eliminate them.

You may play an integral part in devising risk-control procedures or you may be responsible for implementing procedures devised by experts. Make sure you understand your role and level of responsibility within your organisation and the candidate's workplace. You should not proceed with the assessment until control measures have been implemented.

If a hazard is identified, the people responsible must:

- examine the hazard and assess the risk
- implement risk controls to eliminate the risk or to reduce it to a safe level
- inform the relevant people regarding outcomes and actions.

# Report hazards and incidents


The RTO and any workplace where you are conducting assessment requires all employees and assessors to report any concerns, hazards, near misses and injuries that occur in the workplace. This usually involves completing an incident report form or job safety check form, and submitting it to the relevant workplace supervisor, human resources manager or health and safety representative (HSR) as soon as possible. The report may be used as official notification that a hazard exists and the type of action that needs to be taken. This form should be used to identify the hazard, assess the risk and report the action required. Signatures and dates are required to ensure the report has been acted on.

The purpose of these reports is to ensure compliance with policies, procedures and regulations relating to reporting, investigating and correcting incidents. Remember, it is a legal requirement under WHS legislation and workers compensation legislation to report all injuries in the workplace.

## Emergency procedures

You need to be familiar with evacuation procedures in the assessment environment, including the location of emergency exits, fire fighting equipment and first-aid supplies. An effective way to remind all candidates of emergency procedures is to conduct a periodic fire drill or evacuation drill. You should check the RTO's WHS policies and procedures for information on the fire drill or evacuation drill schedule.

Larger buildings generally have a designated safety officer who coordinates the whole procedure. Within a smaller organisation, an employee is given responsibility to supervise and conduct the operation. Assessors and candidates should be familiar with their role in case there is an emergency while an assessment is taking place. This should be part of induction information given in a group learning environment or where candidates are attending a simulation for assessment.

When you are conducting assessment that uses material, equipment or technology that poses a risk to personal safety, you must know how to contact the person who is able to administer first aid. You should also know the procedures to shut down any equipment and machinery in an emergency, or what to do if the candidate suffers a medical emergency.

Ensure you are familiar with the following information:

- the meaning of the evacuation alarms that will be sounded
- who the fire wardens are
- where emergency exits are located
- what to take and what not to take with you in an emergency
- how to walk down the emergency exit steps
- where to meet and what to do when you are there
- when you will be told to return to your workplace or assessment environment.

## PPE procedures

Risk-control measures involve providing and using PPE when appropriate. All clothing must fit well and be comfortable to wear under working conditions. Candidates must be informed why the clothing is necessary, and when and how it must be worn. The use of PPE can be a hazard if it restricts movement, sight or hearing. You need to consult with the workplace supervisor or WHS personnel for advice on the correct use of PPE.

When you are using any specialised PPE, technology or materials during assessment, ensure you have completed relevant induction and on-going refresher training.

Candidates require equipment such as:

- hearing and eye protection
- hard hats
- gloves
- masks
- protective clothing, such as aprons, coats, overalls and vests.

## Safe use and maintenance of equipment

The assessment instrument may require the candidate to use a range of technology and equipment. Each piece of technology and equipment poses a risk to health and safety if it is not in good working order or is used incorrectly. An important part of preparing to conduct assessment is checking the various systems and equipment you will use during the assessment and making sure they are in good working order.

Workplace policies and procedures may include advice on the steps you should follow for maintenance. If you are using specialised equipment, you may have to record the results of regular equipment safety checks; for example, keeping records of the sterilisation of medical instruments if you are conducting assessment with a nursing student.

You may be conducting assessment in an environment that involves using plant or machinery. Workplace policies and procedures should include detailed information on how to clean, start and operate machinery. You need to supervise candidates to ensure they operate the equipment safely, use appropriate PPE correctly and maintain any necessary records.

## Source WHS information

You must identify sources of WHS information that you can refer to while planning and conducting assessment.

Industry regulations and codes of practice give practical guidance on how to control different hazards and risks. Unions, industry associations, consultants and other specialist advisers can also provide information and suggest ways to control risks. Colleagues and HSRs are also a valuable source of information who should be consulted.

The assessment conditions of the units of competency you are planning to assess include advice about any regulations, licences or specific WHS knowledge candidates are required to have to demonstrate competency. You may need assistance in understanding the details of these standards or how they apply to the candidate's workplace and assessment context.

Assistance with aspects of assessment includes:

- specific workplace health and safety information that should be addressed in the instructions to candidates
- any industry characteristics with particular implications for WHS training and assessment, such as remote locations, particular hazards or regulations, or workforce characteristics
- identifying WHS issues and hazards for the industry, including industry characteristics impacting on WHS
- PPE that is needed during assessment
- any prerequisites relevant to WHS performance
- industry operations that require WHS-related licences or certificates; for example, pest control, dangerous goods or asbestos removal
- WHS legal and legislative requirements.

## Health and safety representatives

Workplace supervisors, health and safety representatives (HSRs) and workplace WHS committees are a valuable source of WHS information.

You need to source:

- safety data sheets (SDSs) for any equipment or materials that are to be used when preparing for or undertaking assessment
- forms or templates (such as incident reports)
- instructions for PPE that are relevant to the assessment instrument.

When you are conducting assessment in a group learning environment or simulated workplace, speak to the RTO's HSRs and WHS committee for advice.

Advice from WHS specialists incudes:

- Conduct a risk assessment.
- Use equipment and technology safely.
- Obtain specialised materials, such as PPE and exemplar WHS documents.
- Maintain the equipment and technology used in the training environment.

## Quality manager

Consult with the RTO quality manager about the need to include competency standards that have specific WHS requirements in the RTO's validation process. These assessment tools and instruments may present a higher risk of non-compliance for the RTO. It will also be beneficial to have a validation panel review the instructions to candidates, and the WHS content that is included in the assessment instrument.

## Industry representatives

RTOs regularly consult with industry representatives to ensure their training and assessment strategies reflect authentic work practice and are responsive to the needs of industry. You should use these types of consultation as an opportunity to gather current information on WHS issues and trends in the industries that are relevant to your assessment practice.

Example

### Address WHS risk to a person or equipment immediately

The following example demonstrates how an assessor conducted a risk assessment and responded to a WHS issue during assessment.

Mark is assessing Troy who is an apprentice in the construction industry. Troy has been given the assessment plan for *AHCMOM213 Operate and maintain chainsaws*. Mark is aware that Troy has had limited experience using power tools before completing this unit. As a young worker, Troy also faces a higher risk of being involved in a WHS issue because he lacks experience and is generally unfamiliar with workplace procedures.

Mark visits the assessment location and meets with Troy's supervisor prior to the assessment date to conduct a risk assessment. He also has the opportunity to meet with the construction company's WHS representative and union official to discuss aspects of the on-site assessment and the equipment.

The group agrees that the use of the power tools presents a risk. Mark needs to ensure that the area in which the assessment takes place is clear of any hazards and that he knows the location of the first-aid kit. He must also check the equipment prior to use and confirm that Troy is using appropriate PPE (including visor and gloves) correctly during the assessment.

When the assessment takes place, the chainsaw bucks when the tip hits an unseen branch. The chainsaw is flung back and cuts Troy's shoulder. Mark immediately disconnects power to the chainsaw and coordinates for first aid to be administered. Once the immediate incident is addressed, Mark completes an incident report. He realises that the issue that arose was not a risk that he had considered in his risk assessment. Mark knows that he needs to improve his practice by including this type of incident on future hazard inspections for this unit.

# Activity 14

Find an assessment instrument that requires the candidate to use plant, equipment or materials, then complete the following tasks:

1. Access the RTO's workplace, and the WHS policies and procedures of a candidate's workplace. Source the various forms and templates that have been designed as part of the organisation's WHS system.

2. Evaluate the risks that are involved in assessment. Record your risk assessment on the appropriate form or template.
3. Develop a plan for eliminating or minimising the likelihood of these risks occurring, including an emergency plan that you could follow if a WHS risk was to occur during assessment.

4. Include contact details for emergency personnel who would address the immediate risk and identify any forms you would need to record the actions that were taken.

**Click to complete Activity 14**

# Summary

1. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is an assessment process that involves judging evidence provided by the candidate of the skills and knowledge they developed through previous informal and formal learning against learning outcomes or competency standards.
2. Your role as an assessor requires you to provide clear and accurate information on recognition entitlements to candidates.
3. Establishing a participative and collaborative relationship between the candidate and the assessor, which is based on confidentiality, accountability and sensitivity, builds confidence in assessment methods.
4. Explaining the process of assessment in language that is appropriate to the education and experience of candidates helps to build trust and rapport. Candidates need to feel that you are sensitive to their individual needs and current competency.
5. You are responsible for assessing candidates with a range of individual differences that you need to consider in order to support the candidate during the assessment process. Providing reasonable adjustment for learners is based on legislative and regulatory requirements, and on the purpose of the organisation providing vocational education and training.

# Topic 4

In this topic you will learn how to:

**4A** **Assess the collected evidence and evaluate whether it reflects the evidence required to demonstrate competence**

**4B** **Use your judgment to infer whether competence has been demonstrated based on the available evidence**

**4C** **Make the assessment decision in line with the agreed assessment procedures and assessment plan**

**4D** **Provide clear and constructive feedback to the candidate regarding the assessment decision and clearly document follow-up, if required**

# Make the assessment decision

Making a judgment about a candidate's competency is a crucial and challenging aspect of your responsibilities as an assessor. Use your decision-making skills to guide you to evaluate whether the evidence provided by the candidate meets the rules of evidence and principles of assessment, and thus demonstrates competency.

# 4A Assess the collected evidence and evaluate whether it reflects the evidence required to demonstrate competence

An assessor's responsibility is to assess and evaluate the evidence that the candidate has provided and/or the assessor has observed and collected.

