Assessment
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APPENDIX A: RESOURCES

APPENDIX B: ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TOOLS
Introduction

This Learner Guide supports four units from TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment:

- TAEASS401A: Plan assessment activities and processes
- TAEASS402A: Assess competence
- TAEASS502A: Design and develop assessment tools
- TAEASS403A: Participate in assessment validation

These units have been clustered together to improve your learning and assessment experience.

Part 1: Plan Assessment Activities and Processes

Like all important and valuable processes, assessment requires thorough planning and organising. Part 1 of this Learner Guide supports TAEASS401A: Plan assessment activities and processes, a core unit in the TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

This unit addresses the competence of planning and organising the assessment process, whether assessment is carried out in a learning and assessment pathway or for Recognition purposes. It covers identifying and confirming the assessment requirements, developing an assessment plan, contextualising assessment and organising the arrangements for assessment.

More specifically, this unit will help you develop the skills and knowledge to enable you to:

- Determine the focus of assessment
- Prepare the assessment plan
- Contextualise and review the assessment plan
- Organise assessment arrangements.

Part 1 of this Learner Guide covers the following topics:

- An overview of assessment
- Planning for assessment
- Choosing assessment methods
- Assessment tools
- Organising Recognition processes
- Organising assessment arrangements
- Reviewing the assessment plan.

Part 2: Assess Competence

Planning assessment is one thing; doing it is another. Part 2 of this Learner Guide supports TAEASS402A: Assess competence, a core unit in the TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

The unit addresses the process of competency-based assessment conducted in accordance with a developed assessment plan. It includes assessment carried out in an assessment and learning pathway as well as assessment conducted for Recognition purposes.

The focus of the unit is on the skill of interpreting the collected evidence and making a judgement of competence against the specified unit/s of competency by applying the rules of evidence and principles of assessment.
More specifically, this unit will help you develop skills and knowledge to enable you to:

- Establish and maintain the assessment environment
- Gather quality evidence
- Support the client
- Make the assessment decision
- Record and report the assessment decision
- Review the assessment process.

Part 2 of this Learner Guide covers the following topics:

- Understanding assessment
- Using competency standards for assessment
- Implementing the assessment plan
- Working with the candidate to gather evidence
- Making the assessment decision
- Recording and reporting the assessment decision
- Reviewing the assessment process.

**Part 3: Design and Develop Assessment Tools**

Most jobs use tools, and if you want a good outcome you've got to have the right tool for the particular job. Just like people working in other industries, assessors use a variety of tools. Assessment tools are used to gather assessment evidence and record outcomes; like tools used in other occupations, these vary according to the job being done.

Part 3 of this Learner Guide supports TAEASS502A: Design and develop assessment tools—an elective unit in the TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

It covers how to design and develop effective and relevant assessment tools to use when conducting assessments within the vocational education and training (VET) sector. This involves interpreting a unit of competency to determine the evidence required to demonstrate competency; analysing the assessment context to ensure the tools will be appropriate; identifying assessment methods that most effectively address the evidence requirements; and designing, developing, trialling and reviewing the assessment tool.

This unit will help you develop skills and knowledge to enable you to:

- Determine the focus of the assessment tool
- Determine assessment tool requirements
- Design and develop assessment tools
- Trial and review assessment tools.

Part 3 of this Learner Guide covers the following topics:

- Overview of assessment tools
- Confirming evidence requirements
- Selecting and determining assessment methods
- Designing assessment tools
- Reviewing and trialling assessment tools.

**Part 4: Participate in Assessment Validation**

A strong validation process is the key to providing quality and consistency in assessment. This Learner Guide supports TAEASS403A: Participate in assessment validation, a core unit in the TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.
This unit specifies the outcomes required to participate in an assessment validation process.

Validation is a process involving assessors working in collaboration to review, compare and evaluate their assessment processes and outcomes. This includes validating assessment methods, assessment tools and interpreting the evidence collected to make a judgement of competence, in relation to the same unit/s of competency.

More specifically, this unit will help you develop skills and knowledge to enable you to:
- Prepare for validation by planning for participation in validation processes in your practice environment and gathering together the materials you will need to evaluate during the validation process.
- Contribute to validation by actively participating and ensuring that the critical aspects of validation are addressed.
- Analyse and document outcomes of validation by implementing recommendations formulated during the review process and changing your practices to support improvements in the quality of assessment.

