

confidence  
Maximising assessment  
decision-making resource  
resource assessors kit  
assessment decision  
kit Maximising confidence  
resource kit assessors  
assessment decision-making

# Maximising confidence in assessment decision-making

Resource kit for assessors



*Robin Booth*

*Berwyn Clayton*

*Robyn House*

*Sue Roy*

© Australian National Training Authority, 2002

This work has been produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) with the assistance of funding provided by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). It is published by NCVER under licence from ANTA. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this publication may be reported by any process without the written permission of NCVER Ltd. Requests should be made in writing to NCVER Ltd.

The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author/project team and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian National Training Authority.

ISBN 1 74096 049 1 web edition

TD/TNC 69.09

Published by NCVER

ABN 87 007 967 311

252 Kensington Road, Leabrook SA 5068

PO Box 115, Kensington Park SA 5068, Australia

[www.ncver.edu.au](http://www.ncver.edu.au)

# Contents

---

Introduction	4
How the resource was developed	5
How to use the resource	6
Section 1: Assessment review strategies	7
Strategy 1: Establishing an internal assessment validation process	8
1.1: Assessment validation action plan	12
1.2: Pre-assessment validation of assessment task	13
1.3: Review of assessment checklist	14
1.4: Assessment tools and strategies checklist	15
1.5: Draft best practice moderation principles	18
1.6: Moderation action plans	20
1.7: Mentoring and ongoing moderation and review of assessment	22
1.8: Establishment of Assessment Quality Assurance Committee	23
1.9: Training package implementation and quality assessment strategy	25
Strategy 2: Internal auditing	27
2.1: Audit checklist	28
Strategy 3: Review of currency of assessors	29
3.1: Self-assessment for determining current assessor competence	30
Strategy 4: Organisational policy	32
4.1: Code of practice for assessment panels	34
Section 2: Gathering evidence	38
Strategy 5: Guidelines for designing simulated assessment events	39
5.1: Use of simulation in assessment	40
5.2: 'Beauty options'—simulated assessment	41
Strategy 6: Guidelines for gathering third-party evidence	43
6.1: Template—third-party evidence form	45
6.2: Gathering evidence in the workplace for recognition	47
6.3: Industry validation of assessment	49
Section 3: Partnerships and networks	52
Strategy 7: Implementing quality assurance in on-the-job assessment partnerships	54
7.1: Assessment panels	57
7.2: Assessment partnerships via Learning Centres	59
7.3: Assessor information and networks	60
Strategy 8: Framework for auspiced or collaborative assessment arrangements	62
8.1: Auspiced/Partnership agreement	63
References	70
Appendix A: Dictionary of assessment terms	71
Appendix B: Templates	74

# Introduction

---

## Why is a quality assurance system for assessment important for registered training organisations?

The introduction of Training Packages has focussed attention in the vocational education training (VET) sector on the quality of assessment. For the process of mutual recognition to work effectively there needs to be confidence across the board in assessment decisions made by training providers.

The development of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) emphasises that training and assessment is to be conducted within a quality assurance framework. Registered training organisations (RTOs) are required to document, monitor and evaluate assessment practices within their organisation and within any collaborative assessment arrangements they are involved in.

The Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training BSZ98 (ANTA 1998) defines quality assurance as:

*A planned and systematic process of ensuring that the requirements of the assessment systems, competency standards and any other criteria are applied in a consistent manner. Quality assurance mechanisms or procedures are an integral part of an assessment system.*

With the introduction of Training Packages, assessors are required to work in different ways, in new locations and sometimes in partnership with others. With these changes, it is important for assessment to be monitored to ensure that it remains valid, reliable, fair, flexible and credible. There is widespread acknowledgement that there is scope to significantly improve the quality of current assessment processes and practices.

Regardless of the context in which the assessment occurs or the form it takes, if the assessment leads to an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification the process adopted by the RTO needs to be quality assured. Whether the assessment occurs on or off the job or as part of a recognition process the RTO needs to monitor and continually improve its assessment processes. Previously, the aspects of the assessment process that were usually the main focus of a quality assurance system involved the actual conduct of the assessment. Now there is more emphasis on continuous improvement of all aspects of an RTO's assessment system. The system needs to be reviewed regularly and identified changes implemented. The focus on quality in assessment should be an integral part of the RTO's overall quality management system.

The *Australian Quality Training Framework: Standards for registered training organisations* (ANTA 2001) provides information for RTOs about the assessment validation processes they need to have in place:

9.2 *The RTO validates its assessment plans by:*

- a) *Reviewing, comparing and evaluating the assessment processes, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same standards (\*), at least annually; and*
- b) *Documenting any action taken to improve the quality and consistency of assessment.*

*(\*) These may be internal processes with stakeholder involvement or external validations with other providers and/or stakeholders*

For further information about the AQTF see the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) website: [www.anta.gov.au](http://www.anta.gov.au)

Many of the strategies in this resource could be adopted by assessors and managers when setting up processes to validate their RTO's assessment processes as required by the AQTF.

## How can an RTO benefit from a quality assurance process to cover all aspects of the assessment system?

An RTO assessment quality assurance system:

- is valuable when an RTO is preparing for audit
- increases confidence in RTO standards which allows mutual recognition to work more successfully
- can help maintain standards when assessment occurs in new locations and contexts
- can help maintain standards for assessment occurring through partnerships
- helps ensure that candidates receive fair treatment during the assessment process and value the credentials issued by the RTO

Assuring the quality of assessment will have other benefits to your organisation. Improving the quality and consistency of assessment will help assessors to feel more confident about their judgments, learners to feel they have been treated fairly and employers, community and other RTOs to value the qualification issued.

## How the resource was developed

This kit of materials was developed from research conducted as part of the project 'Maximising confidence in assessment decision-making: Current approaches and future strategies for quality assurance'. The project investigated the range of strategies that RTOs currently have in place to maintain quality at various points in the assessment process. It drew on the experience of practising assessors who identified aspects of the assessment process they felt most required quality assurance strategies to increase assessor confidence. The strategies and material presented in this resource are examples of useful models that were identified during the project or developed by the project team from information collected during the research.

The range of material collected during the project included examples of assessment policies and assessment information provided to learners as well as examples of documented assessment processes and procedures to support assessors and assist with the assessment review process. Selected material and strategies have been grouped under three sections in this resource. These sections cover the range of strategies considered by those consulted during the research to be the most helpful in improving and maintaining assessment quality.

The resource includes:

### *Section 1: Validation strategies*

Includes an overview of how RTOs can develop a validation or moderation process, a range of checklists that assessors can use as part of the assessment review process and examples of how some RTOs have developed validation strategies. Also included in this section is an example of how an organisation developed a code of practice for its assessors.

### *Section 2: Gathering evidence*

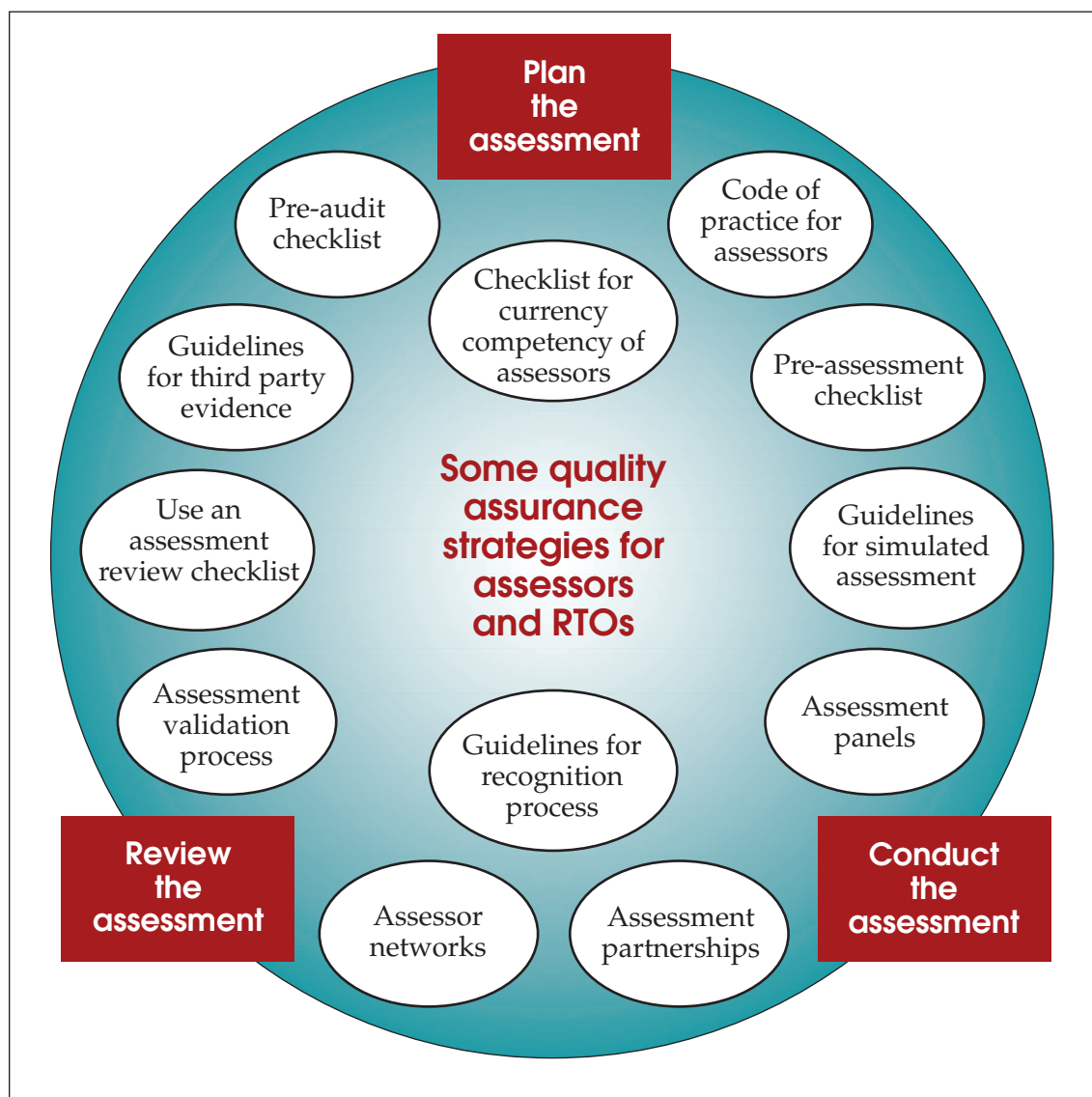
Includes guidelines for setting up simulated assessment and gathering third-party evidence as well as examples of approaches taken by a number of RTOs in gathering valid and reliable evidence.

### *Section 3: Assessment partnerships and networks*

Includes guidelines for training organisations on how and why to document partnership and collaborative assessment arrangements with a range of examples of how particular organisations have improved the quality of their assessment process through partnerships.

Included in the resource are strategies that may be used by small and large, public and private sector RTOs. There are some which may be adopted directly by assessors, while others would need to be implemented on a larger scale by the RTO as a whole. Figure 1 maps the strategies included in the resource in relation to the assessment process.

**Figure 1: Strategies included in the resource**



## How to use the resource

The resource is designed as a series of strategies with case study examples and scenarios of how particular RTOs have dealt with assessment issues. Included with some of the strategies are templates that could be modified to suit the needs of your organisation. Copies of the templates or forms are also included as an appendix for easy access when customising them.

Appendix A is a dictionary of assessment terms that are used throughout the resource. This has been included, as there is considerable confusion about the 'language of assessment'. Also included as an appendix are a series of templates that may be useful to assessors.

Given the diverse range of RTOs currently assessing and awarding a qualification as part of a Training Package, not all these strategies will be relevant to all assessors and RTOs. The strategies provided are designed to act as a trigger. Readers are encouraged to dip into the resource and select strategies that may be useful to their RTO's needs in improving assessment quality.

# Section 1: Assessment review strategies

---

## What is included in this section?

Validation strategies help ensure that the assessment decision is consistent and reliable. The process may involve having another assessor(s) confirm the assessment decision.

This section includes a number of assessment validation strategies, examples of forms and templates designed for use when reviewing assessment processes and examples of how individual RTOs have implemented similar strategies. It also includes information about the development of an assessment code of practice by an RTO. These strategies have been selected because they could potentially increase the confidence of assessors and improve the quality of assessment.

## Section 1: Contents

Strategy	Associated tools, templates and examples
1 Establishing an internal assessment validation process	1.1 Assessment validation action plan 1.2 Pre-assessment validation of assessment task 1.3 Review of assessment checklist 1.4 Assessment tools and strategies checklist 1.5 Draft Best Practice Moderation Principles*— <i>Industry Training Organisations, New Zealand</i> 1.6 Moderation Action Plans— <i>New Zealand Seafood Industry*</i> 1.7 Mentoring and ongoing moderation and review of assessment— <i>Moreton Institute of TAFE</i> 1.8 Establishment of Assessment Quality Assurance Committee— <i>TAFE NSW</i> 1.9 Training Package implementation and quality assessment strategy— <i>NSW Adult and Community Education</i>
2 Internal auditing	2.1 Audit checklist
3 Review of currency of assessors	3.1 Self-assessment for determining current assessor competencies— <i>Assessment and Workplace Training Package</i>
4 Organisational policy	4.1 Code of Practice for Assessment Panels— <i>Department of Defence</i>

\* Note: 1.5 and 1.6 are quality assurance examples from New Zealand. The focus in that system is on moderation. Moderation and validation are interchangeable terms in this case.

## Use of material in the resource

The ideas and strategies included are intended as triggers or models for RTOs and assessors to adapt when developing their own assessment review processes. The templates and forms have been developed as a starting point. They are also included in appendix B so that you can customise them for use by your RTO.

# Strategy 1: Establishing an internal assessment validation process

---

This strategy gives an overview of the benefits of establishing an assessment validation (moderation) process and outlines the process that an RTO can use to implement a validation strategy. The strategy is supported by a number of forms that may be useful in establishing and streamlining assessment review processes. A number of examples describe how some organisations have set up assessment review strategies.

## What is internal validation and why do assessors and RTOs need to consider it

Validation is the process where assessors compare and evaluate their assessment methods, assessment procedures and assessment decisions. Validation is another term for 'moderation'. Validation forms part of the review assessment requirement of the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training and audit requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

There are a number of ways to implement validation or moderation, but the model presented here follows the form of consensus or group moderation. Each RTO needs to design a validation strategy to suit the needs of its assessment system.

Validation, as described in this strategy, is where groups of assessors get together to examine the instruments, processes and outcomes of assessment and come to agreement about the use and effectiveness of these.