Evidence could include:

- work samples
- role-plays
- observation of the candidate carrying out work tasks
- responses to questions.

In this first stage of assessment, an assessor is making sure that the evidence meets the evidence requirements as outlined in the assessment plan, and that sufficient and appropriate evidence has been collected. Assessors must also consider the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment.

## Examine the collected evidence

Evidence is information gathered that provides proof of competency. While evidence must be sufficient, assessors must focus on the quality rather than the quantity of evidence. Your key objective when initially examining evidence is to perform a quality review. The following outlines the purpose of the quality review.

The quality review should show the following:

- The evidence collected from the candidate reflects the evidence required to demonstrate competence, as outlined in the assessment requirements of the unit of competency.
- The rules of evidence have been satisfied to enable reasonable judgments to be made in regard to the candidate's competence against the benchmarking criteria.

When evaluating the candidate's evidence, always keep the assessment criteria in mind, which you will use to judge competence.

## Check the application of the unit

Ensure you are familiar with the benchmarks of assessment and the type of evidence that should be collected.

While the assessment plan identifies the evidence needed, it is a good idea to confirm the requirements by visualising how a person would appear when performing the tasks outlined in the unit of competency. Ask yourself: What evidence would a competent person produce in the workplace? Relate your ideas of the type of evidence that would be produced to the performance criteria and performance evidence described in the assessment requirements.

You must clearly identify the AQF level of the person performing this role. The AQF level helps you to interpret how much autonomy, support, guidance, initiative or experience a worker performing these tasks would be expected to have. The application of the unit information (which can be found under the relevant unit at http://training.gov.au) also assists you to visualise the context of the person undertaking the performance criteria in an actual workplace.

In some cases the assessment requirements are quite specific and stipulate the exact amounts and types of evidence that must be presented for assessment. For example, the performance evidence for this unit, *TAEASS402 Assess competence,* states in the performance evidence statements that there must be 'assessment of at least five candidates within the VET context'.

However, you will often need to use your professional judgment to interpret the performance evidence statements, and decide on an assessment method that satisfies the rules of evidence and principles of assessment. For example, *BSBITU201 Produce simple word processed documents* requires the candidate to produce documents in word format, but does not state the exact number. Instead, it has a note that states, 'If a specific volume or frequency is not stated, then evidence must be provided at least once.'

Once you are confident you know what evidence is needed, check the evidence that has been provided according to the assessment plan.

# Evaluate against the rules of evidence

The four rules of evidence, described in Topic 2, are that evidence used to judge competence must be valid, sufficient, authentic and reliable.

You must carefully evaluate each piece of evidence to confirm that you are able make a reliable judgment of competence according to these criteria.

The individual circumstances of candidates (including their work role, education and life experience) mean they may face various challenges in understanding and implementing the assessment tools. This could lead to a variation in the type of evidence they submit for assessment from what was originally intended. You should not, therefore, assume that the rules of evidence have been satisfied.

The following summarises the key questions you need to consider when evaluating the quality of collected evidence against the rules of evidence.

| **Currency** |
| --- |
| ▶ Is the evidence relatively recent? The evidence collected must be either from the present or the very recent past. For example, when you are assessing candidates for recognition of prior learning (RPL) using a portfolio, you need to apply the RTO's policy for currency of evidence.<br>▶ For example, you may decide that a testimonial from the candidate's supervisor that was written six years ago does not satisfy the rule of currency. |

| **Authentic** |
|---|
| ▸ Is there proof that verifies the evidence is genuine or the candidate's own work? For example:<br>– Where the candidate has submitted a report online, you may wish to use plagiarism-detecting software, such as Turnitin.<br>– Candidates who were given reasonable adjustment may need to provide supplementary evidence, such as participating in a role-play, to confirm that the written component of the assessment reflects their skills and knowledge, and was not enhanced by the scribe or interpreter.<br>– Students may be tempted to submit a third-party report that they completed themselves.<br>▸ Where evidence was produced by a team, are you able to identify the candidate's contribution to the outcome? |
| **Sufficient** |
| ▸ Is there enough evidence to demonstrate competence against the entire unit of competency, including each of the performance evidence items?<br>▸ Has evidence been gathered over time and in various contexts using a variety of methods?<br>▸ Are you convinced that the candidate can repeatedly demonstrate competence?<br>▸ Will it be necessary to gather supplementary evidence? |
| **Valid** |
| ▸ Does the evidence match the unit of competency?<br>▸ Does it reflect workplace performance?<br>▸ Is the evidence mapped to the unit of competency?<br>▸ Has evidence been collected that integrates skills and knowledge with their practical application? |
| **LLN** |
| ▸ Have you satisfied the requirements of the competency standard for language, literacy and numeracy (LLN)? |
| **Dimensions of competency** |
| ▸ Have you collected evidence of all aspects of work performance as represented by task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills? |

# Evaluate against the principles of assessment

You also have to determine whether the way the assessment was carried out was fair, flexible, valid and reliable. Check that the evidence was collected in a manner that allowed the candidate the best possible opportunities, regardless of their circumstances.

In some cases the quality of the evidence submitted by candidates may be affected by certain factors.

Factors that may affect the principles of evidence include:

- insufficient or poorly worded instructions
- a limited number of assessment methods used
- the evidence not being gained over a number of occasions in different contexts
- limited access to opportunities to gather evidence.

In all of these instances, it would be deemed that the candidate was not provided with fair, flexible, valid or reliable opportunities to collect appropriate evidence.

Example

**Assess the collected evidence, and evaluate whether it reflects the evidence required to demonstrate competence**

Jackson has given his assessor, Tom, a range of evidence that he has collected from his workplace to demonstrate competence against a unit of competency in a program he is undertaking in his workplace.

The performance evidence asks him to provide evidence of his participation in a work team that aims to improve work practices.

Tom has arranged a meeting with Jackson to discuss whether additional evidence should be gathered before Tom makes his assessment decision.

The following table summarises the pieces of evidence supplied by Jackson and whether they will form a component of Tom's judgment of competence.

| Evidence submitted | Comment |
|---|---|
| An observation checklist completed by his workplace WHS specialist – the observation checklist records evidence of Jackson's use of personal protective equipment (PPE) required in his job. | An observation checklist for PPE is not relevant to the performance evidence of the unit of competency. |
| A work diary that records the various tasks performed by Jackson – he has also recorded key points he raised during team meetings and his participation in the organisation's quality management program. | Jackson will need to have the diary authenticated. Jackson and Tom will work together to identify how this evidence is mapped to the competency standards. |
| Certificates of achievement awarded by his workplace learning and development department to recognise his successful completion of various modules that relate to his current course. | Tom will need to check that the material covered in these in-house courses is valid and relevant to the performance evidence. |
| Various emails written by Jackson to his team leader on topic-related issues, with work practices and suggestions for improvements. | Work product satisfies the evidentiary rules. |
| A testimonial from the organisation's quality manager about Jackson's involvement in continuous improvement activities. | The third-party report satisfies the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment. |

| | |
|---|---|
| A standard operating procedure written by Jackson that was designed to minimise waste in the workplace. | This satisfies the rules of evidence. It may be considered a work sample as writing procedures is a part of Jackson's job role. Tom may ask Jackson to have his manager authenticate that Jackson created the procedure. |
| Jackson's Year 12 Certificate, which he completed 10 years ago. | Tom will disregard Jackson's high school certificate because it does not satisfy the rule of currency. |
| A reference written by Jackson's former employer; he left the job seven years ago, after finishing his apprenticeship. | Tom will not refer to the reference. The information it contains is not current and is unlikely to relate to the performance evidence. |

# Activity 15

Interview an experienced assessor to gather information on the process they find most effective for examining and evaluating collected evidence to ensure it reflects the evidence required to demonstrate competence. They may wish to describe a particular unit of competency or an assessment decision.

Use this information to prepare a checklist you could use when evaluating evidence. This could be similar to the table in the previous example.

**Click to complete Activity 15**

# 4B Use your judgment to infer whether competence has been demonstrated based on the available evidence

Once you have examined the evidence and believe it matches the type of evidence required (i.e. it is current, sufficient, authentic and valid), you have to evaluate whether this evidence demonstrates the candidate's competency.

You need to follow very clear guidelines when judging the evidence submitted for assessment so you are confident your judgment is based on sound principles.

Your role as a professional assessor requires you to make judgments about:

- the quality of the evidence collected by the candidate
- whether competence has been demonstrated based on the evidence
- whether the candidate's performance of particular tasks and duties are to the standard expected in the workplace.

## Judge evidence

The RTO's assessment system explains the procedure you should follow to judge competence. The procedure reflects the standards described in the VQF/AQTF and the AQF guidelines. A key component of your judgment of competence is the specific benchmarks that apply to the context of assessment. The information in the training package and in the various sections of the unit of competency underpins your understanding of how a competent person performing specific tasks looks in the workplace.

The RTO may have developed tools (such as benchmark solutions or marking guides and checklists) that you can use to evaluate the candidate's evidence. There will also be guidelines on record-keeping and the format to use for recording your findings.

The following demonstrates the various types of benchmarking material that may be available in the RTO for various assessment methods.

**Observation method**

- Observation checklists that benchmark performance and required skills.

**Simulation method**

- Observation checklists that benchmark performance and required skills.
- Knowledge evidence questionnaire responses (used to evaluate supplementary evidence).
- Benchmarks or samples of reflective statements from a journal.