Part 4 of this Learner Guide covers the following topics:
- Preparing for validation
- Contributing to validation
- Analysing and documenting outcomes—bringing it all together.

**Before you begin**

To help you work through this guide, make sure you read the units of competency:
- TAEASS401A: Plan assessment activities and processes
- TAEASS402A: Assess competence
- TAEASS502A: Design and develop assessment tools
- TAEASS403A: Participate in assessment validation

**Additional Support and Resources**

You will find additional learning resources (including video and audio guides) in your e-Learning Area at [http://www.livtraining.edu.au/learners](http://www.livtraining.edu.au/learners). To access your e-Learning Area you will need the username and password issued along with your enrolment confirmation.

When you log into your e-Learning Area you will notice a link to the Training and Assessment Discussion Forum where you can post any questions you would like answered by a trainer.

**Glossary**

A glossary of terms is included in the Learner Guide 1: *Introduction to VET*. Use the Glossary to clarify the meaning of any terms used in this Learner Guide.

**Assessment**

To demonstrate competence in this unit, you must complete the tasks outlined in the *Assessment Workbook*. 
Part 1: Plan Assessment Activities and Processes

An overview of assessment
When asked to reflect on the positive aspects of assessment, candidates often say 'the assessment was well planned and organised'. Ensuring an assessment is well-planned and organised can be very rewarding and provide benefits to everyone involved in the assessment. This Learning Topic looks at the basics of what assessment is, why assessment is carried out, who assesses, and some general information about assessment, including:

- Types of assessment
- Principles of assessment
- Evidence requirements
- Rules of evidence
- Assessment methods and tools
- Recognition process.

What is assessment?
Assessment means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements about whether competency has been achieved to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace as expressed in the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards or the learning outcomes of an accredited course.

Assessment is about identifying competence. Competence means having the skill and knowledge to correctly carry out a task, a skill, or a function. Assessment involves collecting evidence and making judgements on whether or not competence has been achieved.

Like any process, or series of steps, assessment needs preparation; it needs to be planned and organised. Imagine going on a trip overseas when you had not given any thought to planning your flights, accommodation, travel itinerary, spending money or travel insurance. You may end up not going on holiday if you fail to plan. Or, at the very least, instead of enjoying the sights and culture, you may spend most of your holiday attending to organisational tasks which could have been avoided if handled prior to your trip.

This Learner Guide focuses on the key steps, principles and considerations to enable you to plan and organise assessments for yourself and others in vocational education and training (VET).

Your role in planning and organising assessment is part of the overall assessment system. The diagram on the following page shows the 'big picture' of assessment. On the left-hand side are different concepts relating to assessment; these are reflected in the various units of competency in the TAE10 Training and Education Training Package. The relevant units of competency are listed on the right-hand side of the diagram. You will find more information by going to the specific Learner Guide for the unit of competency.
Assessment of competence
The judgment of evidence to determine whether the standard of performance has been achieved.

Assessment validation
Reviewing, comparing and evaluating of assessment tools, processes and evidence contributing to judgment made by a range of assessors against the same standards.

Assessment plan
The assessment plan addresses the planning and organisation of the assessment process. It covers the purpose, the target group, when, where and how assessment will occur and the resources required.

Assessment methods and tools
An assessment method is the technique used to gather evidence. eg observation, questioning.
Assessment tools are the instruments and instructions for gathering and interpreting evidence.

Developing assessment tools
Assessment tools provide the instruments and instructions to guide assessors in the collection and interpretation of evidence.

TAAASS501A
Lead and coordinate assessment systems and services

TAACQM501A
Develop training/assessment organisational policies and procedures

TAACQM503A
Lead and conduct training/assessment evaluations

TAADES501A
Design and develop learning strategies (see parts relevant to assessment strategies)

TAEASS401A
Plan assessment activities and processes

TAEASS502A
Design and develop assessment tools

TAEASS402A
Assess competence

TAEASS403A
Participate in assessment validation
**Why assess?**

Assessment is a process which is critically important to many aspects of workplace performance as it confirms an individual's competence.

