

Principles of assessment and rules of evidence

Assessors must adhere to the following principles of assessment and rules of evidence when they undertake assessments.

Validity

The assessments actually assess what they claim to assess and what they have been designed to assess.

Validity of assessment is achieved when:

- Assessors are fully aware of what is to be assessed, as indicated by the standards of competence, including clearly defined performance criteria;
- Appropriate evidence is collected from various activities that can be clearly related to the units of competency.
- Assessment of the full range of skills and knowledge, integrated with practical application required to demonstrate competency
- including multiple approaches to assessment for every unit of competency
- resembling the workplace through simulated or on-the-job assessments as appropriate
- including mapping to demonstrate how the assessment tool assesses what it claims to assess

Authenticity

- The evidence collected is authentic - that is, it is actually derived from valid sources and is directly attributable to the individual.
- allowing for direct observation of skills and knowledge
- Assessors must be assured and check that the evidence presented for assessment is the candidates own work

Reliability

Reliable assessment uses methods and procedures that ensure that the competency standards are interpreted and applied consistently from person to person and from context to context.

The following are important to ensure that assessment produces consistent outcomes:

- Clear, unambiguous, well documented assessment procedures and competency standards;
- Clear, consistent and specific assessment criteria;
- Effectively trained, briefed and monitored assessors;
- Adequate assessors across industries and a hierarchy of assessment which ensures a quality outcome; and
- Assessment is carried out within a system flexible enough to cope with multiple and diverse forms of evidence which includes practical assessments allowing benchmarking against required competency levels

Consistency

The assessment system must ensure that evidence collected and provided for judgement is consistent across the range, without undue reliance on any small number of select studio contexts or projects.

Currency

Under an effective system, assessment evaluates whether or not the individual's skills and knowledge are current and can be applied in today's workplace.

There may be specific situations where competencies have not been directly applied for a period of time but these competencies may still be current for the individual. In cases such as this, evidence is admissible, and can be assessed for currency, within an appropriately flexible assessment system. If necessary, formal assessment may be undertaken to determine currency.

Currency involves referring to and using current workplace equipment.

Sufficiency

Evidence of competency should be sufficient to cover all the elements, performance criteria and required range of variables in the standards against which assessment is to be carried out.

It requires collection of enough appropriate evidence to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly. In some instances supplementary sources of evidence may be necessary.

A tendency of many candidates is to provide more (or less) evidence than is actually required to prove competency against the standards. An effective assessment system ensures that candidates are clearly advised regarding the amount and form of evidence, which is sufficient to prove competency. This should avoid the situation where masses of evidence are provided, requiring assessors to spend more time than necessary per candidate, or too little evidence, making it difficult to judge competence.

Flexibility

Every portfolio or set of candidate evidence is unique. Each candidate will identify and develop his or her own specific set of evidence to prove competency against the standards. This set will be based on the workplace experience of the candidate and will comprise diverse types and forms of relevant and appropriate evidence.

An assessment system must evaluate the scope of knowledge and skills covered by the criteria - both performance (skill) and underpinning knowledge & understanding.

An assessment system must also evaluate the recognition of current competencies, no matter how or when they were acquired.

Assessors must support continuous competency development and modify and contextualise according to the candidates needs

Fairness and Equity

An assessment system and its processes must not disadvantage any person or organisation. All eligible candidates must be guaranteed access to assessment, which does not discriminate on any basis. Assessment guidelines must include an approach for working with candidates who have special needs.

To achieve these principles, the assessment system must exhibit the following characteristics:

- The standards, assessment processes and all associated information are straight forward and understandable;
- The characteristics of potential candidates are identified, to enable all potential

assessment issues to be identified and catered for;

- The chosen processes and materials within the system of assessment do not disadvantage candidates;
- An appropriate and effective review and dispute resolution mechanism is in place to investigate, examine and redress any issue of unfairness or disadvantage identified, involving access, assessment, certification or any other related issue; and
- Where potential disadvantages are identified, the system is amended to avoid or counter them, or appropriate steps taken to overcome them including reassessment if required.

Reasonable Adjustment to Assessments

To meet the needs of all learners' adjustments can be made to the way assessments are conducted but not to the requirements of the assessment. The purpose of these adjustments is to enhance fairness and flexibility so that the specific needs of students can be met

Examples of reasonable adjustments

- providing additional time for student to practice the assessment tasks
- presenting questions orally for students with literacy issues
- asking questions in a relevant practical context
- adapting machinery and equipment to make it more easily used
- presenting work instructions in diagrammatic or pictorial form instead of words and sentences
- Adjusting the physical environment
- simplifying the design of job tasks
- being supportive of students and allowing for administration of medication and students suffering from fatigue
- equity checks and revision where necessary of proposed assessment methods and tools
- Being considerate and supportive of cultural beliefs, traditional practices, age, gender and religious observances

It is the responsibility of each assessor to assess students' needs and make whatever reasonable adjustments are practicable to maximise a students' opportunity to demonstrate their competence. Assessors may also consider contacting their colleagues or their supervisor to assist in the development of reasonable adjustments to the assessment requirements of this unit.

Plagiarism and Copyright

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own. Plagiarism is a serious act and may result in a students' exclusion from a unit or a course. When students have any doubts about including the work of other authors in their assessments, they must consult with their trainer to discuss the matter. The following list outlines some of the activities for which a student can be suspected of plagiarism or cheating:

- Presenting any work by another individual as one's own unintentionally

- Handing in assessments markedly similar to or copied from another student.
- Presenting the work of another individual or group as their own work.
- Allowing another student to copy your work
- Handing up assessments without the adequate acknowledgement of sources used, including assessments taken totally or in part from the internet.