**Questioning**

- Benchmark responses (model answers).

| **Third-party report method** |
|---|
| ▶ Third-party reports that benchmark performance and required skills.<br>▶ Knowledge evidence questionnaire responses (used to evaluate supplementary evidence). |
| **Portfolio** |
| ▶ Samples of benchmark portfolio items. |
| **Work samples** |
| ▶ Written description of benchmarks that will be used to judge the quality of the candidate's work.<br>▶ Images, diagrams or samples of the standard of work required. |
| **Candidate self-assessment** |
| ▶ Reflective statements and checklists that demonstrate appropriate standards. |
| **Role-play** |
| ▶ Observation checklists that benchmark performance and required skills and ensure that criteria used for judgment are observable behaviours |

## Dimensions of competency

The dimensions of competency relate to all aspects of work performance. You must judge all four dimensions of competency within the context of the required performance.

| Dimension | What to check | Example | Evidence |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Task skills** | The evidence shows that the candidate has performed the individual skills required to complete a work activity to the required standard. | Prepared the agenda for a meeting. | ▶ Work sample<br>▶ Observation<br>▶ Questioning |
| **Task management skills** | The candidate has managed a number of different tasks to complete a whole work activity. | Prepared and conducted a meeting. | ▶ Meeting agenda<br>▶ Minutes<br>▶ Observation<br>▶ Third-party report |
| **Contingency management skills** | The candidate used problem-solving skills to resolve issues that arise when performing a work activity. | Developed a contingency plan for problems with the meeting venue. | ▶ Work sample |

| Dimension | What to check | Example | Evidence |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Job/role environment skills** | The candidate performed effectively in the workplace when undertaking a work activity by working well with all stakeholders, and following workplace policies and procedures. | Participated in staff/team meetings. | ▶ Meeting minutes<br>▶ Observation |

## Profiles of acceptable performance measures

The RTO's assessment procedures may require you to refer to a competency profile when judging assessment evidence. A competency profile provides an overall picture of a competent person in action.

The RTO may provide you with a checklist of the competency profile that you may use to record your judgment of the candidate's evidence. For example, a marking rubric describes the characteristics of competent performance.

## Assess foundation skills

Foundation skills are embedded in each unit of competency and should be assessed as an integral part of the task that is being assessed.

Read each foundation skill, then judge the candidate's application of these skills in conjunction with the performance criteria and knowledge evidence required by the unit.

For example, for the foundation skill 'oral communication' in unit *TAEASS502 Design and develop assessment tools*, the candidate needs to show evidence that they can participate in communication to clarify the purpose and requirements of assessment tools and trial assessments. Third-party reports and observation may be the key assessment instruments.

Example

### Use judgment to infer whether competence has been demonstrated based on the available evidence

Enrique is employed by a TAFE and has been conducting assessments for candidates who are undertaking a course at a local correctional services education centre. This has been a challenging task for Enrique, who needs to collaborate with a wide range of specialists to ensure the candidates receive the various types of assistance they require during the delivery stage of their IT course.

Enrique has identified that:

- some of the candidates are Indigenous people
- some have a mental illness
- some have physical disabilities
- most have LLN issues.

Enrique works with the specialist support services to provide reasonable adjustment that suits the candidates' individual needs. He records the reasonable adjustment on each candidate's assessment plan. He has a diverse range of evidence to assess and is concerned whether he has the evidence he needs to make an assessment decision.

Enrique decides to create the following matrix that he can use to check the collected evidence.

| Evidence presented by the candidate | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Satisfies the rules of evidence. | | |
| Addresses dimensions of competencies. | | |
| Demonstrates acceptable performance measures. | | |
| Assesses foundation skills. | | |
| Demonstrates the workplace application of required skills and knowledge. | | |
| Shows competence in a range of work contexts on different occasions. | | |
| Comes from various assessment methods. | | |
| Focuses on the performance evidence of assessment. | | |
| Links to workplace performance. | | |

# Activity 16

Read the case study, then complete the tasks that follow.

## Case study

Louisa is employed as a trainer/assessor at People Training, an RTO that offers courses in customer service. In most cases, they conduct on-site training of workplace trainees.

Louisa has been given the task of delivering customer service training and conducting on-site assessment at the local council. She is using units from BSB30115 Certificate III in Business.

The candidates are a group of learners who have been employed at the council as trainees as part of a six-month learning program. They have undertaken on-the-job training during this time and some group learning as part of their traineeship.

The customer service program requires them to provide evidence of the following:

- Use communication skills to establish rapport and build relationships with customers in accordance with organisational requirements.
- Identify customer needs using appropriate questioning and active listening skills.
- Provide customer service in accordance with organisational requirements.
- Respond to and record customer feedback and action taken according to organisational standards, policies and procedures.
- Produce a report that identifies and recommends ways to improve service delivery.

Louisa begins the process of determining her assessment process by reviewing the information the candidates have provided on a candidate profile form. She identifies that four learners have issues or a disability that could affect their ability to complete written assessments. One of these learners is an Indigenous Australian and another one is very anxious about being assessed.

1. Prepare a list of the types of evidence you would collect from the various candidates described in the case study.

2. Use a tool similar to the evidence checklist in the previous example to evaluate whether each piece of evidence would enable you to make a reasonable and reliable judgment of competence.

Click to complete Activity 16

# 4C Make the assessment decision in line with the agreed assessment procedures and assessment plan

The previous two sections explained how to make the assessment decision. This involves evaluating the evidence that has been collected using various assessment methods and inferring whether the evidence demonstrates that the candidate can competently perform the tasks in a workplace. Once you have a foundation of quality evidence, making your assessment decision based on the benchmarks recorded in the assessment plan should, in most cases, be relatively straightforward.

This section examines the process of making an assessment decision by using quality evidence and considering strategies you can use where the decision-making process presents additional challenges.

## Meet requirements

Follow the RTO's assessment policies and procedures to make the assessment decision. You may be required to use a marking rubric, grade results (in addition to determining competency) or to collaborate with another assessor. When evaluating the evidence and making your decision you need access to:

- the original assessment plan
- the assessment instrument
- benchmarking solutions or model answers.

The following checklist may be used when evaluating a range of evidence to determine where competence has been demonstrated. Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Requirements for making assessment decisions'; Aspire has included relevant templates in its Trainer's and assessor's guide for this unit.

| Integrity and reliability in assessment decisions | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| The evidence accurately reflects appropriate AQF alignment. | | |
| The evidence allows for performance to demonstrate the four dimensions of competence. | | |
| The evidence allows the candidate to adapt to different contexts and environments. | | |
| Standards of performance on which judgments will be made are mapped to all tasks identified in the elements of the unit or module. | | |

| Integrity and reliability in assessment decisions | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Standards of performance reflect the required skills and knowledge in the unit or module. | | |
| Standards of performance reflect skills and knowledge required in the workplace. | | |
| Standards of performance reflect the assessment requirements. | | |
| Standards of performance allow for demonstration of foundation skills. | | |
| Standards of performance have the same set of performance standards for RPL. | | |
| The evidence used to make a decision about competence follows the rules of the evidence and is: | | |
| Valid | | |
| Current | | |
| Sufficient | | |
| Authentic | | |
| The principles of assessment have been followed and the assessment is: | | |
| Fair | | |
| Flexible | | |
| Reliable | | |
| Valid | | |
| Validation and review of assessment judgments have been/will be carried out. | | |
| Assessment validation has been performed. | | |
| The assessment process is scheduled for review – date and details provided. | | |

## Provide a graded result

In some cases RTO staff choose to provide candidates with a graded result. This means that in addition to being recorded as 'competent' or 'not yet competent', the candidate receives formal advice that describes their performance standard. This may be norm-referenced to others undertaking the qualification. However, generally the results are not norm-referenced but are graded against performance standards. This means there is no bell curve and that any number of candidates can get a distinction or high distinction if they meet the standards.

You need to confirm your RTO's policy in regard to graded assessment results. If candidates will 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, which 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.

Grading a candidate's performance is not part of a competency-based system. In fact, Standard 1, Clause 1.8–1.12 of the Standards for RTOs 2015 states: 'If your RTO applies any form of grading to learners, ensure that this is applied only after the learner has been assessed as fully competent and is in addition to a determination of competent or otherwise'.

However, there is a range of reasons for giving candidates a graded result, as the following indicates.

Reasons to provide a graded result include:

- satisfying the requirements of industry and professional associations
- accommodating the demands of universities for articulation purposes
- satisfying licensing requirements
- determining course reward 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).

## RPL assessment decisions

The judgment of evidence for RPL relies on the same rules and principles as assessment for other purposes. You must evaluate the evidence against the critical aspects of assessment and decide whether the candidate has demonstrated competency. This is usually done by reviewing the candidate's RPL assessment portfolio. You may also use observation or questioning to gather supplementary evidence or to authenticate some of the evidence in the portfolio.

The RTO will have a form, template or checklist you can use to record your evaluation of the candidate's evidence. In some cases, you may judge that the candidate has demonstrated competence against some but not all of the performance and knowledge evidence. Discuss with the candidate in an appropriate forum (such as in a meeting or over the phone) any gaps you have identified in their performance and agree on an action plan to address these. They may be required to do additional training or to provide further evidence.

Example

### Make the assessment decision in line with the agreed assessment procedures and assessment plan

The following example describes the process used by an assessor to make an assessment decision following the delivery and assessment of workplace training.