Validation is an important process that helps to maintain the quality of assessment. The goal of validation is to ensure that assessment is valid, reliable and fair and that decisions are made on the basis of sufficient and appropriate evidence. Internal validation is also a way to ensure that different applications of performance criteria or performance benchmarks remain within acceptable limits. The process ensures that assessors working across a number of sites are applying consistent standards and making consistent judgements. By setting up a system of review of assessment, RTOs and assessors will meet the national requirements to quality assure their assessment methods, processes and judgements.

## What does internal validation involve?

Establishing a process for quality assuring assessment should not be an onerous or costly task. Many activities that assessors currently engage in may form part of a validation strategy.

The main elements of an internal validation system are:

- development of validation action plans
- validation meetings
- sampling of assessed work



## Validation action plans

In consultation with assessors, one person will take the role of the validation co-ordinator and will formulate an action plan that identifies:

- when validation meetings are to occur
- what units of competency or modules are to be included
- what percentage of assessed work is to be scrutinised
- how the procedure for validation is to be conducted (a model of an action plan is included with this kit at 1.1)
- how identified improvements will be made

## Validation meetings

The aim of validation meetings is to provide the opportunity for assessors:

- to discuss the assessment instruments that they have used
- to discuss the assessment decisions that they have made
- to scrutinise the evidence that has been presented by candidates
- to discuss any feedback provided by candidates
- to check that there has been consistent interpretation of the standards

These can be either formal or informal meetings that involve a number of assessors working together in a workplace, within training organisation teaching departments or teaching clusters or even across a number of training providers.

Where assessors are in different locations, the use of telephone, fax, email and internet links can also be used effectively, although there is considerable value in an initial face-to-face session for all assessors involved in the validation process. This allows the development of a shared understanding and ownership of the process.

## Timing—When should internal validation occur?

Validation meetings should occur at appropriate points during the assessment cycle. Internal validation can take place before, during or after assessment has taken place. AQTF requires that a review process be held at least annually.

Validation before assessment takes place concentrates on the:

- design of the assessment activities
- evidence guides and assessment tools
- benchmarks against which learner performance is to be assessed

Validation during assessment concentrates on:

- the actual performance being undertaken by a learner

Validation after assessment concentrates on:

- the assessment task and the assessment process
- learner performance
- the assessment decision that has been made
- reporting and record keeping
- feedback from candidates

While validation after assessment is the most common method, procedures for checking methods, evidence requirements and benchmarks of performance prior to any assessment are also vital to assuring the quality of assessment.

## Who needs to be involved in internal validation?

All people who are undertaking assessment in the RTO need to be involved in some form of internal validation process, even if it only involves getting together for a validation meeting prior to assessment being undertaken.

It is important to identify someone to take on the role of validation co-ordinator, especially where larger groups of assessors are to be involved in the process.

A validation co-ordinator is responsible for:

- development of the validation action plan
- organisation of the validation meeting
- providing guidelines for assessors about the material to be used at validation meetings and how it should be collected and presented
- maintaining records of validation documentation used, sessions held and filing reports of the process for later reference
- reviewing the validation process on a regular basis and modifying or improving the process as required

This role can be shared or rotated, but it does need to be resourced appropriately.

## Establishing a cross-RTO validation process

Once an internal validation process is established, an RTO may further ensure quality by developing links with others assessing in the same industry area. This may be done through contact with another RTO, the relevant industry training advisory body (ITAB), or through professional or industry associations and networks.

## What can be included in validation meetings?

### Sampling

This involves choosing a selection of assessed work from a sample of target units of competence or modules.

The aim of sampling is to:

- determine that the evidence collected is appropriate and sufficient to demonstrate that competencies are achieved
- ensure that assessment methods are used consistently
- confirm performance criteria and standards are interpreted accurately
- check assessors are applying performance criteria consistently

In selecting a sample of assessed work, include as appropriate:

- the assessment work of a range of learners
- the assessment work of a range of teachers/trainers
- any apparent anomalies or borderline cases

Where a training program is being delivered across a range of sites, it is a good idea to sample some assessments from each site to check whether teachers/trainers are applying the assessment strategy in a consistent manner.

Although it is easier to collect examples of written assessment tasks, it is important to not overlook other forms of assessment. Although audio and videotaped assessments are difficult to collect, they are useful for validation meetings.

## Exemplars and benchmark materials

Where there are a number of assessors working with the same standards in an RTO, it is a good idea to collect good examples of assessment tasks, instruments and learner responses that can be shared by your peers or co-assessors.

Before using shared materials, assessors need to agree that the selected learner performances, responses or 'model answers' do in fact represent the standard required for learners to be considered competent. Therefore, exemplars or benchmark materials need to be checked to make certain:

- they accurately assess the performance criteria being assessed (validity)
- the instructions are unambiguous and clear for assessors and learners (reliability and fairness)
- all assessors agree they are acceptable benchmarks

Currency is an important issue with shared material. It is important to review benchmark materials regularly to ensure their ongoing relevance and validity. New benchmark material should also be added regularly.

## What is the value of an internal validation process?

Internal validation processes can be a very supportive mechanism for professional judgement. They provide the opportunity for professional exchange and help people to develop a sense of confidence by enhancing assessor ability to make consistent and accurate assessment decisions.

By establishing internal validation processes assessors can:

- exchange information about the assessment methods they are using and reach consensus about the validity of their approaches
- reach a common understanding of the criteria they are using for the assessment to ensure their approach is consistently applied (reliable)
- evaluate the technical quality of the assessment tools being used
- develop some benchmark performances (examples of what competent performance looks like)
- discuss issues of concern about the assessment process, particularly in relation to fairness and flexibility
- suggest improvements to the assessment system or processes
- have access to up-to-date information about what is happening in their industry
- foster the development of informal networks

## What are the minimum requirements for internal validation?

RTOs need to develop an internal validation process to suit their needs of their assessors and match the resources available. The minimum requirements for an RTO establishing their own process would be:

- someone to take on a co-ordinating role
- validation action plans which document procedures, timeframes and target units/modules to be sampled
- a clear strategy and procedures for comparing assessments
- regular meetings of those involved in validation
- a system to review the validation processes that involves assessors

## 1.1: Assessment validation action plan (template)

This form can be used to document the validation process. It would be a useful record for overall planning of the process and also for audit purposes.

To be completed by the validation co-ordinator after consultation with assessors on which units of competence/modules are to be validated.

Plan for the training period: 00/00/2000 – 00/00/2000

Unit/ module no.	Unit/module name	Pre-assessment validation	Post-assessment validation

Proposed date(s) for pre-assessment validation:        /        /2001

Proposed date(s) for post-assessment validation:        /        /2001

Names of assessors involved in validation:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Validation co-ordinator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up planning action required

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 1.2: Pre-assessment validation of assessment task (template)

This checklist could be completed by a peer or mentor prior to assessment being conducted. It could also be used during validation meetings to guide discussion about specific assessment tasks. If used prior to assessment, sufficient time needs to be allowed for any modifications.

Unit/module no. \_\_\_\_\_

Unit/module name: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment activity	Yes/no	Comment
Assessment task instructions and assessment conditions are clearly identified		
Written information is worded appropriately		
The assessment activity addresses the evidence requirements for the competency or competencies being assessed		
The level of difficulty of the activity is appropriate to the competency or competencies being assessed		
Exemplars, benchmarks and/or assessment checklists are available for use in making assessment decision		

Modification required (as identified under Comments):

Assessment task is ready for use:

\_\_\_\_\_

Verifying peer or mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Filed by validation co-ordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1.3: Review of assessment checklist

#### Facilitator's guide, Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training BSZ98 (ANTA 1999)

The facilitator's guide for the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training BSZ98 presents a project that includes an excellent list of questions for helping to work out the people and procedures for a review of assessment. The questions focus on the critical aspects of validation.

- 1 Who will be involved in the review process? List the people and their role in the review.
- 2 What methods will be used to review the assessment process? List the methods chosen and the reasons they were selected.
- 3 What criteria will be used to evaluate the assessments being conducted?
- 4 How will the review process be documented and who will take responsibility for the documentation?
- 5 How will you determine the assessment decisions are consistent?
- 6 What will be done with the information as a result of the validation? How will findings of the validation be substantiated?
- 7 Who needs to be informed about the review outcomes? What information will they be given and in what form?
- 8 How will modifications to the assessment system be implemented and who will decide what those modifications will be?

## 1.4: Assessment tools and strategies checklist

Use this checklist to assist you to design assessment tools and strategies that meet the assessment principles—validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility. Remember, validity must have the highest priority when you make your choice of approach. Reaching a sensible balance between all of the principles is the key. Gauge your assessment against the following statements, and where you are unable to answer YES, re-work your approach.

### Validity

	Yes/no	Comments
1 The assessment tasks are based on realistic workplace activities and contexts.	Y/N	
2 The evidence relates directly to the units of competence, or learning outcomes, being assessed.	Y/N	
3 The instrument will assess the candidate's ability to meet the level of performance required by the unit(s) of competency.	Y/N	
4 The assessment tasks have been designed to allow holistic and integrated assessment of knowledge, skills and attitudes.	Y/N	
5 More than one task and source of evidence will be used as the basis for judgement, with evidence drawn from a variety of performances over time where practical.	Y/N	
6 Different sources of evidence of knowledge and skills that underpin the competency will be considered in the assessment.	Y/N	
7 The purpose, boundaries and limitations of the interpretations that can be made of evidence have been clearly identified.	Y/N	
8 The methods and instruments selected are appropriate for the assessment system specified by the industry (where applicable).	Y/N	
9 Where practical, the methods and processes for assessment have been validated by another person with expertise in the competencies being assessed.	Y/N	

## Reliability

	Yes/no	Comments
1 Critical elements have been identified and sampling will be used to ensure that the most important aspects are assessed.	Y/N	
2 Assessment exemplars and checklists have been prepared for use by assessors.	Y/N	
3 Guides for observing and recording evidence are based on units of competence.	Y/N	
4 Clear guidelines are available to ensure that assessors make consistent decisions over time and with different candidates.	Y/N	
5 Where multiple assessors are involved in conducting parallel assessment events, the strategies used have been agreed.	Y/N	
6 Consistent instructions to candidates and procedures for undertaking assessment are available to all assessors.	Y/N	
7 Where work samples are to be used as evidence, candidates will receive specific guidelines on requirements, including information about ensuring authenticity and currency of the evidence.	Y/N	
8 Where a competency/cluster of competencies are going to be assessed in different situations, the levels of difficulty are comparable.	Y/N	

## Flexibility

	Yes/no	Comments
1 The assessment approach can be adapted to meet the needs of all candidates and workplaces.	Y/N	
2 Where practical and appropriate, assessment will be negotiated and agreed between the assessor and the candidate.	Y/N	
3 Candidates will be able to have their previous experience or expertise recognised.	Y/N	
4 The assessment strategy adequately covers both the on- and off-the-job components of the training.	Y/N	



## Fairness

	Yes/no	Comments
1 Candidates will be given clear and timely information on assessment.	Y/N	
2 Information for candidates will cover assessment methods, procedures, the criteria against which they will be assessed, when and how they will receive feedback and the mechanism for appeal.	Y/N	
3 Candidates will be included in discussions on the choice of assessment methods and timing.	Y/N	
4 Candidates will be made aware of their responsibilities with regard to assessment.	Y/N	
5 The assessment approach chosen caters for the language, literacy and numeracy needs of all candidates.	Y/N	
6 The special geographic, financial or social needs of candidates have been considered in the development and conduct of the assessment.	Y/N	
7 Allowable adjustment can be made to the assessment strategy to ensure equity for all candidates, while maintaining the integrity of the assessment outcomes.	Y/N	
8 Opportunities for feedback and review of all aspects of assessment will be provided to candidates.	Y/N	
9 There are clearly documented mechanisms for appeal against assessment processes and decisions and these will be provided to candidates prior to assessment.	Y/N	

## 1.5: Draft best practice moderation principles

### *Industry training organisations, New Zealand*

This set of principles may be useful as a model for RTOs establishing an internal validation process. Moderation is the term used in New Zealand for a process that is similar to what is now termed validation in Australia.

## Background

The following are a draft set of best practice moderation principles currently being developed by providers and industry training organisations (ITOs) in New Zealand.

Martin Eadie of the New Zealand Seafood Industry Council suggests:

*Basically it signals an increase in confidence between parties and a move from a compliance regime (catching assessors out) to an enabling/supportive system.*

*Interestingly the main issue now in NZ is not whether or not to have the trouble/intrusion of moderation (key issue from 1994 to 1998) but how to make moderation work effectively.*

## Approach

Moderation is a quality management system designed to achieve valid and consistent assessment.

## Best practice moderation principles

**Principle 1:** Best practice moderation occurs when it is based on mutual trust between assessors, and between the assessors and the standard setter.

- 1.1 Standard setters have a number of tools to support the assessment process but, ultimately, it is the assessor who makes the assessment decision using their professional judgement.
- 1.2 The credentials of assessors (both provider and ITO assessors) are established during the accreditation process. This process ensures that the accredited organisation has systems that lead to the appointment of professional assessors with appropriate technical skills.
- 1.3 A moderation system based on mistrust can lead to assessors (and providers) feeling isolated, threatened and professionally undermined and the development of processes which punish rather than enable.
- 1.4 Mutual trust facilitates sharing of information and resources.
- 1.5 Mutual trust is supported by open communication between all participants.

Principle 2: Best practice moderation occurs when it is an evolving process for the assessor and the standard setter.

- 2.1 The first step in any moderation process is for all the participants in the system to have a shared understanding of the system and its purpose.
- 2.2 The implementation and maintenance of a moderation system requires information and training for all participants on processes and procedures.
- 2.3 A moderation system must be able to evolve in step with the ongoing development of unit standards, training and assessment processes for each industry.
- 2.4 For the effective implementation of industry training as a whole, standard setters will need to ensure that moderation systems evolve to adopt more uniform practices and procedures.

Principle 3: Best practice moderation occurs when it is an ongoing process that underpins all relationships between the assessors and between the assessors and the standard setter.

- 3.1 Formal moderation events, such as regional moderation meetings, are only part of the ongoing moderation process.
- 3.2 Any contact between assessors and between assessors and the standard setter provides an opportunity to support consistency of assessment.
- 3.3 The process of moderation involves a dynamic interaction between assessors, and between assessors and standard setters regarding the unit standard, exemplar/assessment guide.

## 1.6: Moderation action plans

*New Zealand Seafood Industry Council Ltd*

This example describes the process of an industry-wide moderation process developed for the New Zealand seafood industry. It provides an overview of a large-scale moderation process and would be useful for any industry areas establishing a similar process.

### Background

In the New Zealand system, the standard setting bodies are responsible for verifying the outcomes of assessment. Industry training organisations (ITOs) develop an external moderation system, the details of which are published in an Accreditation and Moderation Action Plan. Excerpts from the centrally established external moderation system set up by the Seafood Industry Training Organisation (SITO) are outlined below.

### Approach

It is expected that assessment against registered standards in the seafood industry will take place both off the job (by accredited training providers) and in the workplace (by accredited ITO-registered assessors and accredited training provider assessors).