Assessment may be carried out for various reasons or purposes, for example:

- To recognise current competence
- To determine language, literacy and numeracy needs
- To determine training gaps
- To establish the learner's or candidate's progress
- To determine the achievement of competence
- To gain formal recognition of achievement through a Statement of Attainment
- To gain formal recognition towards a qualification
- To meet organisational requirements for work
- To gain a licence
- To operate equipment
- For recruitment
- For promotion or classification.

Details of these reasons are included in Learning Topic 2: ‘Planning for Assessment’.

**Who can assess?**

Any organisation may undertake assessment for their own purposes and develop their own plan as to how this is done.

However, in vocational education and training (VET), under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) only Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) can issue nationally recognised qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

For what purposes would an RTO undertake assessment? What about a training/assessment organisation that is not an RTO? Are there any assessment purposes that would relate to both RTOs and non-RTOs?

**Assessment by RTOs**

If your practice environment is an RTO, it is important to know about the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

The AQTF means the nationally agreed quality arrangements for the VET system agreed to by the National Quality Council. The AQTF includes the Standards for Registered Training Organisations, which all RTOs must meet in order to obtain and maintain their registration.

Standard 1: The RTO provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations relates specifically to assessments conducted by RTOs and include requirements that must be considered when planning and organising the assessment process.

Among other requirements, Standard 1 requires RTOs to ensure that assessment:

1.1 The RTO collects, analyses and acts on relevant data for continuous improvement of training and assessment
1.2 Strategies for training and assessment meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course and are developed in consultation with industry stakeholders.

1.3 Staff, facilities, equipment and training and assessment materials used by the RTO are consistent with the requirements of the Training Package or accredited course and the RTO’s own training and assessment strategies.

1.4 Training and assessment is delivered by trainers and assessors who:
   (a) have the necessary training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors, and
   (b) have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed, and
   (c) can demonstrate current industry skills directly relevant to the training/assessment being undertaken and
   (d) continue to develop their VET knowledge and skills as well as their industry currency and trainer/assessor competence.

1.5 Assessment including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):
   (a) meets the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course
   (b) is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence
   (c) meets workplace and, where relevant, regulatory requirements
   (d) is systematically validated.

Organisational/legal/ethical requirements

When assessing competence you must always consider organisational, legal, and ethical requirements, including:

- Assessment system policies and procedures
- Recognition of prior learning policies and procedures
- Reporting, recording and retrieval systems for assessment
- Licensing/legal ramifications of assessing competence
- Requirements of training and/or assessment organisations relating to assessment and validation
- Quality assurance systems
- Business and performance plans
- Collaborative/partnership arrangements
- Policies, procedures and programs
- Defined resource parameters
- Mutual recognition arrangements
- Industrial relations systems and processes, awards/enterprise agreements
- Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF 2010) Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs),
- Registration scope
- Human resources policies/procedures
- Legal requirements including anti-discrimination, equal employment, job role/responsibilities/conditions
- Relevant industry codes of practice
- Confidentiality and privacy requirements of information relating to completed assessments
- OHS considerations, including:
  - Ensuring OHS requirements are adhered to during the assessment process
  - Identifying and reporting OHS hazards and concerns to relevant personnel

**Assessment by non-RTOs**

Training and assessment organisations that undertake assessments but are not registered as RTOs, can have their own policies, procedures, benchmarks and standards but cannot provide nationally recognised training. If your practice environment is not an RTO, you are encouraged to discuss relevant policies and procedures with your manager in your practice environment so that your assessment plan reflects your organisational requirements but still meets the outcomes specified in the unit of competency.

**Types of assessment**

**Norm referenced assessment**

Norm referenced assessment is intrinsically competitive. It compares individuals with each other and ranks them according to the number of places and opportunities available. For example, an Olympic gold medal event or the tertiary entrance ratings related to senior secondary school assessment.

**Criterion referenced assessment**

Criterion referenced assessment (or standards-based assessment) is assessment against fixed criteria or standards. These predetermined criteria can take different forms such as:
- Units of competency (from Training Packages)
- Modules (from curriculum)
- Standard operating procedures
- Product specifications.

Increasingly, in VET, units of competency are the benchmarks against which individuals are assessed.

In VET, the term competency-based assessment is used regardless of whether the benchmarks are competency standards or other types of benchmarks.