Carly Smith works as trainer/assessor for an RTO that has been engaged by Slick Office Stationery to deliver and assess *BSBSUS201 Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices*. In conjunction with her work colleagues, the client and two employees of Slick Office Stationery, Carly developed the following assessment plan.

| **Assessment Plan** | |
|---|---|
| **Unit code/s and title/s of competency:** *BSBSUS201 Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices* | |
| **Training organisation name:** Best RTO | |
| **Purpose of assessment/s:** Assessment is being conducted following delivery of the unit *BSBSUS201 Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices* as part of the green skills learning and development program at Slick Office Stationery. Candidates are issued with a transcript that records the outcome of assessment. Candidates have an opportunity to present evidence for assessment of their current competence prior to the delivery of learning. | |
| **RPL assessment:** One candidate - see details attached | |
| **Target group details (candidates)** | ▶ Candidates complete 25 hours of learning prior to assessment. Candidates are currently employed in customer service, warehouse and administrative roles. The highest level of education is a high school certificate. Two candidates have disclosed physical disabilities that require reasonable adjustment of assessment.<br>▶ Three candidates do not speak English as their first language.<br>▶ Previous training conducted for this organisation has revealed lower levels of literacy of some members of the warehouse team. |
| **Candidates' names and contact details (add list if applicable)** | See attached list |
| **Names and contact details of assessor/s** | Carly Smith - csmith@hotdog.com |
| **Other party details (e.g. workplace supervisor), if applicable** | n/a |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Date, time of assessment/s** | Compilation of portfolio of evidence over 7 weeks.<br>Summative at conclusion of learning (week 7) – assessment to be submitted within approximately two weeks of conclusion of training (unless other arrangements are made with the assessor). |
| **Assessment conditions** | Assessment must be conducted in a safe environment where evidence gathered demonstrates consistent performance of typical activities experienced in the sustainability field of work and include access to:<br>▶ documentation, information and resources related to workplace environmental and resource efficiency issues<br>▶ office equipment and resources<br>▶ case studies and, where possible, real situations<br>▶ interaction with others. |
| **Location details** | Slick Office Stationery. Candidate to complete assessment in their workplace and at home. |
| **Methods of assessment** | ▶ Part A – Observation checklist<br>▶ Part B – Case study<br>▶ Part C – Portfolio |
| **Evidence requirements** | ▶ Candidate accesses, interprets and complies with a range of environment/sustainability legislation and procedural requirements relevant to daily responsibilities.<br>▶ Candidate accurately follows organisational information to participate in and support an improved resource efficiency process and reporting as required.<br>▶ Candidate develops and/or uses tools, such as an inspection checklist, to collect and measure relevant information on organisation resource consumption within work role.<br>▶ Candidate identifies organisational improvements by applying efficient resource use to daily activities.<br>▶ Candidate demonstrates knowledge of environmental and resource hazards/risks. |
| **Assessment instruments** | |
| **Methods of submission (if applicable)** | Candidate to supply:<br><br>Assessor to supply: |
| **Resources required** | ▶ Aspire Learning Resources learner guide for BSBSUS201, which includes a final assessment task<br>▶ Internet access<br>▶ Computer with appropriate software |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Reasonable adjustment:** For low levels of literacy, candidates are offered an opportunity to record a verbal response to the case study. | |
| **Ready for assessment declaration** | I confirm that the purpose and procedures of this assessment have been clearly explained to me. I have been consulted about any special needs I might have in relation to the assessment process. The criteria to be used for this assessment have been discussed with me, as have the consequences and possible outcomes of the assessment.<br>I have accessed and understand general assessment information as provided by my training organisation.<br>I have been given fair notice of the date, time, venue and other arrangements for this assessment. I have completed a self-assessment of my performance of the skills and knowledge for this unit and confirm that I am ready for assessment. |
| **Candidate signature** | |
| **Date** | |

Following the training, Carly collects assessment portfolios from 15 staff. She personally observes the performance of staff at a team meeting where they were each expected to contribute suggestions to current work practices to improve sustainability. All assessment candidates also submit a completed case study for assessment.

The assessment plan has been designed to ensure that the collected evidence satisfies the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment. The RTO's policy is to determine competent/not yet competent – they do not give candidates a graded result.

Carly has personally observed one candidate, Perry, who requested RPL assessment. Perry worked three years ago in a local council service that was strongly committed to sustainable work practices. Carly observes Perry performing various tasks in his job role to assess his prior learning.

Carly uses exemplar observation checklists to confirm that candidates have demonstrated competent behaviour and refers to a model solution for the case study. The RTO has developed an exemplar portfolio to be used by assessors in evaluating evidence.

Carly decides that all candidates have demonstrated their competency. With the candidate's permission, she arranges for samples of the collected evidence to be included in the RTO's next assessment validation process.

# Activity 17

In Activity 10, you were asked to collect evidence from a candidate that could be used for RPL assessment. Arrange to meet with your trainer/assessor and discuss with them how you would judge this evidence.

Alternatively, you may judge the evidence you collected in Activity 8.

Referring to the previous sections in this topic, examine the collected evidence and evaluate it to ensure it reflects the evidence required to demonstrate competence.

Arrange a meeting with your trainer/assessor and bring the following with you:

- assessment plan
- assessment instrument
- collected evidence
- mapping document
- assessment guidelines
- benchmarking solutions.

Explain how you would judge whether competence has been demonstrated, and your assessment decision to your trainer/assessor.

# 4D Provide clear and constructive feedback to the candidate regarding the assessment decision and clearly document follow-up, if required

Candidates are usually very keen to know the outcomes of assessment activities. Candidates hope to hear that they have been judged competent and that they are progressing toward the completion of a course of study or statement of attainment.

In some cases, you need to inform a candidate that they are not yet competent and need to undertake further learning and development. In all cases, feedback must be timely, accurate, clear and constructive. Your goal should be to provide feedback at appropriate intervals to support the candidate's further development.

Candidates may use the feedback they receive to:

- plan future professional development
- identify areas of ongoing concern that need to be addressed
- seek a promotion or new work role
- motivate them to continue with their participation in lifelong learning.

## Types of feedback

Feedback may be formative or summative.

Formative assessment (assessment during the delivery stage of learning):

- allows the candidate to incorporate feedback from their assessor as they progress through their learning
- helps the candidate and the assessor identify gaps in competence where additional learning or practice activities may be required
- may motivate the candidate to continue with their studies.

Summative assessment (evidence that forms the basis of the judgment of competence by the assessor) is carried out at the end of the learning program. The result is recorded in the RTO's record system and contributes to the qualification or statement of attainment. The process of recording and reporting assessment outcomes is examined in Topic 5.

RTOs vary in the amount of feedback that is given to candidates following summative assessment. You should check your workplace policies and procedures guide before giving candidates feedback.

The method you use to give feedback should comply with your workplace policies and procedures. Feedback can be given orally, in writing or in an interview. Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Unit assessment feedback cover sheet'.

The RTO could use the following methods to give feedback to candidates:

- discussions with candidates following an assessment activity
- annotated assessment instruments with comments from the assessor
- group feedback
- peer review
- a feedback form completed by the assessor.

# Give constructive feedback

Effective assessment feedback relies on assessors communicating constructively and positively with a view to assisting candidates to understand their progress and assessment outcomes. The more preparation you have undertaken prior to assessment feedback sessions, the better positioned you will be to make a meaningful and valuable contribution to the feedback process. Use your communication skills to build relationships with candidates and promote an atmosphere that encourages participation and the free exchange of ideas.

Aim to motivate the candidate to complete their studies or address any gaps that exist in the evidence they have presented for assessment. Be mindful that, should you be harsh in your criticism or suggest that you believe the candidate is unable to ever demonstrate competence, it is unlikely the candidate will continue with the learning and assessment process. However, you should still be honest and frank in your evaluation of the candidate's performance. Consider your purpose in giving feedback and structure it in such a way as to cushion negative comments with positive feedback.

You may find it helpful to plan your initial comments and suggestions prior to giving feedback. This could involve annotating the unit of competency, assessment instruments or candidate's evidence with your evaluation of whether the rules and principles of evidence have been satisfied. You may also record preliminary suggestions for improvement or further learning and development. Be prepared to listen to the candidate's comments with an open mind; however, planning your opening comments may help you feel more confident during the early stages of the session.

Remember, the method you use to give feedback should comply with your workplace policies and procedures. Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Unit assessment feedback coversheet'.

Your goal is to provide information to candidates in ways that address their individual needs, communication styles and levels of confidence and experience.

When providing feedback:

- Use plain English and avoid jargon. Align your language and wording to the AQF level of the unit of study or qualification. Explain technical language and any unfamiliar concepts.
- Provide an opportunity for a support person, such as a carer or interpreter, to attend the feedback session if appropriate.
- Ensure the information is understood.
- If relevant, read printed information to the candidate and ensure they understand it.
- When appropriate, use graphics and specific examples from the evidence to support your feedback.

- Encourage candidates to ask questions.
- Allow sufficient time so that the session is not rushed.
- Ensure the candidate understands their right to challenge the assessment outcome and knows the process for this.
- Ensure the candidate understands the provisions for reassessment or resubmission of evidence.

## Plan for further learning

Candidates who have successfully demonstrated their competence often want you to praise  areas they have performed well in and identify areas where their performance needs to improve. Successful candidates may expect you to help them formulate an action plan for further learning and development. Check your RTO policies and procedures to determine the type of counselling and advice you should give candidates.

Candidates who are not yet competent may expect you to identify the specific aspects of their evidence that did not meet the performance benchmarks. It is helpful if you can refer to specific pieces of evidence and link it directly to the aspects of assessment.

When a candidate is not yet competent, begin the feedback session by focusing on positives and identify strategies for achieving competence in the future. Always use feedback as a learning opportunity.

Be prepared to explain the process for doing further training, resubmitting evidence or undertaking additional assessment. You may be required to develop a training plan with the candidate and their supervisor to fill their skill or knowledge gaps.

Individual RTOs vary in the procedures they adopt in relation to resubmission, and further assessment and training. Ensure you are familiar with your RTO’s procedures prior to the feedback session.

You should also seek answers to the following questions:

- How do you record that you have given the candidate feedback?
- What action are you to take when the candidate does not agree with the feedback?
- Can you give the candidate the original statement or a copy of their annotated or marked assessment evidence?
- What period of time are they given for resubmission of work?

## Maintain confidentiality

After you have assessed group learners, you may find that some candidates compare their assessment outcomes and ask you to justify their result against others in the cohort. Explain to the candidate that you are not able to discuss other candidates’ results with them, but that you can focus on their assessment outcomes independently.