SITO will appoint national moderators to oversee the moderation processes. SITO will take responsibility for the appointment, training, development, and management of moderators, and for providing administrative support for moderation activities.

The national moderators will:

- be responsible for ensuring consistent assessment between all accredited providers and accredited ITOs
- determine the registered standards in each domain to be moderated each year

It is expected that all registered standards in each domain will be moderated over a period of 3–5 years.

### Pre-assessment moderation

For those registered standards being moderated in a particular year, the accredited provider/ITO will be required to submit assessment materials to the national moderators for approval before any assessment takes place.

The national moderators:

- will check these materials for validity and that they are of an acceptable standard
- may require these materials to be amended or rewritten before being approved

Assessors must use these materials as approved for assessments, and any subsequent changes must be submitted for approval to the national moderators.

### Post-assessment moderation

The purpose of post-assessment moderation is to verify the validity and consistency of assessment decisions.

Post-assessment moderations will be managed by the national moderators who will decide how the moderation will be conducted:

- by an annual regional cluster meeting, and/or
- by an annual national meeting, and/or
- by visits to providers/workplaces

For example, where there are a number of accredited providers/ITO-registered assessors located reasonably close to one another, a regional cluster is likely to be more appropriate.

The national moderators will direct meeting participants on the assessment material required to be brought to the moderation meeting. The assessment material is likely to include assessed work (this could be product, or photographic or other evidence of process) of candidates for the specified registered standards, where the assessment has identified the candidates level of competence as borderline.

## Funding

Provider-based assessors will be required to meet their costs of attending regional cluster and/or national moderation meetings.

## 1.7: Mentoring and ongoing moderation and review of assessment

*Moreton Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE),  
Children's Services*

This example describes how a teaching section of a public sector RTO has developed a process for reviewing assessment.

### Background

Ten teachers and one tutor are involved in the delivery of the Children's Services component of the Community Services Training Package at Moreton Institute of TAFE in Queensland. Of the 11 people involved, seven are part time.

### Approach

The Moreton team has established an ongoing process for moderating the assessment on all of the competencies that they deliver. They use formal team meetings to determine the resources that they require—the delivery approach they will adopt and assessment is a standard agenda item for all meetings. During these meetings, they debate the issues and reach group consensus on how competencies will be clustered, the assessment that will be done, and what the benchmarks will be.

New people who come into the team are mentored by more-experienced assessors. Assessment material is shared and the processes and criteria worked through so that there is a uniform understanding of the standards required.

At the same time, the teachers who may be delivering similar competencies or groups of competencies also have informal meetings in which they continually discuss and review their assessment instruments and processes.

After competencies are delivered, the assessment decisions are moderated. Both the assessment decisions and the process are reviewed and checked against the agreed benchmarks. Part of this moderation process also includes a co-ordinated approach to addressing student issues raised by assessment. The views of students are raised by group co-ordinators who have the responsibility for the delivery of a cluster of competencies. In this way, the teachers are ensuring that their assessment approaches are fair to all students.

### Value of the approach

The strategy adopted here is a simple one. The teachers have a process of reviewing their assessment that has become an ongoing component of the formal and informal interactions between members of the Moreton team. New members are mentored by experienced people, and all are regularly discussing and checking their assessment approaches. This has given them a strong sense of confidence in their assessment outcomes.

## 1.8: Establishment of Assessment Quality Assurance Committee

### *TAFE NSW Children's Services*

This example describes how a large statewide teaching section dealt with quality issues relating to assessment when introducing a new Training Package qualification.

### Background

TAFE NSW has been delivering training and assessing from the Children's Services sector of the Community Services and Health Training Package since the beginning of 2000. These courses are being delivered across New South Wales at 38 colleges and there are approximately 9000 student enrolments. The introduction of this section of the Community Services and Health Training Package was rapid, with a short transition period. A feature of many of the 'old' courses in the Children's Services area was centrally set examinations and many assessors felt apprehensive about their new assessment role. To ensure quality of assessment under the new system and to provide professional development and support for staff, the Assessment Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC) group was formed in March 2000.

### Scope

The AQAC group was established by the program manager at the Community Services and Health Division who has the responsibility for the management of courses and the development of curriculum in the Children's Services area. Each of the 11 TAFE NSW institutes and the Open Training and Education Network (OTEN) have at least one representative on the AQAC group. Representatives have been nominated by the institutes and are all experienced teachers with an interest in assessment issues. Terms of reference have been developed by the group that has an elected chairperson. The group meets for a day at least once a term, and members maintain email contact to supplement the face-to-face meetings.

### Aim

The focus of the group is to identify the critical factors influencing the quality of assessment in the Training Package. The group will provide a co-ordinated focus for assessment across TAFE NSW and organise the development of suitable assessment tools with relevant exemplar so that there is consistent quality in the assessment processes across the system.

### Approach

The AQAC group has operated according to work-based learning processes. Members have identified their professional development needs in the assessment area and, also, appropriate people within the organisation who can work with the group to develop certain skills. One outcome of the professional development input was a one-day interactive workshop on Training Package assessment by the Vocational Education and Assessment Centre (VEAC), which provided the members with a range of activities that they could customise for delivery in their institutes.

AQAC members have also allocated various modules and courses that have been mapped against the Training Package to different institutes. Assessors in the institutes have provided examples of assessment tasks developed for these modules to be shared by other institutes and workshopped in professional development and moderation sessions. These processes are underway, and it is anticipated that the AQAC group will develop a range of assessment tools

that have been through a refinement and validation process by peers. The process is viewed as a continual one so that the 'bank' of tools does not become static. The emphasis is on the development of integrated assessment tasks that can be used in a workplace as well as in a college. The group will also make use of a recently established TAFE Educational Services Division (ESD) website to facilitate the sharing of assessment resources.

AQAC representatives have become the institute assessment mentors for Children's Services. Several members have also worked with teachers from other industry areas in their institutes in assessment quality workshops. The AQAC group has had input from both the State Community Services and Health ITAB manager as well as representatives from some of the other peak bodies delivering training in the Children's Services area in New South Wales.

AQAC members have convened one statewide meeting of Children's Services teachers that had over 130 participants. This gave teachers the opportunity for professional exchange with colleagues from a range of campuses and the opportunity to debate assessment decisions and issues.

## Value of the approach

The approach provides statewide co-ordination of assessment within this industry area where there are large numbers of students undertaking training and increases the confidence of assessors. Each institute has a committed assessment mentor who can act as a facilitator for establishing the institute's validation strategies in the Children's Services area. AQAC group members have been able to provide local support to teachers, particularly less-experienced part-time staff members, who are grappling with the delivery of the Training Package.



## 1.9: Training Package implementation and quality assessment strategy

### *NSW Adult and Community Education (ACE)*

This strategy outlines how an organisation representing a group of RTOs working across New South Wales in the delivery of VET training has worked collaboratively with the organisations in the sector to develop and implement quality assessment strategies, including moderation.

## Background

There are 71 NSW Adult and Community Education (ACE) providers, and approximately 55 providers are RTOs. NSW ACE delivers a range of training programs across the State through its community colleges, adult education centres and Workers Education Associations. The majority of VET courses delivered in the ACE sector are less than 30 hours in duration, with enrolments mainly in the fields of Business Administration, Information Technology, Health and Community Services and Assessment and Workplace Training.

## Scope

The Board of ACE formed a Training Package Working Party to plan a strategy to meet the needs of RTOs within the sector. ACE sector providers are scattered across New South Wales and many are small organisations with few Training Package qualifications in their scope. The early stages of the strategy supported ACE RTOs seeking to register their scope under the new registration requirements and developed a number of Training Package implementation guides for the sector.

The final stage of the strategy focussed on assessment, with a series of metropolitan and regional professional development workshops on assessment and the development and implementation of an ACE sector assessment moderation system.

## Aim

The aim of the strategy was to help ACE providers better manage the transition to Training Packages and to support the establishment of quality assessment systems and the implementation of assessment moderation. The strategy had to be designed so that it was relevant to all ACE providers across the State and cost-effective. Many assessors working in the sector are isolated, with a significant number of part-time employees.

## Approach

A number of assessment workshops were conducted in 1999 and 2000 to support ACE VET providers to implement quality assessment systems and practices. The following two types of workshops were held.

### *Systems workshops*

These were for ACE VET managers and co-ordinators with responsibility for managing the assessment systems in their organisation. These workshops covered areas such as records management, partnership arrangements, roles and responsibilities of assessors and how to establish an assessment quality assurance mechanism, including audit requirements.

## *Moderation workshops*

ACE VET trainers and managers with responsibility for conducting or facilitating assessment moderation activities were targeted. Over 125 ACE VET trainers, co-ordinators and managers attended the workshops, which were held at a range of locations including Armidale, Orange, Nowra, Port Macquarie and Sydney. A 'How to Prepare and Conduct Moderation' guide for ACE VET providers was developed through a collaborative process at the assessment moderation workshops.

The guide includes:

- an explanation of the process of moderation and its value to assessors
- the ACE moderation process and different ways to conduct a moderation session
- the roles of the moderation facilitator and participants
- advice on what should be moderated and how to collect samples
- cover sheets for recording decisions at moderation sessions and information on preparing materials for moderation sessions
- details on the timing, costing and funding of moderation sessions

The ACE process of moderation is not prescriptive in its approach but flexible enough to be relevant to the wide range of ACE providers from metropolitan and regional RTOs.

The guide has been trialed by groups who had input at the workshops, and moderation sessions have been held in different regions. Each region has decided what competencies to target initially for moderation sessions but, generally, these have included high volume areas, competencies delivered in different parts of the region and core areas such as communication and occupational health and safety. Participants at moderation sessions have used assessment instruments and collected evidence as material for moderation.

In some regions, moderation sessions have involved other sectors such as TAFE. In areas with low numbers of providers offering particular courses, moderation will be done across several regions and involve the use of technology.

## Value of the approach

The assessment workshops allow ACE VET sector staff to come together and look at what moderation involves and what it can do for them. The process assists staff to have ownership of, and input into, their own moderation process. Participants are able to see how the adoption of a moderation system would assist in the quality assurance process for their RTO and how necessary it is with mutual recognition of qualifications.

Feedback from assessors working in the ACE sector indicates that they greatly value the opportunity for professional development that the moderation workshops provide.

# Strategy 2: Internal auditing

---

This strategy gives information about how an RTO can establish an internal audit process to maintain quality and meet the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

## What is an internal audit process?

Under the Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations, Clause 1.4 specifies that RTOs are required to monitor and evaluate their compliance with the Standards and their organisation's internal policies and procedures. This evaluation process should take place annually and can be done using either internal audit or through a self-assessment process of equal rigour.

Internal audit refers to a systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining evidence to determine whether the activities and related outcomes of a training organisation comply with AQTF standards for RTOs. RTOs should develop an internal audit planning strategy to cover a period of time of continuous improvement.

The RTO's assessment system would need to be reviewed as part of the internal audit process. In regard to assessment, the plan should take into account:

- candidate and assessor feedback
- results of previous audits
- any complaints received

## What are some of the factors to consider when establishing an internal audit process?

You need to consider the resourcing implications when developing an internal audit system. Think about the time, personnel and physical resources that you have available and develop a system that can be handled within the time available but will still enable effective action to be taken to make improvements to the assessment system.

Allow for training of personnel when establishing your system, as everyone needs to understand the rationale for the system and how it will operate.

The checklist included in 2.1 lists some of the areas you may include in an RTO internal audit process.

## 2.1: Audit checklist

This checklist outlines the documentary evidence you may be required to produce for audit purposes. While there may be variations across state boundaries and from training provider to training provider, maintenance of the evidence listed is good assessment practice for individual assessors and groups of assessors. You should check the local requirements to ensure that you have the evidence necessary to satisfy them.

### Policy-related material

- 1 a code of practice for assessment
- 2 policy on recognition of prior learning or recognition of current competency
- 3 policy on grievances/appeals

### Competency unit-based assessment material

- 4 relevant Training Package or curriculum
- 5 information provided to candidates on assessment
- 6 details of assessment processes
- 7 copies of assessment instruments
- 8 copies of evidence submitted (where feasible)
- 9 details of assessment decisions
- 10 evidence of consultation with industry for assessment strategies

### Assessment validation material

- 11 policy on validation of assessment
- 12 documented validation procedure
- 13 evidence of validation and results, such as:
  - a) minutes of validation meetings
  - b) validation action plans
- 14 evaluation results or feedback from candidates

### Assessor qualifications

- 15 profiles of delivery staff including:
  - a) assessor qualifications
  - b) industry experience
  - c) other qualifications/experience

### Record-keeping material

- 16 A secure record-keeping system which includes:
  - a) enrolment information/roll books
  - b) assessment results
  - c) information on appeals/grievances

# Strategy 3: Review of currency of assessors

---

This strategy outlines a number of support strategies that an RTO can put in place to help assessors maintain their currency.

Ongoing support for assessors should be a major part of an RTO's assessment quality assurance system. Assessors need opportunities to enable them to maintain their knowledge of changes in policy, practice and research that may impact on their assessment practice.

Professional development will help assessors continue to conduct valid, reliable, fair and flexible and cost-effective assessments. It will also help RTOs meet the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisation's recommendations about the competence of RTO staff:

*7.1 The RTO must develop and implement written procedures for the recruitment, induction, and ongoing development of each member of staff who is involved in training, assessment or client service, encourage and provide relevant opportunities for their professional development, and monitor their performance.*

RTOs need to provide clear and consistent information to assessors as part of induction or orientation programs and also ensure that assessors have access to updated RTO information relating to assessment. Regular information to assessors helps enhance consistency of assessment practice. The 'Self-assessment for determining current assessor competence' included at 3.1 is a checklist that may be useful for RTOs to use as a means of determining their assessors' support needs.

Support for assessors could be provided by more traditional professional development training sessions. Other strategies—such as establishing an RTO assessment validation strategy, involvement in an assessor network or providing opportunities for assessors to conduct assessments in teams—will also provide support to assessors, as it will give them opportunities for professional exchange with peers.

Further information about how RTOs have used partnerships or networks to provide support to assessors is included in section 3 of this resource.

### 3.1: Self-assessment for determining current assessor competence

Adapted from *Self-assessment for determining current competencies from Assessment and Workplace Training Package BSZ98*

This checklist can be used as part of an assessment review policy. It may be a useful tool for discussion when you get together with other assessors.

Having confidence in assessment decision-making hinges very much upon the current competence of the assessor(s) making the decisions. Assessment guidelines in Training Packages detail what is required by assessors to undertake assessment, but it is important for assessors to maintain and further develop their skills and knowledge. The following checklist is a useful means of evaluating current competence. To determine where you are at with regard to currency, ask yourself the following questions. Clearly, the more times you are able to answer 'Yes' the better.