The defining characteristics of competency-based assessment include that it is:
- Standards/criterion-based
• Evidence-based
• Work-focussed/participatory
• Criterion-referenced

**Standards/criterion-based**

Fixed standards or criteria are a set of predetermined benchmarks. Benchmarks for assessment may be:

- The requirements of the national assessment guidelines of the relevant Training Package/s
- The guidelines for qualifications and/or units of competency
- The performance criteria or evidence requirements of learning strategies, plans, programs and tools
- Any requirements of Occupational Health and Safety legislation, codes of practice, standards and guidelines
- Assessment requirements of the National Reporting System
- Organisational requirements or product specifications.

**Evidence-based**

Competency-based assessment is the process of gathering sufficient evidence to make a judgment about whether the standards specified have been met. This evidence is mostly demonstrated or produced by the candidate, and some additional evidence can be obtained from third parties.

**Work-focussed/Participatory**

This means that the candidate helps to determine the process of assessment. Judgment of competence can involve a range of assessment activities. Assessors and candidates can negotiate the form that the assessment activities will take. Candidates can be invited to suggest relevant workplace activities and tasks which could produce evidence for assessment. So, when you are planning and organising assessment, consider the ways in which you can allow the candidate to be an active, rather than a passive, participant.

**In competency-based assessment, the assessor must:**

- Know about assessment
- Have a vocational skill to assess in (or work with someone who has expertise in the area being assessed)
- Work closely with the candidate.

**In competency-based assessment, the candidates must be informed of:**

- The criteria against which they are being assessed
- The assessment process or steps
- Their ability to take an active part in the process.
This Learner Guide focuses on planning and organising an assessment in a competency-based or standards-based situation.

You will be planning and organising assessment on behalf of:

- Candidates (individuals being assessed)
- Assessors (those conducting the assessment)
- Other people involved in the assessment processing—for example, administrative staff, coordinators, or supervisors.

In a competency-based system, a candidate can be assessed through two pathways:

- Assessment through training
- Assessment only.

**Assessment through training**

This is where the candidate needs to learn the skills and knowledge first, and the assessment is conducted:

- During the course of training at different intervals (formative assessment)
- During, and on completion of training either on- or off-the-job (summative assessment).

**Assessment only**

This is where skills and knowledge have already been gained, and the candidate is ready to be assessed against the relevant criteria/benchmarks without needing to go through a training program. This 'assessment only' pathway is called many different things:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Recognition of Current Competency (RCC)
- Skills recognition
- Recognition.

**Principles of assessment**

There are four principles of assessment. These are:

- Validity
- Reliability
- Fairness
- Flexibility

The four principles of assessment are crucial to effective assessment in vocational education and training. It is critical that the assessment situations you plan and organise reflect these principles.
When you plan and organise an assessment, make sure that:

- The evidence will prove that the individual has the required skills and knowledge as specified in the relevant unit of competency (Validity)
- Other assessors would make the same decision (Reliability)
- Assessments can be either on- or off-the job, and at a mutually convenient time and situation (Flexibility)
- The assessor objectively considers all evidence, is open and transparent about all assessment decisions, and takes into account relevant characteristics and needs of the candidate (Fairness).

**Evidence requirements**

In a competency-based system, evidence is proof that supports the candidate’s claim of competency. It is information gathered which, when matched against the criteria, indicates that the criteria or benchmarks have been met.

Evidence can come in a variety of forms. For example:

- Demonstration of real work
- Demonstration in a simulated environment
- Contents of a portfolio
- Role-play
- Video recordings of a performance
- Project
- Products made
- Responses to a case study
- Processes used (documented)
- Answers to questions
- Procedures completed
- Reports from third parties.

Evidence can be gathered from a range of sources and should be linked to the candidate’s current or future workplace application of the competency. A variety of methods and tools can be used to collect evidence.