## Appeal the result

RTOs are required to give candidates information about the procedures for making a complaint or appealing the result of assessment. The RTO’s student handbook should include information about the appeal process candidates may follow if they disagree with assessment outcomes.

Ensure that candidates receive this information in a format they can understand, and that support is available if they need help understanding and accessing their rights. This may mean that candidates require verbal instructions and an opportunity to ask questions in addition to the information they receive in the student handbook.

The candidate needs the following information on the appeal process:

- How they can appeal against a perceived unsatisfactory result.
- Who they can appeal to.
- The time period available for the appeal.
- The process for repeating the assessment.
- What happens when they demonstrate competence for only some of the critical aspects of assessment.

Example

**Provide clear and constructive feedback to the candidate regarding the assessment decision and clearly document follow-up, if required**

The following is an example of a candidate feedback form that reports a plan of action for the following semester for a candidate who is enrolled in CSC40115 Certificate IV in Correctional Practice.

| **Candidate feedback form** | |
|---|---|
| **Candidate information** | |
| **Name** | Megan Finn |
| **Assessor's name** | Michael Martin |
| **Assessor's signature** | M. Martin |
| **Feedback date** | 1 June 2016 |
| **Training period details** | Semester 1, 2016 |
| **Units undertaken during training period** | ▶ *BSBLDR402 Lead effective workplace relationships*<br>▶ *CSCORG006 Work effectively with culturally diverse offenders and colleagues*<br>▶ *CSCORG008 Gather and report complex information* |
| **Assessments completed** | ▶ *BSBLDR402 Lead effective workplace relationships*<br>▶ *CSCORG006 Work effectively with culturally diverse offenders and colleagues*<br>▶ *CSCORG008 Gather and report complex information* |
| **Feedback and future action** | |
| **Result (C or NYC)** | C |
| **Gaps in performance** | None |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Strategies for further improvement** | Megan has successful completed these three units. She will undertake *CSCSAS020 Manage security* and *CSCWHS002 Supervise occupational health and safety practices* in semester 2.<br><br>She needs assistance organising to practise WHS hazard inspection in her correctional services workplace. |

# Activity 18

Select a specific cohort of candidates to research. For example, you may wish to research Indigenous people, candidates with LLN issues or workplace trainees.

1. Use relevant journals, websites and experienced workers to gather information regarding any characteristics of this cohort that could potentially impact on the method you use to give them feedback. Develop a plan you could follow if you were assessing candidates in this cohort and need to give them feedback. Record your plan in a journal.
2. Role-play giving feedback to a candidate from this cohort who has not been judged competent. The candidate should be given an opportunity to revise and resubmit their evidence.

# Summary

1. Your key objective when initially examining evidence is to perform a quality review of whether the rules of evidence have been satisfied to enable reasonable judgments to be made in regard to the candidate's competence against the benchmarking criteria.
2. In addition to interpreting the elements and performance criteria in the unit of competency, you must understand the assessment requirements. Be aware that in some cases the performance evidence are quite restrictive, and stipulate the exact amounts and types of evidence that must be presented for assessment.
3. You are judging whether the candidate's performance of particular tasks and duties is to the standard of performance expected in the workplace.
4. You must determine whether the way the assessment was carried out was fair, flexible, valid and reliable. Check that the evidence was collected in a manner that allowed the candidate the best possible opportunities, regardless of their circumstances.
5. The information in the training package and in the various sections of the unit of competency underpins your understanding of how a competent person performing specific tasks looks in the workplace.
6. If you are responsible for assessing candidates against performance standards established by an industry association or an individual workplace, you are using criterion-referenced assessment as you are using fixed standards or performance criteria.
7. The feedback you give candidates should be constructive. Aim to motivate the candidate toward completing their current studies or addressing any gaps that exist in the evidence they have presented for assessment.

## Topic 5

In this topic you will learn how to:

**5A** **Record assessment outcomes promptly and accurately**

**5B** **Complete and submit required assessment documentation according to assessment procedures and confidentiality conventions**

**5C** **Inform other relevant parties of the assessment decision, according to confidentiality conventions**

# Record and report the assessment decision

Various stakeholders have an interest in obtaining timely reports of assessment outcomes.

The RTO has an interest in satisfying the information needs of various stakeholders while complying with their own policies and procedures, relevant privacy legislation and legislative reporting obligations.

Candidates wish to obtain results so they can share information with family, friends and colleagues. Their progress may help motivate them to continue with their vocational education and training.

Carers, community groups, specialist support providers, industry associations, funding bodies and employers may also be interested in either an individual candidate's results or in the outcomes of a specific group. They may use this information to undertake workforce planning, promote individual employees or identify where additional support initiatives may be required.

# 5A Record assessment outcomes promptly and accurately

Trainers and assessors are responsible for ensuring that data on candidates' participation and progress through their training and assessment program is systematically collected, recorded and stored. As an assessor, it is your job to record a candidate's outcomes promptly and accurately.

As you would expect, the candidate is usually keen to receive advice about the judgment that has been made regarding their competence. They may need this information to give to their employer, or to plan future learning and development activities. Achieving success during learning and development is a significant motivator and raises a candidate's self-esteem. This type of success may have an even greater impact for candidates who have faced additional challenges during their learning and assessment, such as language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) issues or being a remote learner.

Other assessment stakeholders may also be interested to receive advice on the outcomes of assessment.

Other stakeholders interested in the assessment outcomes could include:

- employers of apprentices and trainees
- government departments
- funding bodies
- specialist support providers
- the family and carers of learners.

Make sure assessment results are recorded promptly and accurately according to your organisation's information management system.

## Systems for recording outcomes

Effective assessment record-keeping is a critical feature of any assessment system. There are many different management systems that can be implemented for recording assessment outcomes. For a small RTO, a spreadsheet may suffice. In a larger RTO with many candidates, a specialised learning management system (LMS) may be useful. An LMS is specially designed software that manages and supports learning in many ways.

An LMS can be accessed by multiple people, though each can only enter the areas they have been granted access to. This means that the risk of data corruption is reduced, as is the administrative time taken for one person to enter data into a less sophisticated system.

A learning management system:

- allows courses that meet required criteria to be uploaded onto the LMS
- allows learners to self-enrol in courses
- provides in-built discussion boards and email so that learners and trainers can communicate with each other
- allows learners to submit assignments and other course work online providing security through password access

- is a centralised way of communicating with all learners
- provides detailed reports on learner progress.

## Record progress

Understand your RTO manager's requirements and recommendations for the best way of recording candidates' progress, and confirm this with them. You may also need to confirm what information they require regarding a candidate's progress and the format they require it in.

A well-designed, easy-to-use system for tracking candidates' progress is an essential administrative tool. It gives you a clear picture of the progress candidates are making using different learning formats; for example, online courses, blended delivery or group learning.

When recording results, ensure that:

- assessment results are accurately recorded
- that RTO record-keeping policies and procedures are followed
- confidentiality of assessment outcomes is maintained
- appropriate documentation is completed; for example, a training record book for apprentices and trainees.

## Accurate management tools

In the hands of a skilled, efficient administrator, an LMS can track learner progress and provide many other benefits.

Benefits of an accurate management tool include:

- The information can be used to provide reports to workplace supervisors who are keen to see benefits to the organisation from the learning opportunities it has provided.
- Information can be gathered to provide feedback to candidates regarding their progress by monitoring the use of interactive software or learning objects.
- An accurate record of learner progress can be used to identify which learners are at risk of not completing or who need additional support.
- Assessment records provide critical evidence for resolution of appeals and disputes.
- Reports can be generated for auditors.
- Records of assessment assist RTOs and assessors to validate that the standards being used to judge evidence over time are consistent.

## Document outcomes

Refer to your workplace policies and procedures for specific advice on the information you are required to record about assessment outcomes. The instructions that have been developed for the form/template or software package used to record assessment outcomes ensure that you record necessary information.

Reporting systems usually record the following information:

- Personal details of the candidate (from their enrolment form or candidate profile)
- Date, time and location of the assessment
- Assessor details

- Progress towards completion of the unit
- Summary of evidence
- Information about the assessment method
- Assessment decision and rationale
- Feedback to and from the candidate

# Reports to comply with the VQF/AQTF

RTOs are required to regularly report certain information to their state or territory training authority. The range of information required includes the courses and subjects students are enrolled in, their age and gender, where training is occurring and their results.

RTOs must supply reporting information to the training authority in each of the states and territories they operate in, in the various programs or formats requested.

RTOs that provide training to a school-based apprentice or trainee are responsible for ensuring the students' results are submitted to the relevant school VET coordinator within the relevant time frame.

The information gathered by these bodies is used to:

- develop a picture of the VET sector in Australia
- support policy development
- identify strategic priorities
- enable reporting of what has been achieved with public funds.

Example

**Policies and procedures for recording assessment outcomes**

The following is an extract from the policies and procedures of Minelink, an RTO that specialises in delivering work health and safety, and frontline management training to large corporations in the mining sector.

The student's academic performance shall be recorded using the student academic performance record sheet. This spreadsheet calculates the academic progress for the term, based on the total number of units required to be assessed and the outcome of these assessments.

All students shall be deemed competent (C) or not yet competent (NYC) for each unit within the qualification they are enrolled in and complete.

Assessment is conducted by qualified assessors using Minelink's assessment tools, assessment instruments and recording processes as required. All academic results are entered into the student record management system. It is the responsibility of the student results administrator to ensure that the student academic record is completed.

The student academic record is a record of the final assessment outcome for each unit of competency. It must include the code and tile of the unit of competency plus the date competency was achieved.

# Activity 19

1. Identify people experienced in conducting assessment and discuss with them the methods they use to record assessment outcomes. Keep evidence of these discussions to show your trainer/assessor. Evidence may be in the form of:
    - notes
    - records of conversations
    - forms
    - examples of written reports
    - checklists
    - recordings.

   Arrange to meet with an RTO's quality manager to discuss their opinion of best practice methods for recording assessment outcomes.