1 Relevant work history	Yes/no	Comments
How many candidates have you assessed in the past 12 months? In your view, is this a sufficient number to maintain currency?	Y/N	
Have you evaluated your assessment practice? How?	Y/N	
Have you discussed your assessment practice with others?	Y/N	
Have there been any assessments that you have found particularly challenging? What would you have done differently?	Y/N	
Have you been doing anything else which is relevant to your role as an assessor? What?	Y/N	
<b>2 Attendance at professional development activities focussing on best practice in assessment, colleague/peer support and participation in professional networks</b>		
Do you ever participate in team assessments? If so, how has the experience benefited you?	Y/N	
Have you benchmarked your competencies against someone who is recognised as a 'professional assessor'? How do they maintain their current competencies?	Y/N	
Do you belong to any networks or associations relating to assessment? When was the last time you attended?	Y/N	
Do you maintain a log book or diary summarising the professional seminars/activities you attend and what skills and knowledge you acquire?	Y/N	

<b>3 Knowledge of current practices in assessment and workplace training</b>	<b>Yes/no</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Have you read anything in the last 12 months about assessment practices in Australia and abroad? What?	Y/N	
Do you subscribe to magazines, periodicals or services in order to keep abreast of developments in assessment? What are these?	Y/N	
Do you talk to others about assessment practices both in and outside the organisation? Who?	Y/N	
Are you aware of current Occupational Health and Safety requirements and legislation?	Y/N	
<b>4 Participation in moderation, validation processes</b>		
Are you doing anything to ensure your assessment decisions are valid and reliable? What?	Y/N	
Do you participate in assessment validation processes within your RTO?	Y/N	
Do you have regular validation of your assessment by an external 'assessor'? In your view how often should this be done?	Y/N	
Have you made any suggestions on how to improve the assessment system in your organisation?	Y/N	
<b>5 Knowledge of language, literacy and numeracy (LL&amp;N) issues in the context of assessment</b>		
Do you find out if there are LL&N needs amongst those persons you assess? How?	Y/N	
Have you ever had to review your assessment resources to cater for specific LL&N needs?	Y/N	
Can you name LL&N contacts for assistance? What are they?	Y/N	
Are there any other characteristics of candidates that should be addressed? What are they?	Y/N	

# Strategy 4: Organisational policy

---

This strategy provides information about how an RTO can develop an assessment policy setting out the principles, processes, documents and rules that underpin assessment in the organisation.

## Why do RTOs need an assessment policy?

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Standards for registered training organisations specify the requirement for RTOs to have a written assessment policy in Standard 1:

*Clause 1.1 (a) The RTO must keep written policies and procedures for ensuring quality training and assessment consistent with its scope of registration and scale of operations.*

The policy should align with the organisation's Code of Practice or other requirements determined by the State or Territory registering body but there is flexibility for an RTO to establish a policy that best reflects its scope and needs.

As outlined in clause 1.1 (b) in the AQTF Standards:

*policies and procedures are to be circulated, understood and implemented consistently throughout the RTO.*

So an RTO's assessment policy needs to be readily accessible and easily understood by all assessors and reflect the range of assessment processes and strategies in place across the RTO. As part of its continuous improvement process, the RTO also needs to have in place a process for reviewing and updating its assessment policy.

## What are some of the benefits of an RTO assessment policy?

An RTO assessment policy helps maintain assessment standards within the RTO by providing a framework under which all assessors work and all assessments are conducted. It provides a common understanding of the terms, purposes and outcomes of assessment and identifies the roles and responsibilities of the key players in the RTO's assessment process. It also provides a framework within which appeals and dispute resolutions procedures are conducted and outlines the rights and responsibilities of candidates, assessors and others. It helps make the RTO's approach to assessment a transparent process.

An example of how a large RTO has developed a comprehensive assessment policy to reflect all aspects of its assessment practice is included at 4.1.

## What information should an RTO include in an assessment policy?

When developing an RTO assessment policy the following areas will need to be considered, but what to include will depend upon the RTO's scope and assessment situation.



## Possible headings for an RTO assessment policy

- Assessment contexts and purpose
- Assessment scope
- Selection and qualifications of assessors
- Roles and responsibilities of assessors, co-assessors and co-ordinators
- Rights and responsibilities of candidates
- Professional development for assessors
- Documentation of the assessment process
- Assessment information for assessors
- Assessment information for candidates
- Methods of evidence collection
- Requirements for assessment instruments and resources development
- Mechanisms for grievances and appeals
- Fees and cost schedules for assessment
- Guidelines for feedback to candidates
- Record-keeping guidelines
- Confidentiality
- Credentialing requirements in line with the AQTF
- Recognition policy and processes
- Assessment validation processes for specific programs
- RTO quality assurance and continuous improvement mechanisms

## 4.1: Code of practice for assessment panels



### Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation

Roles, rights and responsibilities of panels, assessors and subject matter experts

#### Assessment panels

What is an assessment panel?

Assessment on behalf of the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation is normally conducted by an assessment panel. This panel must contain at least one qualified assessor and one subject matter expert in the units of competency being assessed.

Assessors and subject matter experts have specific roles. These are outlined in the relevant sections of this code of practice. The panel, as a team, has additional responsibilities.

What is the role of an assessment panel?

The role of the assessment panel is to assess the available evidence against the units of competency being assessed. The assessment panel is to:

- identify and sensitively deal with the differing needs of assessees, workplaces and industry throughout the assessment process
- identify, and where appropriate refer potential forms of conflict of interest in the assessment process outcomes
- avoid all forms of harassment throughout the assessment process
- protect the assessee's rights to privacy, confidentiality, active involvement in the assessment process, and the right not to be assessed or to discontinue the process
- ensure that personal or interpersonal factors, not relevant to the assessment of competence, do not influence the assessment outcome

- ensure the content and face validity of the assessment process. (Content validity is the degree to which the assessment measures the stated requirements of the unit of competency. Face validity is the degree to which the assessment process appears to be, and is, assessing what it is meant to be assessing.)
- make assessment decisions based on evidence that could be produced and verified by another assessment panel
- ensure that confidentiality of assessment results is maintained, and only released with the written permission of the assessee
- ensure assessment results are used for the purposes of the assessment process as agreed by the assessee, their supervisor and the assessment panel

Who decides the composition of an assessment panel?

The composition of an assessment panel is to be negotiated between the assessee, their supervisor and the main assessor.

The assessee must agree to the composition of their assessment panel.

Who can be on an assessment panel?

The members of an assessment panel may work in any position (Australian Public Service or Australian Defence Force) within Defence, or be contracted specifically for the purposes of conducting assessments.

An assessee's immediate supervisor is not usually a member of the assessment panel.



Department of Defence  
Awarded for  
Nationally recognised  
Best Practitioner in  
Assessment 1999  
Workplace



It is recommended that an assessment panel contain members from outside the assessee's immediate workgroup wherever possible.

## Assessors

What qualifications does an assessor need?

Assessors working for the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation must be competent in the following three units of competency from the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98):

- BSZ401A—Plan Assessment
- BSZ402A—Conduct Assessment
- BSZ403A—Review Assessment

or the equivalent units of competency from previous versions of workplace assessor competency standards.

Ideally, an assessor will also be a subject matter expert in the area that they are assessing.

Do assessors have to be registered?

The Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation requires assessors to be registered with it before it will accept and action their assessments.

Who can be registered as a Department of Defence assessor?

Defence employees and contractors who hold the necessary assessor qualifications can register with the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation. Registration indicates that an assessor wishes to assess on behalf of the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation (e.g. against the Public Services Training Package or other Training Packages and competency standards within the Department's scope of registration).

What are the roles of a Department of Defence assessor?

An assessor registered with, or contracted to, the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation is to:

- brief the assessee, their supervisor and support people on the assessment process, including making the assessee aware of:
  - the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation Code of Practice for Assessment and explaining it to them
  - their rights and the processes of appeal

- the processes for reporting assessment outcomes
- all known consequences of assessment decisions
- plan the assessment process in consultation with the other panel members and with the active participation of the assessee
- ensure that the assessment process is:
  - valid (is seen to assess what it is meant to be assessing and adequately samples the full range of skills and knowledge required to demonstrate competence)
  - reliable (uses assessment methods and procedures that give confidence that the units of competency and their levels are being interpreted and applied consistently from assessee to assessee and context to context, including across assessment panels)
  - flexible (the assessment process is adjusted to meet the needs of individual assesseees and their workplaces)
  - fair (no assessee or group is disadvantaged in or by the assessment process)
- conduct the assessment process in accordance with the:
  - units of competency for assessors (see paragraph on assessor qualifications)
  - assessment guidance given in the Training Package from which units of competency are being assessed
  - boundaries of the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation assessment system, policies and procedures
  - industry guidelines (where the Training Package being assessed belongs to an industry other than the Public Services or Public Safety)
- ensure that the judgement of competency addresses all five dimensions of competency (task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills, job/role environment skills and the ability to transfer these skills and knowledge to new situations)
- take an integrated, holistic approach to the assessment that combines knowledge, understanding, problem solving, technical skills and where called for within the units of competency, attitudes and ethics
- ensure that assessment leads to a valid and reliable assessment outcome, with particular attention to the recency, relevance and authenticity of evidence

- ensure that the assessment process is a positive learning experience for the assessee, regardless of the assessment outcome
- balance the assessment strategies, depth and breadth of evidence sought and resources put into the assessment process with the risks associated with an incorrect assessment outcome
- record and report the assessment outcome in line with the requirements of the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation
- gain formal agreement and sign off from the assessee and assessment panel members that the assessment was carried out in accordance with the agreed procedures
- seek feedback from the other panel members, assessee and others involved in the assessment process and use that feedback to improve future assessments
- provide feedback to the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation on the units of competency, assessment guidance, policy and processes, if and when required

Department of Defence assessors should also:

- be an advocate and information source on competency-based training and assessment within their workplace
- provide advice to potential assessees on how to access the assessment system and on assessment in general
- guide assessees through the self-assessment process
- possibly mentor or coach an assessee through an assessment (although here the assessor taking on this role should not be a member of the assessment panel, but rather takes on the role of a support person)

What are the legal responsibilities of an assessor?

An assessor is legally responsible for performing their assessment tasks with reasonable and appropriate care and skill (the level of care and skill expected of a reasonable person who has been trained and qualified as an assessor). As a minimum, an assessor operating on behalf of the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation is expected to be familiar with the process and

practices of assessment (in general, and as outlined in the *Department of Defence Assessment Kit (Version 4)*) and have demonstrated an ability to apply these principles objectively, flexibly, openly and fairly. Accepting the role of assessor for someone gives an implied promise to exercise that expertise.

Who is responsible for the currency and professional development of assessors?

The Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation expects its assessors to take an active role in maintaining their currency as assessors and developing their professional skills and knowledge in the area of assessment.

Defence, as a Registered Training Organisation, provides a range of tools and mechanisms to assist assessors achieve this, including documentation, newsletters, networks and professional development days.

Individual assessors are expected to:

- periodically self-assess themselves against the units of competency for assessors
- identify and seek internal and external professional development opportunities
- join, create and maintain networks (formal and informal) with other assessors
- seek technical assistance and policy advice as they require it

How can assessors who do not have currency or confidence in their role as an assessor develop these?

Department of Defence assessors who are not current (e.g. have not conducted or been involved in assessments for more than 6 months) or are not confident in their role should:

- team with a more current and/or confident assessor as part of an assessment panel (could be a second assessor and/or as subject matter expert)
- use the *Department of Defence Assessment Kit (Version 4)* and other resources to refresh their knowledge of the assessment process
- seek support, assistance and or information from their Regional Education, Training and Development (ETD) Unit, People Development Agency or direct from the Directorate of Training Systems Policy (DTSP)

## Subject matter experts

What qualifications does a subject matter expert need?

The qualifications needed by someone who takes on the role of subject matter expert may differ, depending on what is being assessed.

For units of competency from the Public Services Training Package, a subject matter expert is someone who:

- ▶ is competent in at least the units being assessed
- ▶ has a broad knowledge of the competency standards in the Public Services Training Package
- ▶ has a detailed knowledge of the units being assessed
- ▶ is able to follow assessment requirements specified by the assessor and practices the necessary interpersonal and ethical skills required in an assessment process

The subject matter expert does not have to be formally qualified in the units being assessed. However, they must be able to detail how they are competent in the units being assessed on the grounds of either qualifications and/or experience.

The subject matter expert may be, but does not have to be, an assessor.

Do subject matter experts have to be registered?

Unlike assessors, subject matter experts do not have to be registered with the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation. When reporting assessment outcomes assessors have to include detail on who the subject matter expert was and outline their qualifications (e.g. formal qualifications, workplace role and experience).

What are the roles of a subject matter expert?

Subject matter experts are to:

- ▶ understand the units of competency being assessed and the level of performance required in the workplace

- ▶ contribute to the planning of the assessment process to ensure that the process and outcomes are accepted in the workplace, and have a high probability of being accepted in related workplaces
- ▶ contribute to the development and/or customisation of assessment tools
- ▶ ensure that the evidence presented is:
  - valid (relates to the units of competency being assessed)
  - authentic (is the product of the assessee or makes clear what the assessee's contribution was)
  - sufficient (is enough to satisfy the panel that the assessee is competent) and
  - current (recent, relates to current skills and knowledge) to the units being assessed
- ▶ ensure that the assessment meets the requirement of the units of competency and current workplace practice

What are the legal obligations of a subject matter expert?

A person taking on the role of subject matter expert on an assessment panel is obliged to undertake the assigned tasks of a subject matter expert and a panel member with reasonable and appropriate care and skill. As in the case of assessors, the subject matter expert must have the skills and knowledge to perform that function. Accepting the role of subject matter expert gives an implied promise to exercise that expertise.

## General

What do I do if I believe the assessment process is not credible?

If you believe that an assessment process or outcome is somehow in question, contact the Director of Training Systems Policy.

## Your feedback

Feedback on how well this Code of Conduct meets your needs will be valued. This can be directed to the Directorate of Training Systems Policy.

This Code of Practice incorporates the International Code of Ethics and Practice for Assessment issued by the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME).

# Section 2: Gathering evidence

---

## Introduction

Competency-based assessment is based on the collection of sufficient, authentic evidence to make a judgement about the candidate's performance. Training Packages and assessment against competency standards require that this evidence is collected from the workplace or a simulated environment.

The strategies and examples presented in this section provide guidance on how to enhance aspects of gathering sufficient, valid evidence for assessment. The strategies have been included to help assessors develop confidence in those assessment situations that may be new or challenging. The materials are designed to stimulate ideas and provide information so that assessors in RTOs can develop their own strategies for improving assessment.

Simulated assessment is now a requirement in many VET situations, either because of the lack of appropriate workplaces for assessment or because it is inappropriate to assess on the job. Designing an assessment environment that mirrors the workplace environment and maintains the validity of the assessment can be a challenge.