The diagram on the following page broadly illustrates the relationship between benchmarks; evidence requirements; assessment methods and tools; and evidence produced. It is important that you understand these concepts and relationships.
Benchmarks determine evidence requirements

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<th>Evidence requirements</th>
<th>Assessment (evidence gathering) methods</th>
<th>Assessment (evidence gathering) tools</th>
<th>Evidence produced</th>
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<tr>
<td>Benchmarks are the standards against which a candidate is assessed.</td>
<td>This is the information which, when matched against the benchmarks, shows that a candidate is competent</td>
<td>These are the techniques used to gather different types of evidence.</td>
<td>These are instruments and instructions for gathering and interpreting evidence.</td>
<td>This is the information on which the assessment judgment is made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXAMPLE Sell products to customers</td>
<td>EXAMPLE What is the learner’s product knowledge?</td>
<td>EXAMPLE Real work observation</td>
<td>EXAMPLE Observation checklist</td>
<td>EXAMPLE Demonstration of product knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customer service/selling skills</td>
<td>Third party assessment</td>
<td>Third party report</td>
<td>Demonstration of customer service and selling skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rules of evidence

Rules of evidence have been identified to ensure that assessment produces evidence which is valid, sufficient, current, and authentic.

The assessment methods and tools you choose in the planning phase must be able to collect evidence that meets each of these rules of evidence.

Validity

Assessment methods chosen must ensure that the evidence collected covers all the requirements in the benchmark or criteria. If the benchmark is a unit of competency, then the evidence must cover:

- All elements
- All performance criteria
- The dimensions of competency
- Employability Skills
• Consideration of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level
• All the 'musts' in the range statement
• All the critical evidence listed in the evidence guide
• All essential skills and knowledge listed in the evidence guide.

**Sufficiency**

When choosing assessment methods, ensure that the tools can collect enough evidence to make a decision about the candidate's competency. Usually, it means collecting evidence to show competency over a period time and in different situations. It is also important to make sure the methods and tools will assess all aspects of competency. A good way to make sure there is sufficient evidence is to use a combination of different assessment methods.

**Currency**

When planning an assessment, you need to determine whether the evidence-gathering opportunities you have chosen will ensure the candidate can perform the skills and has the knowledge. Currency is particularly important when assessing for the purpose of Recognition. Evidence supplied by applicants for Recognition may be a combination of historical and recent evidence to show a total picture of current competence.

**Authenticity**

When planning an assessment, you must be able ensure that the evidence to be gathered is the candidate's own work. Evidence-gathering activities such as direct observations or verbal questions produce authentic evidence easily because the assessor sees the candidate's skills or hears the answers to questions. Other assessment methods such as projects or written work may need further authentication. This can be achieved by using more than one method, for example a project plus a follow-up interview to clarify the project stages, or supplementary information in the form of a third party report from managers or supervisors.

It may not always be appropriate or feasible to directly observe or directly question the candidate, so there will be times when this may need to be verified by a third party such as a manager or supervisor. If documentation is used, it must be verified. Using a range of assessment methods will assist with establishing authenticity, through the crosschecking of evidence.
Planning for assessment

An assessment plan is a document developed in conjunction with other relevant key stakeholders. In preparing an assessment plan, you should document key steps and actions to be taken and plan for risks or contingencies. The assessment plan ensures that all relevant stakeholders are aware of what will happen, as well as when, where and how it will happen. This Learning Topic covers the assessment plan in more detail.

The assessment plan

The assessment plan should include:

- The unit/s of competency and elements or other benchmarks to be assessed—you will need to be familiar with these
- The purpose/s of assessment—this needs to be identified so that the stakeholders are well aware of the reason for the assessment
- A profile of the target group—characteristics and needs of the candidates
- Others involved in the assessment process—teachers/assessors, administrative staff
- How the assessment will occur—that is, the assessment methods and tools to be used. It can include a description of the method and examples of tools to be used for the assessment
- When and where the assessment will occur—this includes details of any due dates for submission of evidence, or dates and times of when the assessment will occur and the proposed location of the assessment
- What resources or special arrangements are required—this outlines what is needed to carry out the assessment, given the special needs of candidates, organisational requirements, or other legislative or OHS considerations
- Context for assessment—this outlines the details of the environment in which the assessment will take place and any changes which need to be made as a result. For example, will it be on-the-job, off-the-job or a combination of both? Or will the assessment be contextualised to the work setting?
- Instructions for the candidate—this outlines information to be given to the candidate, related to the assessment exercise at hand.

As you work through this guide, you will need to develop an assessment plan. A template is available in the resources.