   Review the RTO's policies and procedures guide, and find instructions given to assessors about recording assessment outcomes.

2. Use the information you gather from each of these sources to create a blog (or similar) that you could use to communicate with other assessors and stakeholders in the RTO's assessment system about the most effective method for ensuring results are recorded accurately, promptly and securely.

Click to complete Activity 19

# 5B Complete and submit required assessment documentation according to assessment procedures and confidentiality conventions


Reporting is an important tool for demonstrating the RTO satisfies their compliance obligations. The VET regulator, Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), requires RTOs to provide an annual summary report of their performance against the learner engagement and employer satisfaction quality indicators. This is useful information to individual assessors who are able to form a view of units of competency, cohorts of candidates and assessment methods that are achieving key performance measures. You should also examine assessment documentation in conjunction with your RTO colleagues to identify opportunities to enhance assessment processes and improve your own assessment practice.

## Produce assessment documentation

You must have clear instructions on the procedures you are to follow to complete and process an assessment report. In many RTOs, this function may be the responsibility of administration staff. Your role is to confirm that the report is accurate.

Preparing accurate and timely reports is potentially a high-risk area for RTOs. This aspect of the RTO's operations is usually evaluated during an audit. You can expect, therefore, that the RTO has implemented strict procedures in relation to reports.

These procedures may include:

- identifying the people responsible for processing assessment reporting requirements
- scheduling the production of a report
- checking the accuracy of the report
- forwarding relevant information to regulatory authorities
- ensuring correct storage and disposal of the report and associated records.

## Qualification completion

Qualification completion is when a learner is issued with formal certification for the successful completion of a recognised Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) qualification.

Qualification reports are produced at the time specified in the RTO's policies and procedures. For example, TAFEs may produce these at the conclusion of each semester and print transcripts to send to candidates. Final assessment reports may be produced at the conclusion of the academic year. Check the procedures implemented in your RTO to ensure you have transcribed and checked the results of individual candidates with sufficient time for the completion process.

RTOs have procedures that describe the method they use to issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment. For example, the procedure may specify that the qualification or statement of attainment must be issued within 21 days of course completion. The RTO's record system must record sufficient information to produce the qualifications and statements of attainment. This means that you need to contribute a list of units of competency achieved by each individual candidate.

All records must be kept securely and all confidential information must be safeguarded. If you keep records outside the RTO's premises, ensure you comply with the RTO's privacy and confidentiality policies and procedures. In many cases, RTOs have implemented procedures that restrict electronic access to candidates' personal information from off-site locations. Be very careful when you are transporting printed assessment reports or using them in another venue, such as in a meeting with regulatory authorities or auditors.

## Understand AVETMISS


The Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) is a nationally consistent standard for the collection and analysis of VET information throughout Australia. AVETMISS is designed to record data on programs delivered and assessed by RTOs, adult and community education, adult migrant education services and state training authorities (apprenticeships and traineeships). AVETMISS includes the national reporting requirements of information related to learners, curriculum and training organisations. Under the VET Quality Framework (VQF) and AQTF requirements, it is a condition of registration that all RTOs have a student record management system in place that provides data to meet the AVETMISS standard.

RTOs are required to collect, use and report data on two quality indicators: learner engagement and employer satisfaction.

Discuss the process your RTO uses to satisfy AVETMISS with the RTO's administration team or your supervisor.

You can read more about quality indicator reporting at:

- www.asqa.gov.au/vet-registration/meet-data-provision-requirements/quality-indicator-reporting.html

Example

**Complete and submit required assessment documentation according to assessment procedures and confidentiality conventions**

Shannon is an education manager in charge of delivery and assessment to over 300 students at a large TAFE. In addition to managing the student cohort, he has leadership and managerial responsibilities for over 25 staff. At the end of each semester, he gets his team together to review the data gathered from learner engagement questionnaires and employer satisfaction feedback. This information has been collated in a report to ASQA. Shannon finds that summaries of these reports can be used to identifying trends or patterns that he and his staff can review to improve outcomes for candidates and employers.

# Activity 20

1. Access an example of an assessment report, if possible (your trainer/assessor may be able to provide a sample document for you to use) OR

   If you are unable to access an actual report, complete an assessment record for a candidate who has successfully completed nine units in AUM20113 Certificate II in Automotive Manufacturing Production – Passenger Motor Vehicle.

   Summarise the completed process using this table or prepare a similar table on the submission of assessment documentation.

| Activity | Comment |
|---|---|
| Report purpose | |
| Data source (for assessment outcomes) | |
| Software used to prepare report | |
| Method for checking accuracy of source data | |
| Report format | |
| Date report prepared | |
| Target audience | |

| **Activity** | **Comment** |
|---|---|
| Methods for checking accuracy of completed report | |
| Parties for report distribution | |
| Recommendations for improvement based on reported outcomes | |

2. Write a short reflective statement of your experience in preparing the assessment report.

**Click to complete Activity 20**

# 5C Inform other relevant parties of the assessment decision, according to confidentiality conventions

You are responsible for informing the candidate and other interested parties of the assessment decision. When doing so, you must adhere to confidentiality guidelines required by your workplace policies and procedures. This section examines methods that are effective in giving feedback regarding assessment activities to all stakeholders, including employers and licensing bodies.

## Inform the candidate

RTOs must ensure learners have timely access to current and accurate records of their participation and progress in training and assessment as part of their VQF/AQTF obligations. The RTO's policies and procedures must explain how trainers and assessors can inform learners about how to gain access to their records.

Feedback on candidates' assessment performance is a vital element of their learning.

Use feedback to:

- recommend aspects of their learning and performance that need improvement
- set future training and development goals
- plan how to address areas where competency was not achieved
- identify areas where specialist support is required
- guide candidates to adapt and adjust their learning goals and strategies
- support trainers and assessors to understand candidates' individual needs.

## Who needs information on the assessment decision?

Your workplace policies and procedures may include information about which parties to inform of assessment decisions. The assessment plan may also identify all those who need to receive information. The assessment context plays a major role in determining which parties are informed of the assessment decision; for example, candidates who are apprentices or trainees can expect that their employer is notified of the assessment outcome. Check your workplace procedures guide for the form that is used to record the candidate's consent to releasing their assessment results to a third party.

The following summarises the entitlement of various stakeholders in relation to receiving assessment results.

### Candidate

- The candidate should receive written feedback about the assessment and a transcript of the assessment decision.

**Centrelink**

- The candidate may be in receipt of a Centrelink payment that is reliant on their successful completion of a training course. The RTO's policies and procedures should include information regarding the method used to inform Centrelink of the status of a learner's training and assessment.

**Employers of apprentices/trainees**

- Candidates who are apprentices and trainees should be aware that their employer is informed of assessment decisions.

**Employers (other than employers of apprentices/trainees)**

- Employers who have paid for the training are entitled to receive information about their employees if the employee has agreed to give it to them.

**School**

- The candidate's school needs to be informed when the student is doing a TAFE-delivered vocational HSC/VCE course, and the RTO has an agreement with the school to provide it with certain information.

**Parents/carers**

- The RTO's policies and procedures may specify whether parents and carers have rights to information about learners. Public RTOs, including TAFEs, usually require the learner's consent before information is released to a parent or carer.

**Specialist support services**

- Specialist support service providers (such as interpreters and translators, disability support workers, LLN teachers and subject matter experts) will not receive information about assessment outcomes without the written consent of the candidate.

## Transcripts

A candidate receives formal notification of the assessment decision as a printed letter or on a suitable database where they can access their personal details, including results.

In most cases, the RTO issues a transcript of the candidate's record, which lists all of their results in the course to a specific date. RTOs vary in the information they include in transcripts. They generally show the names of all the units of competency the candidate has enrolled in and the results they have achieved, including the application of the skills and knowledge to the standard of performance required in the workplace in a specific industry area.

Candidates receive either a certificate to show that they have successfully completed their qualification or a statement of attainment indicating the units they have successfully completed.

You may need to remind candidates that they have the right to appeal a decision they are unhappy with. Make sure they are aware of the appeal process (this was discussed in Topic 4).

Example

**Inform other relevant parties of the assessment decision according to confidentiality conventions**

The following example demonstrates the various people who may need to be informed of assessment outcomes.

Suzie has been working for several months in a large manufacturing company as a production hand. She had problems coping at school and left at the end of year nine.

The organisation's HR manager was made aware of Suzie's LLN issues by her team leader, who was concerned that she was unable to read standard operating procedures and safety information. The organisation supports Suzie and several other workers with similar LLN issues by engaging an RTO to provide appropriate learning and development on site. The course is designed to support them in developing the LLN skills required to participate effectively in further vocational training. This is supported by on-the-job coaching and mentoring.

Suzie has now completed the course. She has given her written consent for her learning and development outcomes to be shared with her team leader and the HR manager. Suzie receives a transcript that records her results and a copy is retained on her HR file.

# Activity 21

Read the case study, then complete the task that follows.

Note: you can choose to complete this task for an assessment candidate in your actual workplace instead of the candidate described in the case study.

## Case study

Vineet is 17 years old. He left school last year and lives with his parents. Vineet has a mild intellectual disability and is supported by Signpost Disability Services. He receives a payment from Centrelink.

Vineet's case manager helped him to secure a traineeship with a retail outlet. Vineet is currently completing various units of competency related to his work in retail from SIR20216 Certificate II in Retail Services as part of his traineeship.

You have recently recorded Vineet's results for last term. He was judged competent in all units except *SIRRINV001 Receive and handle retail stock*. Vineet has agreed that he needs to undertake further training before being assessed again for this unit.

Prepare a mind map that identifies the various stakeholders who need to be informed of the assessment decision. Your mind map should record:

- each stakeholder's identity
- the information needs of each stakeholder (in regard to assessment outcomes)
- the impact of privacy and confidentiality legislation, and relevant workplace policies and procedures.