Assessors also need to consider the validity, reliability, flexibility and fairness of the assessment they have designed. An 'Assessment tools and strategies checklist' has been included in section 1 to assist assessors with quality of assessment design.

Assessors need to collect evidence from workplace supervisors, peers and others to demonstrate the candidate's performance. Assessors frequently comment on their lack of trust in evidence provided by workplace supervisors or others involved in the assessment process. Some information to assist collection of evidence from a third party has been included in this section.

## Section 2: Contents

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Associated tools, templates and examples</b>
5 Guidelines for designing simulated assessment events	5.1 Use of simulation in assessment <i>Department of Defence VET</i> 5.2 'Beauty Options'—Simulated assessment <i>Canberra Institute of Technology</i>
6 Guidelines for gathering third-party evidence	6.1 Template—Third-party evidence form 6.2 Gathering evidence in the workplace for recognition <i>Regency Institute of TAFE, Children's Services</i> 6.3 Industry validation of assessment <i>Canberra Institute of Technology</i>

# Strategy 5: Guidelines for designing simulated assessment events

---

It is sometimes not feasible to assess a candidate while real work is being carried out. Simulated assessment is one way to overcome this problem. Use the following checklist to assist you to design simulated assessment events that are as valid and as cost-effective as possible. The key element in simulated assessment is that it must closely resemble what occurs in the workplace.

## In preparing the physical location

- real workplaces are checked to get ideas about current practice and ways of setting up work spaces
- where practical, the training environment is altered so that it reflects a real workplace
- the equipment and other facilities are as close to those in use in industry as possible

## In preparing the assessment event

- the activity builds in opportunities for assessing whole work tasks or clusters of competencies
- contingencies are included as part of the assessment design. For example, candidates are required to deal with pressures of telephones, time constraints, interruptions and workflows
- the assessment activity focusses on processes as much as products
- operational procedures and occupational health and safety requirements are applied as they would be in a real work setting
- the methods, context and concepts are validated with industry to ensure the accuracy of the assessment approach
- an observation checklist is prepared that clearly outlines the critical performance criteria

## In preparing the candidate(s)

- candidates are prepared for being assessed via a simulated assessment activity
- candidates receive a pre-assessment briefing outlining assessment method, process and tools
- the criteria against which performance is to be assessed are discussed with candidates
- roles are developed and candidates are primed to undertake them

## In conducting the assessment

- where practical, industry experts are involved in assessment process and decision-making
- the performance of the candidate is videoed, where appropriate
- the checklist of critical performance criteria is the focus of the observation of candidate performance

## 5.1: Use of simulation in assessment

### *Department of Defence VET*

Guidelines developed by the Department of Defence to ensure that simulated assessment situations meet agreed criteria and mirror the real life situation as far as possible.

Simulations may be necessary for rarely occurring events, dangerous or expensive events, or where the work is not a part of the assessee's normal responsibilities. Where simulation of the workplace is used, such simulations must match the real workplace context as closely as possible. In particular, they should provide an assessment environment that allows for the demonstration of the broad concept of competency, notably:

- performing the task
- managing a number of different tasks
- coping with irregularities and breakdowns in routine
- dealing with the responsibilities and expectations of the workplace, including working with others
- transferring competency to new situations

The validity of simulations depends very much on how accurately the simulation mirrors real life situations. Simulations include fully realistic 'mock ups', computer-generated simulations and virtual realities like flight simulators and more simple recreations of the workplace environment that 'set up' an event for the purposes of learning and/or assessment. They may either expect the assessee to act as they would in real life, or to act and talk their way through the process.

Simulations allow the assessment panel to 'stage' the situation in a realistic manner but within defined and repeatable contexts. This allows the assessment panel to apply the same simulation, or the same 'base' simulation with variations, to different assessees and/or to the same assessee over time.

Simulations must be:

- allowed within the constraints of the units of competency and Training Package being assessed
- carefully planned and managed by people with specialist training in simulation and/or in consultation with the training organisation involved
- fully debriefed and used as an active learning experience for the assessee and all others involved in the simulation
- used in balance with evidence from other sources to show evidence of consistent performance over time

When making a judgement about competence on the basis of evidence gained mainly through simulations—as with any other assessment judgement—the assessment panel will need to take account of both the wording and the 'spirit' of the competency, its relationship with other units of competency and current workplace practices. In some instances, a Training Package may state that certain units of competency can only be assessed in an 'actual' workplace setting. Generally, the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation prefers evidence from the real workplace and/or life experience.



## 5.2: 'Beauty Options'—simulated assessment

Canberra Institute of Technology

A description of how a TAFE teaching section established a simulated assessment process in the beauty therapy area follows.

### Background

With the introduction of the National Beauty Training Package, the teachers in the Beauty Therapy Department of Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) undertook an action-learning project to develop their assessment strategies.

When the CIT team began planning the project, they considered three main factors:

- The need to address the requirements within the Training Package for 'qualifications that focus on competencies required for work in the beauty industry. The focus is on the practical skills and tasks required to function in the salon environment.'
- The broad framework for the assessment event came from the Assessment Strategy contained within the Implementation Guide developed by CIT for delivery and assessment of this course.
- *Beauty Options*. This is CIT's fully equipped, registered beauty salon where candidates enrolled in the Certificate III in Beauty Therapy are able to demonstrate and practise their knowledge and skills under conditions that they will find in the workplace. Clients/models are members of the Australian Capital Territory community who pay a small amount for the services provided by the 'beauty therapists in training'.

The teacher-assessors involved in this project are registered beauty therapists who operate their own salons.

### Assessment approach

The event took place over two days in the 'Beauty Options' Salon. The maximum timeframe of the assessment was two hours. During this time each candidate was required to perform the following services for their client:

- consultation
- skin analysis
- mini facial
- eyebrow shape or eyelash tint
- light 'day' makeup

As part of the preparation for the event, candidates participated in formative assessment four weeks beforehand. As a result, teaching staff felt that the candidates were well prepared.

Each candidate was given an 'Assessment Event Schedule' two weeks prior to the day(s). Candidates were given the choice of dates as only 50% of the group could be accommodated on each day. This was the only 'negotiation' involved in this assessment.

The physical limitations were ten clients and ten candidates in the room. The assessment event was videotaped on each day and the same two assessors were present on both days.

Using their own kits, candidates were required to meet the requirements of *Beauty Options* Client Procedures, including setting up their workplace, preparing their client and ensuring their work trolleys were fully equipped. Each candidate was given a Skills Assessment Theory Task Sheet and a Practical Task Sheet.

The performance criteria covered the following range of skills, knowledge and attitudes:

- greet client in a warm, friendly manner and put client at ease
- consult with client about service being offered
- check for contra-indications
- complete a consultation card
- apply safe working practices
- communicate with clients throughout the service
- organise their time
- arrange their tasks in order of priority
- answer questions asked by their assessor whilst working
- work independently
- complete the services within the required timeframe
- assist their client to dress (if necessary)
- farewell their client appropriately
- clean up their workstations and salon

Immediately after the completion of the event, candidates were encouraged to reflect on their performance and to bring comments to a group feedback session. The candidates and assessors then watched the video of the assessment taking place. The feedback from all sources informed the approach for the next assessment event.

## Value of the approach

This event gave candidates the opportunity to be assessed on their performance in a realistic salon environment, working with real clients. It provided assessors with direct evidence on the candidates' ability to apply their learning in a fully integrated way. By involving practising beauty therapists as assessors, the assessment approach and the assessment decisions were validated.

The *Beauty Options* simulated assessment approach raised the level of confidence that candidates, assessors and industry have in the assessment processes and assessment decisions that have been made.

# Strategy 6: Guidelines for gathering third-party evidence

---

Assessors can draw upon supplementary evidence from people in the workplace who have direct access to candidates. This indirect evidence usually takes the form of third-party reports (sometimes called third-party testimony). These reports provide additional information on which to base an assessment decision. The following are some guidelines for building confidence in this type of evidence.

## What are the critical elements for third-party reports?

- a statement explaining the third party's professional relationship to the candidate and contact details; for example, workplace supervisor, colleague, line manager
- a description of the specific activity/activities carried out by the candidate
- a summary of when, and in what context, the activity was observed
- scope for the assessor to match the report to the performance criteria against which the candidate is being assessed

## When can third-party reports be used in the evidence gathering process?

- when the evidence is provided by someone who is in a position to make a valid comment on the candidate's performance; for example, a line manager or a leading hand
- when the evidence is presented in written/official form, includes the name and contact details of the third party and can be easily verified
- when, for reasons of cost-effectiveness, the use of some indirect evidence is required to make a defensible assessment decision; for example, if a candidate is located in a remote area or is in a confidential situation
- when there is a need to confirm the authenticity and currency of the evidence provided by a candidate (Recognition of Prior Learning/Recognition of Current Competencies); for example, to confirm that product evidence is the candidate's own work

## What should the assessor consider when judging third-party reports?

- the degree to which the content of the third-party report matches the performance criteria in the competency standards
- how much weight will be placed on the third-party report in terms of its contribution to the candidate's overall evidence

## How much weight should the assessor give to a third-party report?

The amount of weight placed on a third-party report will be determined by how well the third party understands competency-based assessment and the competency standards being used to assess the candidate's performance.

The following categories may guide the assessor in determining the weight given to a third-party report:

Category	Description
a)	A third party with occupational expertise, is familiar with the competency standards and has experience in workplace assessment
b)	A third party with occupational expertise, who is familiar with the competency standards
c)	A third party with occupational expertise, who is not familiar with the competency standards
d)	A third party who comes into broad contact with the candidate and who is not familiar with the competency standards

This is, in effect, a sliding scale where the assessor may place more weight on the report from a third party in category a) than for a report from a person from category d).

The assessor also needs to consider the value of a third-party testimony in terms of its overall place in the decision-making process. Relying too heavily on third-party evidence can undermine the validity of the final decision. It can also undermine confidence in the outcomes of the assessment.

## What other checks can be put in place?

- the assessor can contact the third party directly to clarify certain points made in the third-party report
- the assessor can provide tools and guidelines for the third party to use; for example, checklists and questions
- the assessors can check third-party reports as part of their review processes

## 6.1: Third-party evidence form (template)

This form can be used when collecting third-party evidence as part of the assessment process. It is adapted from one developed by TAFE Tasmania—Workplace Learning Services.

(Confidential)

Name of candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Workplace or RTO: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit/s of competency: \_\_\_\_\_

As part of the assessment for the units of competency, we are seeking evidence to support a judgement about the candidate's competency. As part of the evidence of competency we are seeking reports from the supervisor and other people who work closely with the candidate.

Name of supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Workplace: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone/fax/email: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you read the competency standards for the unit(s) you are commenting on? Yes  No

Has the assessor explained the purpose of the candidate's assessment? Yes  No

Are you aware that the candidate will see a copy of this form? Yes  No

Are you willing to be contacted should further validation of this statement be required? Yes  No

What is your relationship to the candidate? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you worked with the person being assessed? \_\_\_\_\_

How closely do you work with him/her in the area being assessed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are your experiences and/or qualifications in the area being assessed?  
(include any assessment or training qualifications) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does the candidate:	perform job tasks to an acceptable level?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	manage job tasks effectively?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	solve problems on the job?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	work well with others?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	find it easy to move to new tasks?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Overall, do you believe the candidate performs to the standards on a consistent basis? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Identify any further training needs for the candidate: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6.2: Gathering evidence in the workplace for recognition

*Children's Services, Regency Institute of TAFE*

This example describes the process a TAFE Institute has put in place to maintain the quality of its recognition process.

### Background

The lecturing staff in Children's Services at Regency Institute of TAFE undertake only a small amount of 100% Recognition of Prior Learning or Recognition of Current Competencies. This is mainly in the area of Out of School Hours Care, where a large number of workers have considerable experience but limited formal training.

The strategy, which has been formulated to undertake this assessment, focusses on ensuring that the final assessment decision can be made with confidence.

### Approach

The critical elements of the Regency approach are:

- an emphasis on well-qualified assessors
- a strong partnership with industry
- stringent evidence requirements
- validation through on-the-job observation

#### *Qualifications of assessors*

All assessors involved must have:

- a minimum of five years industry experience
- a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education *or* the Diploma of Community Service (Children's Services)
- the assessment component of Category 2 Workplace Trainer (although the full Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment is preferred)

#### *Partnership with industry*

A close partnership with industry is maintained because it is acknowledged that Regency staff cannot cover the assessment of all competencies effectively or validly.

#### *Evidence requirements*

Evidence is drawn from a range of sources. The candidate is required to provide a portfolio of evidence in support of the application for recognition. This portfolio must include:

- certificates of attendance at any professional development activities that the candidate may have attended
- documentation of previous study of any kind, preferably within the last five years
- evidence of consistent work experience
- references in support from employers, parents
- a written submission explaining experience against each competency included in the application for recognition

### *Site visits and observation*

After taking some time to reflect on the quality of the evidence provided in the portfolio, a site visit is organised by the assessor to observe the candidate in the workplace. This generally takes 2–3 hours and the observation centres on the candidate undertaking activities pertaining to the competency or competencies being assessed.

Where candidates are located in country regions, ‘country visitors’ may be utilised. Experienced people who have the appropriate expertise carry out these observations, rather than staff from the institute. Telephone interviews are conducted to discuss and affirm assessment decisions in these instances.

### Value of the approach

The teaching staff at Regency consider that there are three valuable spin-offs from the assessment approach that they have adopted:

- For the candidates, their existing skills and knowledge can be acknowledged and they can then move more rapidly through training programs. For people who have worked with children for 10–12 years, this approach is particularly valuable. Recognition also builds the confidence of candidates to proceed and succeed.
- When assessment has been undertaken in close partnership with industry, it builds the confidence of the employer in the candidate, their workers and the off-the-job provider. Such confidence means that they continue to make the connections with the institute, they continue to be co-operative and they encourage others within their agency to have their skills recognised and to be involved in training.
- For the institute, such collaboration has a very positive outcome. The graduates are very much sought after and they do not have to advertise their programs. They have also developed strong working relationships and networks within the industry, which strengthen the sense of confidence in the quality of the training being delivered.



## 6.3: Industry validation of assessment

*Horticulture Training Package, Canberra Institute of Technology*

A description of how the horticulture section of a training organisation worked with industry to ensure the quality and industry support for their assessment processes follows.

### Background

With the introduction of the Training Package for Horticulture in 1999 the Department of Horticulture at Weston Campus, Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) decided to investigate the implications for assessment procedures.

The department wanted to ensure that the methodology for assessment was appropriate to the Training Package environment. In particular, the department wanted to involve industry directly in the development of the assessment methodology and to gain industry validation for assessment processes and documentation.

To ensure that assessment events would be conducted in a standardised fashion, regardless of the assessor, it was decided to include development of standard assessment instruments and records.