Identifying and confirming assessment requirements

Consultation with the relevant people

You might be planning and organising assessment for a small number of people (for example, yourself as an assessor and one candidate) or for many assessors and candidates. At the very least, the relevant people you need to consult with are candidates and assessors. Other relevant people might include:

- The client, company or organisation
- Team leaders, managers, supervisors
- Trainers and facilitators
- Technical or subject experts
- Training and assessment coordinators
- Industry regulators
- Employee and employer representatives
- Members of professional associations
- Commonwealth department official such as Centrelink staff, caseworkers
- New Apprenticeships Centre (NAC) personnel.

Depending on the stakeholders involved, you will need to let them know the contents of the assessment plan and the parts of the plan that affect their roles and responsibilities.

**Establishing the purpose of assessment**

In planning any assessment, you need to be clear about the purpose of the assessment. The purpose needs to be clarified with the key stakeholders. At the very least, these are the candidates and assessors. Once the purpose of the assessment is confirmed, the appropriate benchmarks can be identified, followed by evidence requirements and assessment methods and tools.

It is important for you to know the purpose of the assessment for a number of reasons. The purpose of assessment will influence the choice of benchmarks/criteria used, how you go about confirming the assessment plan, and the way in which assessment is conducted.

Most importantly, the outcomes of the assessment may significantly affect the candidate's future.

The flow-on effects of a successful assessment for candidates could include extended workplace responsibilities, and perhaps higher earning capacity. Unsuccessful assessment attempts might mean further training, the inability to continue to meet work requirements, or not being permitted to use equipment. There are also implications of giving an inaccurate assessment of competency—for example, if workers are not assessed properly, they may be less skilled than what is reflected in their assessment, which may lead to job loss or low productivity.

Here, in more detail, are some different purposes or reasons for assessment:

**Recognition**

Recognition is the acknowledgement that individuals can gain skills and knowledge in many different ways; through life experience, work experience and/or training and education. Recognition avoids training people in things they already know and can already do. Instead, individuals are assessed up-front and evidence can be drawn from relevant experience and/or other training. Recognition is also referred to as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Current Competency (RCC), or Skills Recognition.

**Language, literacy and numeracy requirements**

This is where assessment is conducted specifically to determine the language, literacy and numeracy competencies of individuals. It may be used as a selection tool for learning programs, or for identification of further training requirements in those areas.
\textbf{Identifying training or education needs}

Assessment can be conducted to identify the training and education needs of individuals. The benchmark or criteria for assessment could be position descriptions or other organisational standards. The results can then be used to plan suitable training or education programs.

\textbf{To identify an individual’s progress (formative assessment)}

This involves gathering evidence on the individual’s progress and giving them feedback on their progress.

Formative assessment identifies the learner’s progress towards competence and is used during the period of learning.

\textbf{Summative assessment}

This involves gathering evidence on the individual’s achievement of the required knowledge and skills. Summative assessment determines whether a person is competent. Recognition is a form of summative assessment.

\textbf{Qualifications and formal recognition of achievement through Statements of Attainment}

Often, the purpose of assessment is to issue formal credentials to those who achieve competence.

Individuals can be assessed against endorsed industry or enterprise Training Package competency standards. Individuals can also be assessed against learning outcomes of accredited courses. In both cases, satisfactory completion of the evidence requirements will lead to the individual being issued with a formal qualification or Statement of Attainment. This is summative assessment, and may occur at the completion of training or before training (Recognition).

\textbf{To meet operational requirements for work or to operate equipment}

A worker might need to be assessed to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to do the work required of them. This could involve assessing their competence in using a particular piece of equipment.

\textbf{Licensing}

Many industries and occupations require practitioners to have a licence to perform a particular function or role. Each industry or occupation in this category has a set of criteria for assessment of the skills and knowledge required in order to be issued with the licence. Examples include real estate agents; plumbers; horse and greyhound trainers; and LPG fitters in the automotive industry.

You might need to check to see if there are any licensing requirements associated with the unit of competency.
Recruitment

Assessments might be conducted in order to recruit or hire a person for a particular occupation or job. The position description usually sets out the criteria against which the individuals are selected. If more than one candidate meets the criteria, norm referencing will then occur, that is, candidates will be compared to each other.

Promotion or classification

Individuals might be assessed in order to place them on a classification scale or to promote them into a new position.