**Click to complete Activity 21**

# Summary

1. Effective assessment record-keeping is a critical feature of any assessment system.
2. An LMS is specially designed software that manages and supports learning.
3. An RTO is required to regularly report certain information. Assessment reports are produced at the time specified in the RTO's policies and procedures.
4. You should seek opportunities to meet with your colleagues, including administration team members, to review the data that is presented in assessment reports.
5. Your workplace policies and procedures may include information about which parties are to be informed of assessment decisions. These may include candidates, employers, government bodies, parents, schools, Centrelink and specialist support personnel.
6. The training and funding context plays a major role in determining which parties are informed of the assessment decision.
7. The candidate receives formal notification of the assessment decision as a printed letter or on a suitable database where they can access their personal details and results.

# Topic 6

In this topic you will learn how to:

**6A** **Review the assessment process in consultation with candidates and other relevant people to improve future practice**

**6B** **Document and record the review according to relevant assessment system policies and procedures**

# Review the assessment process

As an assessor, you have a responsibility to be an active participant in your own professional development. You should maximise the opportunity that an assessment review process provides to gather feedback, reflect on your competencies, and plan future learning and development to improve the quality of your performance.

You must also support the RTO's continuous improvement system by identifying and promoting opportunities to enhance assessment processes.

# 6A Review the assessment process in consultation with candidates and other relevant people to improve future practice

An important part of your role is to continually reflect on the assessment process you are following and on your own assessment practice so you can implement any improvements that are identified.

## The importance of a review

An RTO is expected to regularly review the assessment processes they follow in order to retain their registration. This continuous improvement cycle is an essential part of their policies and procedures, and ensures they maintain quality assessment standards.

In addition, you are expected to demonstrate a commitment to ongoing professional development to ensure your own practices remain current, and to discuss and exchange information with other professional assessors. Reflecting on your practice ensures that you identify opportunities for improvement you can include in your professional development plan.

Reviewing how well the assessment process worked with other assessors, the candidate, industry representatives (such as workplace supervisors) and anyone else who was involved is a crucial part of your responsibilities as an assessor. RTOs are required to engage with industry, as they can provide valuable feedback on the assessment process.

## What to review

The RTO's assessment processes will include participation in assessment validation. This forms part of the RTO's review to ensure its assessment processes meet organisational and legislative requirements. The validation process reviews the RTO's assessment tools to ensure assessments are fair, flexible, valid and reliable.

The panel:

- discusses assessment instruments and methods
- compares evidence and judgments made
- ensures instructions are clear and appropriate
- identifies where reasonable adjustments can be made.

During the validation process, you have the opportunity to reflect on the quality of the assessment instruments and methods used and how you perform as an assessor.

If you are part of a team, you may find that the various professional conversations you have with other assessors expose you to a range of different ideas regarding assessment.

In your conversations with other assessors, you may find that:

- other assessors adopt a different approach to interpreting units of competency
- representatives of industry or enterprises have suggestions about improving the authenticity of simulations used in assessment

- the method you use to judge competence is not grounded in the rules of evidence and principles of assessment.

Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Validation activity checklist'; Aspire has included relevant templates in its *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

## Your own performance

When reviewing your own performance, you may find it helpful to maintain a journal where you regularly record reflections of your work experience.

During assessment activities you could use the journal to record your experience in:

- preparing for assessment
- conducting assessment and your interactions with candidates and their workplace supervisor
- your self-assessment of your communication and teamwork skills, and your effectiveness in explaining assessment procedures
- your participation in continuous improvement processes
- reflections of your relationships with other assessors and specialist support providers.

## Review quality

The following table summarises some of the key areas of assessment that should be reviewed, both during and after assessment activities. Ask your trainer for a sample 'Review and reflect on your assessment processes' template.

| Aspects of assessment | Reflective questions |
|---|---|
| **Assessment instruments** | ▶ Do you use correct procedures to access the current version of assessment plans and instruments?<br>▶ How do you ensure that you interpret the assessment plan and units of competency consistently (with other assessors)?<br>▶ How effective are you in explaining instructions to candidates?<br>▶ Were there any differences in the way that assessors interpreted instructions to candidates?<br>▶ Do the assessment instruments you use comply with training package requirements to use authentic or simulated workplaces?<br>▶ What feedback did you receive about assessment instruments that you helped design? You may have received feedback about aspects such as:<br>– instructions to the candidate<br>– instructions to the assessor<br>– validity of mapping the assessment tool to the unit of competency<br>– compliance with the assessment requirements<br>– access and equity<br>– reasonable adjustment<br>– compliance with the principles and rules of evidence. |

| Aspects of assessment | Reflective questions |
|---|---|
| **Collected evidence** | ▶ What findings were there in regard to satisfying the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment?<br>▶ Do you over-assess? For example, do you use assessment instruments that gather evidence which far exceeds the amount of evidence required?<br>▶ Are you consistent with other assessors in the amount and types of evidence you collect using assessment instruments? |
| **Organisational requirements** | ▶ Do you follow the assessment plan?<br>▶ Do you consistently apply the organisation's policies and procedures for assessment?<br>▶ How effectively do you give feedback to candidates? |
| **Benchmark solutions and marking guides** | ▶ How effective are the RTO's benchmarking solutions?<br>▶ If you are responsible for developing benchmarking solutions, how do your procedures compare with other assessors?<br>▶ Do your benchmark solutions promote reliability and consistency?<br>▶ What method do you use to ensure that you continually improve your benchmark solutions?<br>▶ How do you manage version control of benchmark solutions? |
| **Assessment judgments and outcomes** | ▶ What feedback do you receive about your assessment judgments?<br>▶ What activities do you use to ensure you are consistent within your judgments and with other assessors?<br>▶ What trends or patterns do you find in complaints or appeals about your assessment judgments? |

## Consult with relevant people

Assessment is never performed in isolation. You are required to interact with various people at each stage of the assessment process. Each person you interact with forms a view of your performance and, as such, is a potential source of information you can use to critically reflect on your assessment practice.

Your workplace policies and procedures may include advice on the process you should follow when contacting people external to the RTO, such as specialist service providers and workplace supervisors. Make sure you follow these instructions.

Carefully prepare for debriefings, meetings, interviews or discussions in which you are seeking feedback from other people. Identify your objectives and the aspects of your performance that you are most concerned with. You may wish to prepare a checklist or form to send in advance of your consultation meeting to let the other person know your purpose in meeting with them and encouraging them to be open and frank in their feedback. It would be helpful if you could send them a form or checklist to record their thoughts prior to your meeting. You can use the form or checklist to structure your meeting.

## Assistance with feedback

Remember to thank the person who has invested their time and effort in meeting with you. It may be appropriate to discuss your plans for how you will incorporate their feedback in your professional development plan.

The following table describes the people you can consult with and how they can help you.

| Relevant people | How they can help you |
|---|---|
| **Other assessors, training and assessment coordinators** | ▶ Interpreting the assessment plan and the benchmarks (units of competency)<br>▶ Mapping assessment instruments with assessment requirements<br>▶ Suggestions for improvements to assessment instruments<br>▶ Feedback on their observations of your interaction with candidates<br>▶ Evaluation of judged evidence<br>▶ Review of the documents you complete to record assessment outcomes<br>▶ Feedback on teamwork, communication skills and professional relationships with other assessors<br>▶ Evidence of your contribution to assessment validation and continuous improvement processes<br>▶ Evidence of your compliance with the RTO's policies and procedures, and relevant legislation and regulations (including implementation of the assessment plan)<br>▶ Suggestions for integration of competency standards for assessment<br>▶ Information about strategies that may be used for professional development |
| **Clients/ candidates** | ▶ Feedback on the legibility of assessment instructions<br>▶ Feedback on the RPL process<br>▶ Usability of the assessment instrument (time required to gather evidence, difficulty in sourcing evidence, support required, etc.)<br>▶ Specialist support required/provided<br>▶ Suggested improvements to reasonable adjustment<br>▶ Feedback on the support and guidance provided by the assessor<br>▶ Feedback received from their workplace colleagues and supervisor<br>▶ Accuracy of information included in assessment instruments<br>▶ Suggestions for integrated assessments<br>▶ Availability of relevant information, including workplace policies and procedures, legislation and regulations<br>▶ Experience of online learning and assessment<br>▶ Resources required for assessment; for example, computer hardware and software, internet access, materials, accommodation, supervision and printed materials (such as learner guides and textbooks) |

| Relevant people | How they can help you |
| --- | --- |
| **Supervisors/ team leaders/ managers** | ▶ Observations of interactions between the assessor and the candidate<br>▶ Suggestions for improvements to assessment instruments<br>▶ Feedback on assessment instruments used for third-party reports and how they contributed to the assessment process<br>▶ Feedback on teamwork, communication skills and professional relationships with other assessors and administration staff<br>▶ Evidence of your contribution to assessment validation and continuous improvement processes<br>▶ Evidence of your compliance with the RTO's policies and procedures, and relevant legislation and regulations<br>▶ Compliance with the RTO's record-keeping system<br>▶ Recommendations for future consultations with industry and enterprise representatives<br>▶ Feedback on performance in quality management, continuous improvement and assessment validation activities<br>▶ Review of the evidence gathered for assessment<br>▶ Evaluation of judged evidence<br>▶ Information about strategies that may be used for professional development<br>▶ Knowledge of research relevant to assessment processes<br>▶ Opportunities for career progression |
| **RPL coordinators** | ▶ Observations of interactions between the assessor and the candidate<br>▶ Feedback regarding the instructions and advice given to candidates<br>▶ Review of the evidence gathered for assessment<br>▶ Evaluation of judged evidence |
| **Technical and subject experts** | ▶ Review of the accuracy of information included in assessment instruments<br>▶ Feedback on instructions given to candidates<br>▶ Emerging trends and innovations<br>▶ Feedback on the quality of simulations, case studies and knowledge questionnaires<br>▶ Suggestions for reasonable adjustments<br>▶ Recommendations for improvements to RPL processes<br>▶ Suggestions for evidence that would be appropriate for inclusion in assessment portfolios<br>▶ Opportunities for consultation with industry or business representatives |