### Scope

The project focussed on Certificate Level 4 competencies to be delivered on-campus to students with a range of backgrounds, many of whom did not have a workplace. The Weston campus of CIT was purpose-built for delivery of horticulture training and represents the workplace for these students.

### Aim

The aim of the project was to ensure that the assessment procedures used on-campus were valid in the view of industry and comparable to those used for on-the-job assessment of User Choice-funded students.

### Approach

The approach used was to develop a standardised set of assessment instruments and recording process for each competency. Once the draft format for the documentation was decided, all horticulture staff were consulted and invited to comment on the appropriateness of the format. Revisions were made and a final format decided.

The Department of Horticulture has always had strong links to industry and has in the past made use of Industry Reference Groups (IRGs) during curriculum reviews. The horticultural industry is comprised of several sectors, namely Nursery (Production and Retail), Landscape, Parks and Gardens, Turf, Arboriculture and Floristry. The department has formed reference groups with each of these sectors.

Once the format for assessment instruments was finalised at the departmental level, the IRGs were invited to meetings to review the overall approach and the format. The proposed format was accepted by the IRGs. Horticulture staff were then allocated specific competencies to document for their particular area of expertise and the instruments and record documents were

logged to a shared departmental disk drive to ensure open and immediate access to all staff when conducting assessments.

The next step in the process was to mail out documentation of the relevant competencies to representatives from each industry sector and to invite comments on the specific details of the assessment instruments. There was a good response to the mail-out and many comments and suggestions were made for improvements to specific assessment instruments. The amendments were made and the process was put to a final meeting of the IRGs for approval.

The final stage was to administer the instruments to students and to use the recording and feedback documentation. Final validation was also sought from IRGs at this point. Invitations were extended to IRG members to observe assessment events and to give feedback on the relevance and appropriateness of the assessment process and, eventually, to validate the assessment process.

## Outcomes

The main outcome was a set of exemplar assessment instruments and records of assessment. These were stored on the shared departmental disk drive, and assessors were advised to ensure that they were used whenever assessments of these competencies were carried out. Feedback and endorsement forms were also collected from the members of the IRGs and filed as a validation record.

### *Value of the approach*

Most importantly, the department now has full confidence that industry sanctions, and has validated, the assessment process being used to assess non-User Choice students of horticulture. Indeed, the reason for the trial was, in part, to ensure that industry was informed of the assessment process and deemed it a valid process.

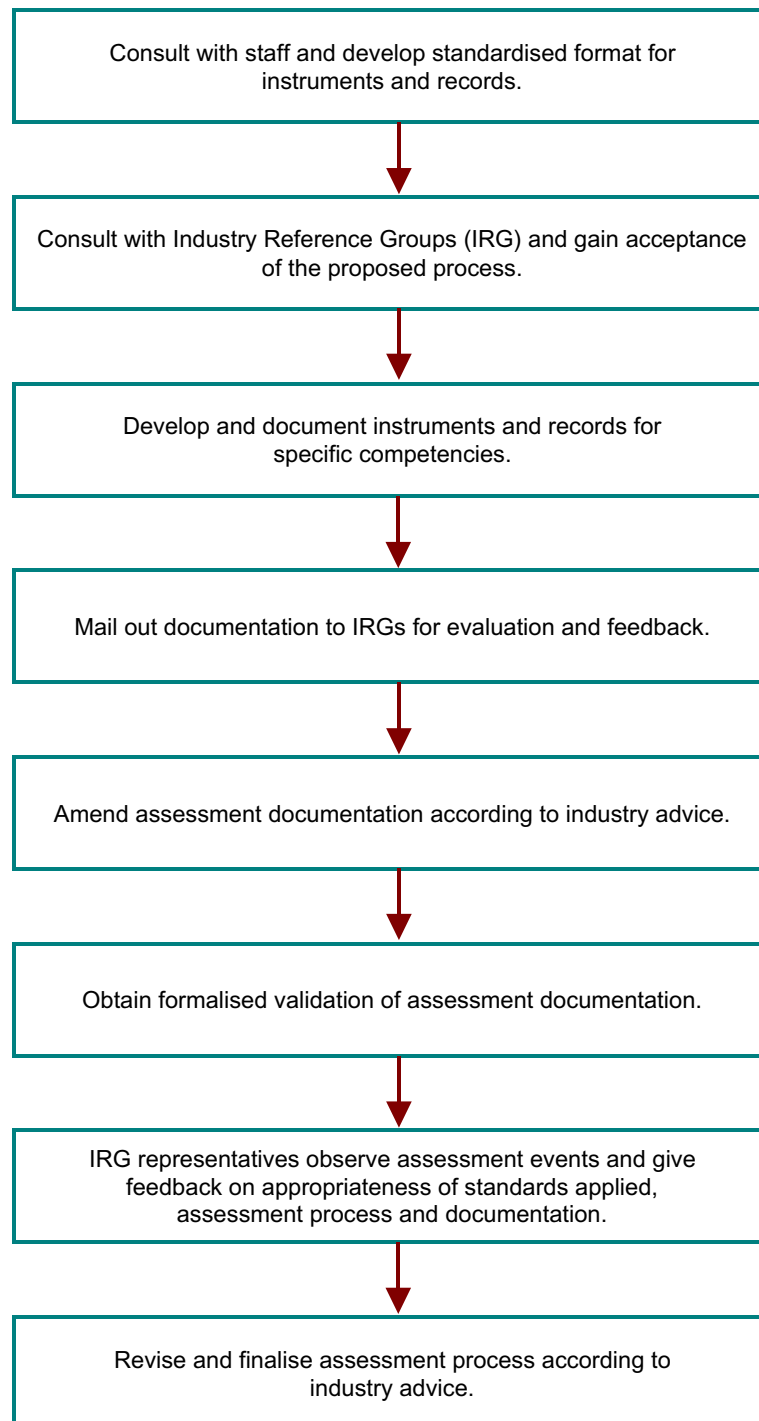
The department wanted to ensure that students without an external workplace (on-campus students) who were deemed competent would be exposed to a standard of assessment, which was equivalent to a student who was assessed in a workplace. The validation of the process by industry standardisation of assessment is also a benefit of this project. The department now has confidence that, regardless of the assessor conducting the assessment, the process used and the standard applied will be much the same. Prior to this project, there was a diversity of approaches to assessment used, and the assessment process was more dependent on the individual assessor.

Teaching staff benefited from the process also. It was useful to prepare the assessment instruments prior to commencement of classes. This ensured that training sessions were clearly focussed on the critical aspects of the competency to be assessed.

The use of standardised documentation also assisted staff to feel confident that planned assessments were appropriate and pitched at an appropriate standard. The development of standardised assessment instruments also made it easier for students to clarify what would be expected of them in assessment events.

Finally, the process of working together as a whole department, and in close co-operation with industry, has ensured that staff believe that this new approach to assessment has provided a transparent process which industry has validated and that the department is providing quality-assured, relevant industrial training.

**Quality assurance process for assessment of Horticulture competencies for on-campus learners, Department of Horticulture, Canberra Institute of Technology**



# Section 3:

## Partnerships and networks

---

### Introduction

This section provides a collection of strategies that RTOs have put in place to improve the overall quality of assessment by using the strengths of networks and strategic partnerships.

The strategies were collected during consultation for the Maximising Confidence in Assessment project and are representative of the range of strategies RTOs across Australia have adopted to assist in the quality assurance of assessment. Strong assessment partnerships and supportive networks were identified in the initial project focus group as key factors in ensuring that assessors have confidence in the assessment process.

### Why form assessment partnerships?

RTOs can form partnerships with enterprises and with other training organisations to provide opportunities for assessment on the job and improve the overall quality of assessment.

An assessor may not have the required technical expertise or currency to adequately assess all facets of the standards. Assessors may need to rely on feedback about a candidate from a workplace assessor or supervisor if they are unable to directly observe the candidate. One way of dealing with these situations is to form an assessment partnership where assessors team up with technical experts or another assessor. It is important that all roles are clearly defined and understood by all parties.

In some RTOs, assessment is conducted by teams or panels to allow assessors to share the workload. Working with other assessors is an ideal way to upskill and support assessors, as well as making the best use of technical expertise.

Assessing in partnership with colleagues or assessors from other organisations may find assessors in unfamiliar territory. They may need to develop new skills in approaching and communicating with workplace personnel and other assessors. Clearly defining roles and responsibilities, as well as providing professional development and support and mentoring, gives assessors more confidence in carrying out new roles. One of the most effective forms of support is joining an existing assessor network.

### Assessor networks

Networks may exist within an RTO or across a number of RTOs. They are designed so that assessors can share information, strategies and experience with each other. There are a number of assessor networks in each State that have the support of National Assessors and Workplace Trainers (NAWT). They give assessors an opportunity to meet face to face or receive information about assessment and interact online.

Assessor networks may function in one industry area or across a range of industries. Where they involve representatives from a number of RTOs, they provide a mechanism for setting up an external validation process (see section 1).

Further information about established assessor networks can be found by contacting the NAWT organisation (<http://www.nawtb.com.au>) or the VET Assessor Network (<http://www.veac.org.au>).

## Section 3: Contents

---

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Associated tools, templates and examples</b>
7 Implementing quality assurance in on-the-job assessment partnerships <i>Access Division TAFE NSW</i>	7.1 Assessment panels <i>Canberra Institute of Technology</i> 7.2 Assessment partnerships via Learning Centres <i>Regency Institute of TAFE</i> 7.3 Assessor information and networks <i>Department of Defence VET</i>
8 Framework for auspiced or collaborative assessment arrangements	8.1 Auspiced/Partnership Agreement <i>Enterprise Design Associates and TasWRAPS ITAB</i>

---

# Strategy 7: Implementing quality assurance in on-the-job assessment partnerships

---

After researching a number of examples of assessment partnerships, one RTO has developed a summary of strategies for negotiating partnerships to assist assessors.

*Access ESD, TAFE NSW*

## Background

In the new training environment, TAFE NSW teachers are now supervising, mentoring and validating training and assessment delivered wholly or in part by enterprise personnel. In most cases this training leads to the issuing of TAFE NSW qualifications. In such circumstances, it is essential to set up quality assurance mechanisms to underpin quality outcomes for all those involved: learners, enterprise supervisors and assessors, the employer and TAFE.

The following summary outlines possible steps involved in setting up such a quality assurance process.

## Strategies for negotiating partnerships

### Preparing for negotiation

- Make sure negotiators are familiar with assessment and reporting requirements and the institute's quality assurance obligations.

### The agreement

- Make sure agreements are clearly negotiated and documented.
- Make sure documentation of roles and responsibilities clarifies and supports implementation of assessment arrangements. The complexity and language of agreements need to be appropriate for their audience.

Agreements should cover:

- |                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| ➤ program objectives         | ➤ implementation |
| ➤ roles and responsibilities | ➤ resources      |
| ➤ troubleshooting            | ➤ costs          |
| ➤ record keeping             | ➤ feedback       |

### Enterprise-based teacher/co-ordinator requirements

It is essential to recruit teachers and co-ordinators with appropriate experience and skills, as the role of an enterprise-based teacher will be an expanded one.

## Participation

Involve those responsible for conducting and managing assessments in negotiations and make sure they know and understand what is involved.

## Strategies for implementing assessment arrangements

### Roles and responsibilities

- Make sure those involved in assessment partnerships understand their respective roles and responsibilities.
- Provide those involved in gathering evidence or conducting assessments with opportunities to discuss responsibilities and processes.

### Support

- Make sure initial and on-going support is available for TAFE workplace assessors.
- Provide appropriate advice and support to assist workplace assessors and learners.

### Resources

Provide appropriate resources and guidelines to support assessments.

## Monitoring and evaluating workplace assessment practices

### Roles and responsibilities

Identify and document:

- the institute's overall responsibility for the quality of assessment practices
- the respective roles and responsibilities of institute and workplace personnel in monitoring and evaluating assessments

### Monitoring

Monitoring of workplace assessors' practices and determinations is best undertaken within a framework of advice and support, rather than compliance and inspection.

## Quality auditing

Quality auditing arrangements are most commonly used where an organisation conducts its own training and assessment and the institute's role is to validate the quality of practices and assessment decisions.

Quality auditing arrangements are also needed in partnerships where the institute and the enterprise undertake distinct and separate components of a TAFE course with little interaction during these processes.

Quality auditing agreements between institutes and enterprises should cover:

- roles and responsibilities
- the timeframe
- procedure

All those involved in quality audits should be advised and briefed.

Institutes need to follow these quality-auditing arrangements by:

- conducting an initial compliance audit to ensure all processes and procedures meet quality standards before the program commences
- monitoring processes and sampling of assessments
- conducting final quality audit

## Evaluating

- Build evaluation processes into program agreements.
- Make sure that there is input from all those involved in assessment processes.



## 7.1: Assessment panels

*Community Development, Canberra Institute of Technology*

The following describes how a teaching section of a large RTO has set up assessment panels.

### Background

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) students involved in the second year of the Diploma in Community Services (Welfare) are required to undertake a work-based project in a relevant community agency. Projects are identified either by learners or are offered by agencies who are enthusiastic about being involved in the process. They are agreed in consultation with workplace supervisors, the learner and the teacher. Learners undertake the project, write a project report and make a presentation to an assessment panel that includes teachers and industry representatives.

### Aim

The aim of this assessment approach is to improve the validity of the assessment task being undertaken by learners and to ensure that assessment of competency is undertaken by a partnership of people who have between them assessment expertise and technical expertise in the competencies being assessed.

### Approach

Teachers are to meet regularly to ensure that the assessment information, assessment processes and the benchmarks against which learners are to be assessed are understood.

Learners are also carefully prepared. They are provided with written information about the assessment process. Additionally, they undertake a workshop to work through the issues and clarify their goals. Ongoing support and direction is also provided via face-to-face contact and telephone, email and online communication where appropriate.

Industry people are to be closely involved in the development of the workplace project. Initially, the CIT field supervisor makes personal contact and then an establishment meeting is held between the learner, the field supervisor, the teacher and the agency supervisor. Thus all stakeholders have a clear idea of their roles and responsibilities.

The industry personnel involved in assessment panels have no connection to the agency in which a project is undertaken. They are people who have expertise in community services, an understanding of the competency standards and the training context.

Assessors are provided with written information about the criteria against which competency is to be determined and full information about the process of assessment.

Assessment decisions are made jointly, following an examination of the project report and the presentation. Learners are provided with verbal feedback immediately after the assessment decision has been made.

### Value of the approach

This approach assists greatly in developing a sense of confidence in the assessment strategies that are being implemented and in the assessment decisions that are being made.

Students are provided with the opportunity to undertake activities that allow them to demonstrate their competency in a range of real work tasks in a real workplace.

For teachers, industry representatives who have a thorough knowledge of current practice in community service agencies confirm their judgements and support and extend their understanding of the industry context.