Legitimate collaboration and cooperation between students on assignments is encouraged, since it can be a real aid to understanding. It is legitimate for students to discuss assignment questions at a general level, provided everybody involved makes some contribution. However, students must produce their own individual written solutions. Copying someone else's work is plagiarism, and is unacceptable.

Copyright

Students must be careful when photocopying the work of others. The owner of the material may take legal action against students of the college if the owner's copyright has been infringed. Students are allowed to do a certain amount of photocopying for research or study purposes. Generally, 10% or one chapter of a book is acceptable, where the participant is studying with, or employed by, an educational institution.

Consequences

Students found to be plagiarising or breaching copyright will have their work marked down, will need to re do their assessment and may have their enrolment cancelled.

Instructions on Conducting Assessments

Prior to conducting assessments

- Read the assessment task as detailed throughout this document
- Contextualise the task (and checklist) to ensure it reflects the students working environment. (Be sure to check with the mapping document to ensure any contextualisation still covers the unit requirements)
- Read the assessor instructions and checklist prior to commencing the assessment
- Ensure the studio environment is suitable for the parameters of the task, to ensure the students will have an appropriate opportunity to demonstrate their skills
- Make suitable modifications to the studio environment if required to allow all tasks to be observed
- Ensure the student is fully prepared for the assessment and is allocated the appropriate time and resources for the task
- Advise the student prior to conducting the assessment of:
 - what will occur throughout the assessment process
 - when the assessment will occur
 - the level of competency expected
 - What is required to achieve competency
- Do not tell the student how to undertake the task, as this would lead the student and render the assessment process invalid. The student should have been taught "how" to perform each task during training
- Do not give the student a copy of the checklist prior to the assessment

- Prior to each assessment session read the mapping documents applicable to each cluster to familiarise yourself with the unit performance criteria, knowledge, skills and critical aspects of evidence

Conducting the assessment

- Establish and oversee the evidence gathering process to ensure remains valid, reliable, fair and flexible
- Advise the student when to commence the assessment
- Observe the student undertake the tasks as outlined
- Record your observations in the assessor checklist
- Where a checklist point is not observed due to an inappropriate environment, or for a reason outside the students control, modify the scenario to allow the student an opportunity to perform the associated task
- Where a checklist point is not appropriate, write "N/A" in the space provided. All checklist points must be completed for each assessment task. If your record an N/A then additional assessment must occur to achieve fairness and equity for the student.
- Gather supporting documentation where available and appropriate (as evidence)
- Incorporate reasonable adjustments to the assessment process without compromising the integrity of the assessment
- Do not interfere with the assessment unless the students actions impose a risk to themselves or anyone else
- If a student performs an activity incorrectly, mark it as such.
- Record what you see, not what you want to see.
- Ensure that the unit performance criteria, knowledge, skills and critical aspects of evidence are applied when making assessment decisions
- Once the assessment is complete, advise the student that the assessment has ceased, and record your comments in the sections provided

Making the decision

- The student needs to be deemed satisfactory in all assessment requirements for the unit to gain competency.
- If you are in doubt as to a student's satisfactory completion of a task or competency for the whole unit, gather further evidence to help guide your decision.
- Assess the students on what you see during the assessment period, not on actions before or after the assessment.
- Use both the checklist and your professional competency to determine the final outcome for the student.
- If you are marking the student NYC, ensure you outline why you have made this decision, and provide advice on how the student can improve their skills / knowledge prior to reassessment.
- Seek advice from a qualified colleague or the Training Manager if you are uncertain of your final assessment decision.

After the assessment

- Provide constructive feedback to the student on their performance during the assessment period. Do not make any comments on actions undertaken prior or after the assessment period.

- Provide the student with:
 - Clear and constructive feedback based on the assessment decision
 - Information on ways of overcoming any identified gaps in competency revealed by the assessment the opportunity to discuss the assessment process and outcome information on reassessment and the appeals processes.
 - An opportunity for reassessment if appropriate or requested by the candidate
 - Information on appeal process as applicable to your organisation
- Where the student performance is deemed satisfactory, provide the student with a copy of the completed checklist, ensuring the comments section is completed.
- Where the student performance is deemed not-satisfactory - provide a copy of the comments / feedback, but not the checklist. This is to ensure the assessment remains valid on re-assessment.
- Check that you have followed the assessment decision making rule for the unit
- Complete assessment recording sheets for each assessment task and for the unit.
- Check that all sections of the assessment recording sheets have been correctly completed.
- Where applicable attach copies of completed work to the assessment recording sheets
- Forward completed assessment recording sheets to the NTS Administrator within 24 hours of an assessment being completed
- Incomplete and incorrect documentation will be returned to the assessor for completion and correction by the assessor

Instructions for Undertaking Assessments

- Ensure that you have been given a date and time for the assessment
- Ensure that you feel adequately prepared for the assessment by having completed all the classwork associated with this assessment cluster
- Ensure that you clearly understand the instructions for the assessment tasks
- If you are unclear regarding any of the instructions request clarification from the assessor
- Satisfy yourself that all the required equipment and material is available for you to complete the assessment
- If any required equipment is faulty or missing do not undertake the assessment until these matters are rectified. Remember that setting up and adjusting equipment properly may be part of the assessment requirements
- You are entitled to constructive feedback regarding your assessment, especially if you did not complete the assessment tasks satisfactorily
- You are entitled to 2 attempts at each assessment tasks before your assessment outcome is finalised
- You are entitled to appeal your assessment outcome using the National Training Services appeal process and appeal form which is available on the website (www.nationaltrainingservices.edu.au) or from the National Training Services administration