| Relevant people | How they can help you |
|---|---|
| **Coaches and mentors** | ▶ Observations of interactions between the assessor and the candidate<br>▶ Suggestions for improvements to assessment instruments; for example, the workplace project was too time-consuming or required access to technology that was not available (this is reasonable feedback that the trainer can take back to the RTO)<br>▶ Feedback on teamwork, communication skills and professional relationships with other assessors<br>▶ Evidence of your contribution to assessment validation and continuous improvement processes<br>▶ Evidence of your compliance with the RTO's policies and procedures, and relevant legislation and regulations<br>▶ Review of the evidence gathered for assessment<br>▶ Evaluation of judged evidence<br>▶ Information about strategies that may be used for professional development<br>▶ Research relevant to assessment processes<br>▶ Opportunities for career progression |
| **LLN experts** | ▶ Provision of specialist support, where necessary<br>▶ Suggestions for relevant professional development opportunities<br>▶ Feedback on the instructions and advice given to candidates<br>▶ Observations of the assessor interacting with candidates<br>▶ Feedback on the sufficiency of support given to candidates<br>▶ Review of the reasonable adjustments offered to candidates<br>▶ Information about the issues and challenges facing people with lower levels of LLN<br>▶ Information about research related to LLN |

Example

**Review the assessment process in consultation with candidates and other relevant people to improve future practice**

In the following example, an organisation conducts a quality review that enables their assessors to identify opportunities to improve their assessment practice.

QCC Training specialises in delivering and assessing workers in the childcare industry. They have recently added the qualification CHC50113 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care from the CHC Community Services Training Package to their scope.

The RTO's approach relies on blended delivery. Learners complete a series of learner guides developed for the units of competency in the Diploma, receive on-site support from a trainer from QCC Training and attend a workshop one day per month at QCC Training's premises.

Mandy has been responsible for conducting assessment for various units of competency in the course. These units require learners to demonstrate they are competent to prepare and implement programs that support the children's development. The assessment instruments prepared as part of the assessment plan developed by Mandy require learners to complete lengthy multiple-choice quizzes and write an extended essay that describes the features of various programs for children.

During the assessment review that was conducted at the end of semester, Mandy is disappointed to receive poor feedback from the assessment candidates. She finds that the majority of candidates felt that the quiz was 'too easy' for people who will work as directors of a childcare centre and didn't give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate their depth of knowledge. Several point out it would have been better to submit programs they had developed rather than writing essays about the process.

Mandy is now worried about her judgment, so she discusses her concerns with her colleague, who suggests that she should consider using portfolio assessment for the programming units. Candidates can also be observed in their workplace, submit various programs they have implemented and maintain a learning journal. The online quiz should also be revised and trialled before implementation. The RTO quality manager suggests that a project team be formed to investigate the use of electronic portfolios, such as Mahara and PebblePad.

The director of Happy Days Childcare, who is participating in the assessment review, asks Mandy to consider integrating the programming units of competency for assessment. The director suggests this is likely to:

- reduce the amount of assessment candidates need to complete
- allow increased workplace observation
- improve the authenticity of the assessment tool.

Mandy realises the importance of consulting with her peers and colleagues, and is confident she will improve her assessment practices in the future.

# Activity 22

Participate in a meeting with stakeholders in the assessment process. This could either be in your workplace or in a group learning environment where you simulate a workplace meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to review the assessment process to improve your own practice. Consider asking the following people to participate in the review:

- other assessors
- a candidate
- your manager
- a business or enterprise representative
- other learners
- your trainer.

The participants will need access to material that demonstrates your assessment practice. You may wish to provide them with the evidence you have collected for your assessment portfolio. You should also consider arranging for a 'critical friend', such as another assessor, to observe you implementing an assessment instrument.

Write a reflective statement of approximately 500 words summarising the outcomes of the review meeting. Your summary must include specific areas of your assessment practice that you need to improve. These may include:

- Who was there?
- What were the various roles of each stakeholder?
- What did you look at specifically?
- What was the feedback?
- What actions were identified?

Click to complete Activity 22

# 6B Document and record the review according to relevant assessment system policies and procedures

The RTO is required to regularly review the quality of its assessment processes (including assessment tools and instruments) to maintain its registration. You are expected to maintain appropriate records of the review and continuous improvement of assessment processes as evidence of the RTO's compliance regime. This may include documenting:

- the results of a validation of the RTO's assessment processes
- findings from the review of your own assessment practices.

## The RTO's assessment process

Managers are generally responsible for preparing and reviewing reports of the assessment process. It is essential that they clearly identify any gaps in assessment practice and the specific actions that should be taken to address these gaps. Make sure you are familiar with the report's recommendations for improvement, and are able to identify where they apply to you.

| **The manager or panel representing the training and assessment team may formulate recommendations such as:** | |
|---|---|
| ▶ additional professional development for assessors | ▶ additional or enhanced engagement with industry and enterprises |
| ▶ making changes to assessment instruments based on student feedback | ▶ improving evidence collection processes |
| ▶ revising the RTO's assessment policy to reflect the needs of industry and workers, and ensure compliance with relevant standards | ▶ revising information for assessors |
| ▶ making systematic improvements to the record-keeping system | ▶ revising information for candidates or third parties |
| ▶ reviewing learning and assessment resources from student evaluations | ▶ engaging with subject matter experts |
| ▶ making changes to assessment system procedures | ▶ implementing technology improvements. |

# Your professional improvement plan

Record the feedback you receive about your assessment practice on your review form. This forms the basis of your professional development.

Use this information to identify where you can improve your practice in the future. You may find that it is in one particular area, such as interpreting units of competency, collecting appropriate evidence or making assessment judgments. Most assessors improve with experience, but undertaking specific professional development is an essential aspect of your work.

As part of their VQF/AQTF compliance obligations, RTOs are required to provide for assessors' continued professional development to ensure that trainers and assessors maintain the currency of their skills and knowledge, relevant to the units of competency and training packages being delivered and assessed.

Your RTO may have a form or template you should use to record your professional development plan. Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Professional development plan'.

**Example**

**Document and record the review according to relevant assessment system policies and procedures**

The following is an example of a report completed by an assessment review panel to recommend improvements to the assessment tool used to judge competence for assessment candidates in an insurance company.

**Date of activity:** 4 May 2016

**Training package:** Financial Services

**Code:** FNS

**Course:** Certificate III in Financial Services

**Code:** FNS30115

| Unit code | Name of unit | Reason/s for selection |
|---|---|---|
| FNSINC301 | Work effectively in the financial services industry | New assessment instrument.<br>External audit schedule next semester. |

**What are you validating? (tick as appropriate) You should select at least one of the top three:**

- ☐ Assessment instrument/s
- ☐ Process of assessment and assessor role
- ☐ Assessment judgment
- ☐ Interpretation of the unit/s of competency
- ☐ Standard or benchmark of the performance required
- ☐ Reasonable adjustments
- ☐ Evidence required

| What approach are you using to validate? (Where appropriate tick the relevant box) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Type of validation (as per original plan)** | **This validation is occurring:** | **Who is involved?** | **Resources required** |
| ☐ Panel review<br>☐ Moderation meetings<br>☐ Team meetings<br>☐ Other (please specify) | ☐ Before the assessment<br>☐ At implementation stage<br>☐ Throughout the assessment process<br>☐ At the end of the assessment | ☐ Assessor/s<br>☐ Industry representative/s<br>☐ Student/s | ☐ Training package<br>☐ Units of competency<br>☐ Assessment instruments,<br>☐ RPL application<br>☐ Instructions to candidates and assessor |

**Recommendations**

The assessment instrument implemented in semester 1 uses multiple-choice questions as the assessment method. The first group of assessment candidates to use the online multiple-choice assessment instrument did not achieve competency at the rate that had been expected. A significant number of candidates did not complete the multiple-choice quiz, complaining that they were not given adequate time. Informal feedback from candidates included 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.

The assessment instrument is to be redesigned to include short case studies that realistically portray various job roles in a bank. Assessors will need to investigate whether it is feasible to use observation checklists in the workplace.

# Activity 23

This learning activity is designed to engage you in reflective practice. Review the various documents you have collated as you worked through the learner guide for this unit. Reflect on any formative feedback you have received from your trainer/assessor as you progressed. Incorporate the recommendations for improvements to the assessment process that you identified in Activity 22.

Prepare a professional development plan that records gaps in your assessment practice and the strategies you plan to use to address them. You can consult with your manager or supervisor to prepare your plan, if applicable. Alternatively, use your trainer/assessor as your mentor/supervisor. You can record the feedback and advice you have received in a learning journal.

You may prepare your professional development plan using either the appropriate form/template from your workplace or the sample template 'Professional development plan'.

**Click to complete Activity 23**

# Summary

1. As a professional assessor, you have a responsibility to regularly reflect on your performance.
2. You should review the following aspects of assessment:
   - assessment instruments
   - collected evidence
   - benchmark solutions
   - marking guides
   - records of assessment outcomes.
3. Each of person you interact with will form a view of your performance and, as such, is a potential source of information you can use to critically reflect on your assessment practice.
4. You are required to follow the assessment improvement policies and procedures that have been developed for your individual workplace when participating in these processes. All results from reviews must be recorded as part of the RTO's commitment to continuous improvement.
5. Record the feedback you receive from colleagues, learners, workplace supervisors and others about your assessment practices, such as course evaluations, to inform your professional development.
6. You must comply with policies and procedures implemented by the RTO for participating in your ongoing professional development.