For the industry partners involved in assessment panels, the approach is seen as a meaningful way to have input into training. It also enhances agency understanding of what is happening in the off-the-job component.

For all participants, the great value of this assessment strategy is that it has developed a high level of confidence in the quality and outcomes of the process.

## 7.2: Assessment partnerships via Learning Centres

*Children's Services, Regency Institute of TAFE*

The following describes how a teaching section of a TAFE institute has established partnerships for on-the-job assessment.

### Background

This strategy was developed to accommodate the workplace assessment requirements of full-time on-campus students. The methodology was piloted with City West Child Care Centre for a two-year period before being extended to other agencies. The model has been broadened with the support of Framing the Future funding. This has allowed the time to work with centre managers and staff in preparation for implementation.

### Approach

Six students are placed in each childcare centre—two in the Babies Room, two in the Toddlers Room and two in the 3–6 Rooms. They are in the one centre for two full days a week for a period of six months. At the end of this period they move on to another centre for the next six months. Over this extended period of time, students gain considerable experience in each of the rooms.

One facilitator (TAFE lecturer) stays in each centre for two mornings per week. Most stay in the one centre for the entire year. The work that facilitators undertake is much more than assessment. They spend one hour with the student group as a whole, and the rest of the time are dedicated to assessing the on-the-job component of the competencies.

Centre staff did not take much of a role in assessment in the early stages, as people were busy building up a picture of their roles and responsibilities and trying to find the right balance in relationships. Working in partnerships such as these requires trust and this took a little time to develop. Now assessment is carried out by facilitators in close collaboration with centre staff. At least the centre director and one other staff member in each centre are qualified workplace assessors.

### Value of the approach

The Learning Centres concept has been formally evaluated. In addition, ongoing evaluation meetings are conducted.

Facilitators have built up a strong sense of trust and confidence between themselves and centre staff and there has been a distinct change in the relationship between the training provider and the centres. The centres particularly like the fact that they have the same students over an extended period of time. The children get to know the students and this helps to establish good relationships.

Being involved in the Learning Centres has allowed the facilitators to enhance their skills and their understanding of competency as it applies in the workplace. Further, the partnerships have provided the opportunity for a 'brushing up' of worker competencies in the centres, resulting in a lift in the quality of the services they provide. Overall, there has been an improved level of confidence in the assessment outcomes and positive consequences for the students, the facilitators, the institution and the centres.

## 7.3: Assessor information and networks

### *Department of Defence VET*

An overview of strategies implemented by the Department of Defence to support VET assessors follows.

## Background

The Department of Defence is a Registered Training Organisation. It implements in excess of 15 Training Packages, including the Public Services Training Package. Because it is a large, geographically dispersed organisation, the Department of Defence has set up a range of strategies to achieve consistency in assessment practice and outcomes. The department uses its centralised directorate to provide ongoing information and support for all assessors. Assessor co-ordinators in each State act as a link between the central area and individual assessors. It has also established a system of national and regional assessor networks and encourages assessors to maintain links to external networks where possible. Annual professional development is provided for all assessors to update their skills and knowledge.

## Approach

Information and support are the critical components of the Defence approach to assessment. Documentation on policy, guidelines for practice together with networks and additional support strategies have been put in place.

### *Assessment kit*

A comprehensive kit has been developed for assessors that provides a framework for a quality assessment system.

The kit is designed to:

- provide guidance to assessment panels on how to conduct assessments within the department
- assist assessment panels in briefing candidates, supervisors and support people on the role of assessment and assessment processes
- inform training providers within, or working on behalf of, the Department of Defence Registered Training Organisation on the development of assessment guidelines and assessment

The kit gives an overview of the Department of Defence RTO and the assessment system and summary of Defence policy on the various components of assessment together with an outline of the purpose and use of the assessment kit.

*The kit also includes:*

- an introduction to assessment and details on conducting assessment and evidence gathering
- an outline of assessment principles and issues
- quality assurance and continuous improvement strategies
- information for supervisors and managers and assessors
- information for candidates
- information about roles and responsibilities of support people
- details of composition, roles and responsibilities of assessment panels

- details of qualifications, roles, responsibilities and professional development for assessors
- information on roles and responsibilities of subject matter experts
- information about the National Training Framework

### *Assessment guidance booklets*

The Department of Defence has developed booklets for 35 of the Units of Competence in the Public Services Training Package (Generalist Units and Policy Development).

These booklets contain everything an individual assessor needs to plan and conduct sound assessments and make valid assessment decisions. Each booklet contains a user-friendly and comprehensive checklist for self-assessment by candidates. This provides candidates with the opportunity to contribute significantly to the evidence-gathering process.

### *Supporting networks and information*

To support assessors in the field, the Department of Defence has established:

- regional assessor networks
- the *Assessor* newsletter which is distributed to assessors about four times a year
- guidance for assessors posted to the *Assessors Online* website
- an assessor helpline
- regional assessor co-ordinators

### Value of the approach

The approach to assessment adopted by the Department of Defence provides clear guidance for assessors and others involved in the assessment process. Quality assessment documentation and information for assessors ensures that assessment is consistent across the organisation.

The Department of Defence won the National Assessment Award for Workplace in 1999.

# Strategy 8: Framework for auspiced or collaborative assessment arrangements

---

This strategy summarises elements to be included in a formal agreement for an auspicing/collaborative assessment partnership.

## Introduction

Effective partnerships require agreed procedures and a ready acceptance of the roles and responsibilities for each partner. Whether you are participating in collaborative assessment or simply entering into an informal assessment partnership, it is important for all partners to consider who has responsibility for what aspects of assessment, how the assessment system will work and the various processes for ensuring the outcomes are achieved. The following is a basic framework for developing an assessment partnership. Each component will need to be discussed and agreed by all stakeholders in the partnership.

Auspicing/collaborative assessment generally refers to a formal arrangement where an RTO issues a qualification and some or all of the assessment has been conducted by another organisation. It can be defined as:

*Formal arrangements which enable Registered Training Organisations to provide recognition for the outcome of assessments conducted by non-registered organisations. Such agreements specify the minimum quality assurance measures that must be met to ensure that the assessment outcome will be recognised by the Registered Training Organisation.*  
(VET Glossary, Training Package for VET in Schools)

In drawing up an agreement, partners must agree on:

- 1 the purpose of assessment
- 2 what is to be assessed
- 3 who will have access to assessment outcomes, information and data
- 4 who will undertake assessment
- 5 aspects of the assessment process including:
  - the evidence to be collected and the methods for collecting it
  - who will be responsible for preparing the candidate
  - who will be responsible for debriefing the candidate
- 6 who will be responsible for keeping the records of assessment
- 7 how appeals and grievances will be handled and by whom
- 8 how the quality assurance processes will be handled and what strategies will be employed
- 9 any costs that may be involved in the assessment

## 8.1: Auspiced/Partnership agreement

*Enterprise Design Associates and TasWRAPS ITAB*

This Tasmanian project, supported by ANTA in 1997–98 through its *Framing the Future* staff development initiative, developed a model for partnership arrangements. RTOs and enterprises entering into partnership arrangements can adapt this document for their own purposes.

### Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc

#### *Auspiced assessment agreement*

I ..... (assessor's name) agree to abide by the arrangements reached by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc, retail enterprises and assessors covered under this agreement.

I understand that while this agreement details the fees to be charged by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc, I am able to set assessment fees as I judge appropriate.

Assessor's signature: .....

#### Agreed procedures

##### *Purpose of assessment*

The Stanley Moriss Agreement will be used to provide access to affordable, convenient and credible assessment services.

In particular it will be used by organisations and individuals to:

- recognise individuals' existing competencies, and issue qualifications
- identify individual and enterprise training needs

For some organisations, it could also be used:

- to contribute to quality assurance objectives
- as part of a performance appraisal system
- for promotion/award purposes (according to conditions set out in the workplace agreement)
- as part of a probation system for new employees
- as part of in-house operational requirements (e.g. to operate EFTPOS)
- for marketing purposes

##### *What will be assessed*

Under this agreement, workplace assessors will conduct assessments against the national Retail Competency standards.

Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc will issue qualifications based on these assessments, and consistent with the scope of its registration against the Retail Training Package.

The qualifications may be statements of attainment for individual units of competence (or groups of units), or complete certificates, diplomas or advanced diplomas.

### *Recognised qualifications in the retail industry are:*

- Certificate 1 in retail operations
- Certificate 2 in retail operations
- Certificate 3 in retail operations
- Certificate 4 in retail management
- Diploma in retail management
- Advanced diploma in retail management
- Statements of attainment for units belonging to any of these qualifications

### *Access to assessment*

- To promote the widest possible access to qualifications through this agreement, it is essential that candidates are given adequate information about the opportunities available.
- In most situations, employers will carry the primary responsibility for disseminating information to employees about the Retail Competency Standards, the Stanley Moriss Agreement, and opportunities for recognition of their competencies.
- Information and advice will also be available from workplace assessors, Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc, the TasWRAPS ITAB, and union representatives.
- Anyone seeking a qualification against the Retail Competency Standards may be a candidate under this Agreement. This includes:
  - employees
  - owner/employers
  - trainees
  - former retail workers
- Candidates will apply for assessment through a standard application form. Available assessors will be listed on the back of the form.
- This form may be obtained from the employer, a workplace assessor or Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc.
- The form should be returned either directly to Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc or through the workplace assessor.
- There will be occasions when a candidate may not complete the requirements for a successful assessment. In these circumstances, note the following:
  - When a candidate has ‘missed’ one element of a unit of competence, only a minor further assessment should be needed. The requirements for this would be negotiated between the assessor and the candidate.
  - When more than one element has been ‘missed’, a reassessment of the whole unit is required. For further clarification, contact Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc.
- Issues such as assessor availability, the scheduling of assessments and managing demand for assessments will be determined in individual workplaces through negotiation between the candidate, the assessor and the host employer.

### *Who assesses*

- Assessment must be carried out by people who:
  - are qualified assessors  
Assessors are accepted as qualified when they have met the requirements for the *Assessment Standard*, and the *Extension Unit* from the National Competency Standards for Assessment. These could be achieved by completing a recognised Assessor Training Program. (Details of the qualifications requirements for assessors are outlined in the Retail Training Package.)
  - have retail qualifications at least to the level being assessed

Retail qualifications may include ‘packages’ of units of competence (e.g. specialising in customer service), as well as full certificate qualifications.

Note: If a potential assessor does not hold retail qualifications but is sufficiently experienced and competent in the retail industry, Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc will offer an RPL service (at a substantially discounted rate) for the relevant qualification.



- have knowledge and understanding of the National Retail Training Package (NRTP) and the Stanley Moriss Agreement

To gain knowledge and understanding of the NRTP and the Stanley Moriss Agreement, workplace assessors must participate in the induction program.

- One person may fulfil all three requirements, or the roles may be split among two people. For example, an assessor who lacks detailed knowledge of a particular retail field may seek the advice of an 'area specialist'.
- Where the assessment roles are split, the following guidelines apply:
  - The qualified assessor has overall responsibility for managing the assessment process.
  - The area specialist has responsibility for advising on types and combinations of evidence to be collected.
  - The qualified assessor and the area specialist will jointly conduct the assessment, judge the evidence, and decide the outcome.
  - If the two fail to agree on an assessment decision, the matter must be referred to Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc within two working days of the assessment.
- Assessors who wish to operate within another RTO's auspiced assessment system must first seek the agreement of Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc.
- Assessors should not use Stanley Moriss materials and resources when operating within another RTO's auspiced assessment arrangement.

### *Assessment process*

Assessors working within the Stanley Moriss Agreement should follow the guidelines listed below for gathering evidence and preparing and debriefing the candidate.

### *Evidence*

- The candidate should always be given a say in what evidences will be collected, and how they will be collected.
- Adjustment must be made to the way evidence is collected to accommodate a candidate's special needs, particularly for disability and cultural differences.
- Except for credit transfer, assessors are required to collect more than one evidence for a unit of competence.
- A recommended evidence mix for a unit of competence should include at least three evidences, including at least one direct evidence.
- A recommended evidence mix should include contemporary evidence and evidence covering a period of time.
- Witnesses supplying testimony must be given a copy of the relevant competency standards by the assessor.
- The standard Witness Testimony form is to be used by all assessors.
- Candidates have the right to see all evidences collected, including witness testimonies and work records.

### *Preparing the candidate*

When candidates are briefed in preparation for assessment, the following steps should be followed (but not necessarily in the same interview, or in the same order).

- Candidates should be put at ease.
- The reasons why assessments are being done in the company should be explained (e.g. employee certification, pay scales, training needs). This may require input from the employer.
- The reasons why individual candidates are being assessed should be discussed.
- Candidates should be shown the Retail Industry Competency Standards and 'walked through' the relevant units, elements, performance criteria and range statements.
- Assessors should check that the units of competency match the candidate's job and that they understand the descriptions.

- Assessors should explain the role of evidence in the assessment process. Candidates should be shown a list of possible evidences and invited to suggest their own. A combination of evidences should be agreed. There should also be agreement on the origin and use of witness testimonies (where applicable).
- Candidates should be notified if others are to be involved in the assessment (e.g. an area specialist).
- The assessment process itself should be explained (e.g. preparing, collecting and judging evidence, debriefing, recording).
- Assessors should check that candidates understand how the auspiced assessment system works and are aware of all the parties involved, particularly the role of Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc.
- Assessors should negotiate times and places for assessments which are acceptable to the candidate, the assessors and the employer.
- Candidates should be made aware of all of their rights (e.g. fair and consistent treatment, opportunity to redeem assessments, clear explanation of assessment decisions, confidentiality as detailed under 'Record Keeping', appeals).
- Assessors should reassure candidates that they can be reassessed and helped with training if needed. Further charges may be involved.

If they default on a unit of competence by just one element, a further assessment can be arranged without the need to reapply. In this instance, a charge may be made to cover costs such as travel.

- Candidates should be made aware of any consequences if they are not successful.
- At the conclusion of the preparation interview, agreements reached should be recorded on an Assessment Plan.

### *Debriefing the candidate*

When candidates are debriefed following an assessment, the following steps should be followed—not necessarily in the same order:

- Assessors should invite the candidate to reflect on their own performance.
- Positive aspects of the candidate's performance should be reinforced, and they should be asked to identify areas for improvement.
- Assessors should provide advice on areas which need training and options for ways in which the training can be done (e.g. action plan, on-the-job experience, training course).
- Assessors should indicate when the final decision will be made, and when the candidate will be informed. This should be no longer than five working days after the assessment.
- Candidates should be reminded of record-keeping procedures, and the rules about access and confidentiality.
- Assessors should discuss the need for further evidence if necessary.
- Candidates should be invited to provide feedback on the assessor's performance.

### *Record keeping*

- Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc is responsible for maintaining and storing records of assessment results. The assessor is responsible for completing assessment records and forwarding them to Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc.

Copies of assessment records will be given to the candidate by the assessor, before being forwarded to Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc and, where appropriate, the employer.