Organisations can use a range of benchmarks for promotion and classification purposes. As well as the units of competency from endorsed Training Packages, workplace policies and procedures; industry best practice standards; quality standards; or operating procedures could be used as benchmarks. Some promotion or classification systems are competitive because there are fewer positions available than the number of competent individuals. If this is the case, then the promotion or classification system is probably norm referenced and other determinants could be used to compare individuals and make a selection.

Determining the target group

Now that you have identified the purpose of your assessment, you will need to determine the target group who will be assessed. It could be people employed in (or undergoing training so they can be employed in):

- An enterprise
- A department or division within an enterprise
- A job role or occupation
- An industry sector
- A professional association
- A trade or profession
- A community or government organisation.

You will need to determine who is going to be assessed so that you can plan for their needs.

Identifying the benchmarks

Industry competency standards

These are units of competency specifying the sets of skills and knowledge for workplace performance determined by each industry or industry sector and included in endorsed Training Packages. For example, units for:

- Financial Services
- Horticulture.
**Cross-industry standards**

These are units of competency included in endorsed Training Packages and common to a range of industries. For example, units of competency for Training and Assessment, or Information Technology.

**Enterprise standards**

These units of competency are developed by private organisations or enterprises which identify a need for specific standards that relate to their own operations. McDonalds, Kodak Australasia and Qantas are examples of organisations that have their own enterprise competency standards.

Competency standards make up part of the endorsed component of Training Packages. Information regarding Training Packages and units of competency can be downloaded from the National Training Information Service (NTIS) website <http://www.ntis.gov.au>.

Training Packages can be purchased from Australian Training Products. Information can be found on their website <www.atpl.net.au>. Training Packages can also be purchased from the relevant Industry Skills Councils (ISCs), which have replaced the former Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs). The ISCs’ contact details can be found on the NTIS website.

**Organisational benchmarks**

If your training/assessment organisation is not an RTO, it can still use publicly available competency standards as benchmarks for assessment, but unless it partners with an RTO, no Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification or Statement of Attainment can be issued.

Examples of organisational benchmarks used for assessment include:

- Standard operating procedures
- Internal enterprise training, for example induction
- Internal OHS standards
- Product specifications.

It will depend on the purpose of assessment within your practice environment as to how this assessment is implemented.

If your practice environment is not an RTO, and you are to be involved in assessments, you are encouraged to speak to your manager to find out what standards or benchmarks are relevant to your context and purpose of assessment.

**Analysing the benchmarks to determine evidence requirements using Training Packages**

Units of competency from Training Packages are the most common benchmark used in vocational education and training. Where no Training Package exists, the benchmarks might be modules and learning outcomes from accredited courses.

When reading and interpreting the units of competency, you will need to consider a range of factors in order to determine the types of evidence required. These factors include:
A critical consideration when deciding on the evidence requirements is the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Units of competency from Training Packages are written to reflect work activities within an industry or across an industry. They are packaged as groups of units into qualification levels that are represented by various qualifications within the AQF. Each qualification within the AQF has a descriptor, which provides guidelines for performance at a particular level, including:

- The breadth and depth of knowledge
- The breadth and depth of skill
- Problem-solving capabilities
- Information processing capabilities
- The operational environment in which the work is performed
- The level of discretion or judgement in the work
- Responsibility for a person’s own work
- Responsibility for the work of others.

These descriptors will have an impact on the evidence requirements, and ultimately the assessment methods you choose. For example, for a Certificate I, demonstration of a task will involve a directed task, whereas for higher qualifications, more discretion and independence is required.

Planning and organising assessment at the higher AQF levels is more demanding, as the qualification outcomes or benchmarks are more complex. Planning will involve careful analysis of the benchmarks so that the assessment methods and tools chosen will provide relevant evidence to match all the skills and knowledge components, including the dimensions of competency.

To ensure sufficient evidence is collected at higher AQF levels, assessment is more likely to be conducted over an extended period. Acquiring higher-level competence is often a developmental process and this is best shown over time.

Planning and organising assessment at the higher levels might also involve a range of people who can assist with the provision of evidence.
Language, literacy and numeracy requirements

When deciding which evidence-gathering methods to use, the language, literacy and numeracy requirements of the units of competency need to be considered. This will guide the choice of methods so that you avoid assessment methods that put demands on the candidate beyond those specified in the units of competency. For example, in some units of competency, writing is either not required or is a minimum requirement.