All assessment records will be marked 'confidential'. This means that the only people to have access to, or copies of, these records will be the candidate, the assessor, the employer and Stanley Moriss personnel. Any other party wanting access to assessment records must first seek the candidate's permission.

The meaning of confidentiality in this agreement should be explained to the candidate.

A standard assessment record form will be used for most candidates. One exception will be where trainees or apprentices have been issued with a Training Log Book by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc.

The Assessment Record form or Training Log Book should be signed and dated by both the assessor and the candidate on completion of the assessment (i.e. when the candidate is told the decision).

Other records to be kept by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc and the candidate are Assessment Application forms, Assessment Plans, Appeal Application forms, Appeal Action forms and copies of credentials issued.

Evidence used for assessment should be held by the assessor until the relevant appeal period has expired. Following this, material supplied by the candidate will be returned; other material will be disposed of.

Assessment records and sample assessment tools (used by workplace assessors) will be stored by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc for seven years.

Statements of attainment and certificates/diplomas issued by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc will list the units of competency achieved.

When full credentials have been completed, candidates will be informed by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc. This could occur through the workplace assessor.

### *Appeals and grievances*

Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc has responsibility for maintaining and managing the appeals system and process.

Both candidates and employers should be informed that they have the right to appeal against an assessment decision.

The person appealing must be informed that the Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc appeal process is to be followed first (summarised on reverse of appeal form) that the Tasmanian State Training Authority (TASTA) is the final level of appeal (contact details should be provided) that they have the right to a support person of their choice (e.g. supervisor, workmate, friend) during the appeals process.

The appeal must be lodged formally and no longer than one week after the candidate has been advised of the assessment decision.

In response to a formal appeal, Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc may:

- interview any of the people involved (e.g. the candidate, the assessor, the area specialist)
- request another assessor review the case
- schedule another assessment
- uphold or reject the appeal at any stage

The appeal process must be completed by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc within three weeks of its being lodged.

If either the candidate or the assessor is still unhappy with the outcome, he/she can request the ITAB to nominate another RTO (registered in the same area) to arbitrate. This stage should be commenced within one week of the appeal decision, and resolved with the utmost urgency.

Appeals procedures must be accurately documented, using the standard Action Taken on Appeals form.

All stakeholders will meet their own costs in the appeal system. Where a third party is involved, Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc will meet the relevant costs.

## Quality assurance

Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc will carry the responsibility for day-to-day management, quality assurance and review of the Stanley Moriss service.

The quality of the Stanley Moriss Agreement will be assured through the following steps:

- Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc will monitor all assessment records and will publish any relevant trend information twice a year. This may include the number of assessments completed, the range of evidence used, the range of candidates applying, activity level of assessors, and industry coverage.
- Every six months all assessors must attend a half-day/evening moderation meeting. The meetings will be called by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc but will be chaired by an assessor, with a Stanley Moriss representative as an observer. The purpose of the meetings is to develop common understanding of the standards being applied under the agreement. Each assessor will present anonymous samples of evidence used in real assessments and discuss the assessment decisions made. Through feedback from fellow assessors, participants will develop a shared interpretation of the competency standards and the range of appropriate evidence.
- Every six months all assessors are expected to attend half-day/evening meetings:
  - to review the Stanley Moriss Agreement
  - to address professional development needs which have been identified through Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc's monitoring of the agreement

These meetings will be convened by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc with an ITAB representative and other RTOs invited to participate as observers. The purpose of these meetings is to improve the performance of assessors through professional development and to improve the procedures through systematic review. Any real or perceived problems with the process can be identified and solved. Any potential innovation can be discussed and incorporated in the system.

The minimum attendance requirement for moderation and professional development/review meetings is one of each type of meeting over a 12-month period. If an assessor misses two consecutive meetings, he/she will be deemed to have left the system. In cases where assessors have not conducted assessments for 12 months, their membership may be reviewed by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc.

All assessors are expected to follow the standard procedures defined in this policy. Should an assessor need to deviate from the agreed assessment process, prior notification should be given to Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc outlining reasons for the deviation.

In the event of an appeal being upheld, Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc will meet with the assessor involved:

- to provide guidance and assistance in relation to the assessment process required in the Stanley Moriss Agreement
- where appropriate, provide training to remedy any weakness identified

On six occasions each year Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc will audit assessments. Different assessors will be involved each time. The method of auditing will be chosen from the following list, but will not include any more than four of one kind:

- *Actual assessment audits*—observation of an actual assessment process from start to finish, followed by debriefing of the assessor.
- *Previous assessment audits*—comprehensive review with the assessor of a previous assessment, including evidence and documentation.
- *Retest the tested*—reassessment of a candidate by another assessor. This relies on the co-operation of the candidate, the understanding that the purpose of the reassessment is to check the assessor rather than the candidate, and an agreement that the original assessment decision will not be affected by the reassessment.

Where an audit reveals 'below standard' performance, Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc will review the case and organise appropriate action.

Every two years Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc will ask the TasWRAPS ITAB to nominate a third party to evaluate the Stanley Moriss Agreement. The evaluation should include all stakeholders (RTO, employers, assessors and candidates) and should cover all aspects of the agreement, particularly the quality assurance procedures.

### *Costs*

The following fees will be charged by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc:

Assessor registration	\$150 per annum
Statement of Attainment ( <i>may address more than one unit of competence</i> )	\$100
Certificate	\$200
Transfer from Statements of Attainment to a full certificate	\$ 50

Fees for workplace costs, such as releasing assessors to other firms or hosting candidates from outside the firm, will be at the discretion of participating employers and assessors.

The question of who pays particular fees (e.g. employer, assessor or candidate, or shared arrangements) is a matter for individual workplaces.

### *Marketing*

Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc will market the Stanley Moriss Agreement (together with other training services) to employers, and other interested parties.

Where on-the-job experience or resources are not available in the candidate's workplace, the assessor and employer may agree to seek an alternative work placement for the candidate. Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc is able to assist in negotiating alternative placements.

Any remaining training needs can be met by Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail Training Inc. At our discretion, we may also refer candidates to other RTOs.

# References

---

- ANTA (Australian National Training Authority) 1998, *Training package for assessment and workplace training BSZ98*, ANTA, Melbourne.
- 2001, *Australian Quality Training Framework: Standards for registered training organisations*, ANTA, Melbourne.

# Appendix A: Dictionary of assessment terms

---

These definitions have been adapted from the training package for Assessment and Workplace Training.

<b>Assessment</b>	Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved
<b>Assessment context</b>	The environment in which the assessment will be carried out. This will include physical and operational factors, the assessment system within which assessment is carried out, opportunities for gathering evidence in a number of situations, the purpose of the assessment, who carried out the assessment and the period of time during which it takes place
<b>Assessment guidelines</b>	One of the endorsed components of Training Packages, which set out mechanisms for valid, reliable, fair and flexible assessment of competency against the competency standards. The guidelines underpin assessments carried out by Registered Training Organisations under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)
<b>Assessment plan</b>	An assessment plan is a document developed by an assessor, that includes the elements or units of competency to be assessed, when the assessment will occur, how the assessment will occur, the assessment methods to be used and the criteria for the assessment decision.
<b>Assessment tools</b>	Assessment tools incorporate both the instruments and the instructions for gathering and interpreting of evidence. A variety of assessment tools should be used in the process of establishing competency. Evidence gathering/assessment tools include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ specific instructions for candidates</li><li>➤ examples of acceptable responses</li><li>➤ rules of judgements in holistic competency assessment</li><li>➤ descriptions of typical competent performance</li></ul>
<b>Authenticity</b>	Competent refers to the confidence that an assessor has that the evidence provided by a learner as part of assessment is actually the learner's own work
<b>Competency</b>	The specification of knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standards of performance required in the workplace.
<b>Competency standards</b>	Define the competencies required for effective performance in the workplace. Standards are expressed in outcome terms and have a standard format comprising of Unit title, Unit descriptor, Elements of Competency, Performance Criteria, Range of Variables and Evidence Guide.
<b>Cost-effectiveness</b>	Refers to a balance between the costs of developing and conducting an assessment process relative to the effectiveness of the assessment process and the value of the assessment outcomes to the assessor and candidate.

<b>Evidence</b>	Information gathered which, when matched against the performance criteria, provides proof of competency. Evidence can take many forms and be gathered from a number of sources. Direct evidence is observation of performance under real or simulated work conditions. Indirect evidence is observation of performance under real or simulated work conditions. Indirect evidence can be gathered from a third person. Supplementary sources of evidence may include answers to oral or written questions, documented information about past and current achievements (portfolios, resumes), videos or audiovisual records or prior performance.
<b>Evidence Guide</b>	Part of a unit competency. Its purpose is to guide assessment of the unit of competency in the workplace and/or a training environment. The Evidence Guide specifies the context of assessment, the critical aspects of evidence and the required or underpinning knowledge and skills. The Evidence Guide relates directly to the Performance Criteria and Range of Variables defined in the Unit of Competency.
<b>Fairness</b>	Refers to the controls in place to ensure that assessment is available to all eligible persons regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, language barriers, and geographic location and that, in the course of assessment, persons are not disadvantaged for any reason. These controls include: making the assessment 'transparent' (i.e. the assessment processes and standards or other assessment criteria are accessible and understandable); ensuring assessment methods are equitable; advising persons being assessed on the purpose, methods and procedures for assessment; providing effective feedback during and after assessment; and providing suitable opportunities for challenges and appeals and re-assessment, when necessary
<b>Integrated assessment</b>	An approach to assessment that covers multiple elements and/or units from relevant competency standards. The integrated approach combines knowledge, understanding, problem solving, technical skills, attitudes and ethics into assessment tasks.
<b>Performance criteria</b>	Evaluate statements which specify what is to be assessed and the required level of performance. The performance criteria specify the activities, skills, knowledge and understanding that provides evidence of competent performance for each element of competency.
<b>Quality assurance</b>	A planned and systematic process of ensuring that the requirements of the assessment system, competency standards and any other criteria are applied in a consistent manner. Quality assurance mechanisms or procedures are an integral part of an assessment system.
<b>Reliability</b>	Refers to the extent in which 'consistent' outcomes are achieved in assessment regardless of who does the assessment, when it is conducted and in whatever context it is conducted.  This usually is achieved by ensuring clear and sufficiently detailed procedures, clear and unambiguous assessment criteria, measures to ensure consistent interpretation of evidence and sufficient, suitable training for assessors.
<b>Reporting of assessment outcomes</b>	The different ways in which the outcomes of assessment processes are reported to the person being assessed, employers and other appropriate personnel or stakeholders. Assessment outcomes may be reported in a variety of ways including graded, non-graded, statistical or descriptive reporting systems.
<b>Review of assessment process</b>	Planned and systematic analysis of the assessment system.



<b>Simplicity</b>	Refers to the extent to which assessment procedures are straightforward and easy to understand and implement
<b>Sufficiency</b>	Refers to having enough suitable evidence presented by a learner to ensure that an accurate decision can be made about achievement of competency.
<b>Transparency</b>	Refers to the extent to which all aspects of an assessment system (criteria, processes, recording arrangements, etc.) are open and clear to anyone who takes the time to look at, or through it. It is the measure of the clarity of an assessment system to all involved.
<b>Training Package</b>	Set of learning and assessment resources which provide a basis for the achievement of national qualifications as a result of assessment against competency standards. Training packages have endorsed components: national competency standards, national qualifications and national assessment guidelines, and also include non-endorsed components: learning strategies, professional development and assessment materials.
<b>Unit of competency</b>	Describe a discrete job or function and is written in outcome terms. Further developed through Elements and Performance Criteria
<b>Validity</b>	A valid assessment assesses what it claims to assess; evidence collected is relevant to the activity and demonstrates that the performance criteria have been met.
<b>Validation</b>	Validation involves reviewing, comparing and evaluating assessment processes, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same standards. The process may involve having both technical and assessment specialists review the assessment tools, procedures and judgements for validity. The process may be internal with stakeholder involvement or external validation with other providers and/or stakeholders.

# Appendix B: Templates

---

The following templates from the resource have been included again in this section for easy access by RTOs. They can be customised for use in your RTO by the addition of logos and details relating to your context.

Template 1: Assessment Validation Action Plan

Template 2: Pre-assessment validation of assessment task

Template 3: Third-party evidence form

## Template 1: Assessment validation action plan

To be completed by the validation co-ordinator after consultation with assessors on which units of competence/modules are to be validated.

Plan for the training period: 00/00/2000 – 00/00/2000

Unit/ module no.	Unit/module name	Pre-assessment validation	Post-assessment validation

Proposed date(s) for pre-assessment validation:        /        /2001

Proposed date(s) for post-assessment validation:        /        /2001

Names of assessors involved in validation:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Validation co-ordinator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up planning action required

---



---



---



---



---

## Template 2: Pre-assessment validation of assessment task

Unit/module no. \_\_\_\_\_

Unit/module name: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment activity	Yes/no	Comment
Assessment task instructions and assessment conditions are clearly identified		
Written information is worded appropriately		
The assessment activity addresses the evidence requirements for the competency or competencies being assessed		
The level of difficulty of the activity is appropriate to the competency or competencies being assessed		
Exemplars, benchmarks and/or assessment checklists are available for use in making assessment decision		

Modification required (as identified under Comments):

Assessment task is ready for use:

\_\_\_\_\_

Verifying peer or mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Filed by validation co-ordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

## Template 3: Third-party evidence form

(Confidential)

Name of candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Workplace or RTO: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit/s of competency: \_\_\_\_\_

As part of the assessment for the units of competency, we are seeking evidence to support a judgement about the candidate's competency. As part of the evidence of competency we are seeking reports from the supervisor and other people who work closely with the candidate.

Name of supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Workplace: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone/fax/email: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you read the competency standards for the unit(s) you are commenting on? Yes  No

Has the assessor explained the purpose of the candidate's assessment? Yes  No

Are you aware that the candidate will see a copy of this form? Yes  No

Are you willing to be contacted should further validation of this statement be required? Yes  No

What is your relationship to the candidate? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you worked with the person being assessed? \_\_\_\_\_

How closely do you work with him/her in the area being assessed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are your experiences and/or qualifications in the area being assessed? (include any assessment or training qualifications) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the candidate:    perform job tasks to an acceptable level?    Yes     No   
                                  manage job tasks effectively?    Yes     No   
                                  solve problems on the job?    Yes     No   
                                  work well with others?    Yes     No   
                                  find it easy to move to new tasks?    Yes     No

Overall, do you believe the candidate performs to the standards on a consistent basis? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Identify any further training needs for the candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Any other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



The National Centre for Vocational Education Research is Australia's primary research and development organisation in the field of vocational education and training.

NCVER undertakes and manages research programs and monitors the performance of Australia's training system.

NCVER provides a range of information aimed at improving the quality of training at all levels.

ISBN | 74096 049 | web edition