Where writing is not required, written methods of assessment might not be appropriate, and the unnecessary language and/or literacy demands of the assessment method itself may prevent the candidate from demonstrating competence. In such cases, other methods can be used, including verbal questioning, or use of pictures and diagrams.

The same goes for numeracy. For example, if a person is required to provide correct change in a retail outlet, it might not necessarily mean they have to mentally calculate the change to be given, as the machine will probably do it or the workplace may allow the use of calculators. Be guided by the unit of competency. In addition, the Key Competencies will help you decide on the level of numeracy needed.

Required knowledge and skills

The required knowledge and skills can be found through a thorough examination of the benchmark. If the benchmark is a unit of competency, you need to examine all parts of the unit.

The Evidence Guide

The evidence guide in a unit of competency details specific evidence requirements. It’s a good idea to look at this first, as it usually gives an overall view of what a person needs to be able to do to prove competency, and the extent of the assessment. Its purpose is to guide assessment of the unit of competency in the workplace and/or training environment.

The evidence guide gives an overview of assessment requirements and the context of assessment. It details:

- The required knowledge and understanding
- Skills and attributes, Employability Skills or generic skills
- Products and processes that can be used as evidence
- Resource implications and specific evidence requirements.

There are often examples of evidence that may be collected for each unit of competency. The evidence guide relates directly to the performance criteria and range statement defined in the unit of competency.

Units of competency might be formatted in slightly different ways, depending on when they were written. They usually have a section outlining critical aspects of evidence, or specific evidence requirements and the required knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes.

There is usually a section in the evidence guide outlining suggested assessment methods and resources, or products and processes that can be used for assessment. This provides guidance on the assessment approaches that may work best for that particular unit of competency, and ways of gathering and recording evidence.

Elements and performance criteria
Elements and performance criteria are included in a unit of competency. An element describes the activities that make up the broader function or job which is described by the unit of competency. The performance criteria further specify what is to be assessed and the required level of performance of the activities.

The range statement

The range statement within a unit of competency sets out the variety of contexts or situations in which performance can take place. This helps the assessor identify the specific industry or enterprise application of the skills and knowledge in the unit.

Employability Skills

In May 2005, the approach to incorporate Employability Skills within Training Package qualifications and units of competency was endorsed. As a result, from 2006 Employability Skills will progressively replace Key Competency information in Training Packages.

Background to Employability Skills

Employability Skills are also sometimes referred to as generic skills, capabilities or Key Competencies. The Employability Skills discussed here build on the Mayer Committee’s Key Competencies, which were developed in 1992 and attempted to describe generic competencies for effective participation in work.

The Business Council of Australia (BCA) and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), produced the Employability Skills for the Future report in 2002 in consultation with other peak employer bodies and with funding provided by DEEWR. Officially released by Dr Nelson (Minister for Education, Science and Training) on 23 May 2002, copies of the report are available from the DEST website at: http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/ty/publications/employability_skills/index.htm.

The report indicated that business and industry now require a broader range of skills than the Mayer Key Competencies Framework and featured an Employability Skills Framework identifying eight Employability Skills*:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Initiative and enterprise
- Planning and organising
- Self-management
- Learning
- Technology.

The report demonstrated how Employability Skills can be further described for particular occupational and industry contexts by sets of facets. The facets listed in the report are the aspects of the Employability Skills that the sample of employers surveyed identified as being important work skills. These facets were seen by employers as being dependent both in their nature and priority on an enterprise’s business activity.

*Personal attributes that contribute to employability were also identified in the report but are not part of the Employability Skills Framework.
### Employability Skills Framework

The following table contains the Employability Skills facets identified in the report *Employability Skills for the Future*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Facets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Listening and understanding, Speaking clearly and directly, Writing to the needs of the audience, Negotiating responsively, Reading independently, Empathising, Using numeracy effectively, Understanding the needs of internal and external customers, Persuading effectively, Establishing and using networks, Being assertive, Sharing information, Speaking and writing in languages other than English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teamwork</strong></td>
<td>Working across different ages irrespective of gender, race, religion or political persuasion, Working as an individual and as a member of a team, Knowing how to define a role as part of the team, Applying teamwork to a range of situations e.g. futures planning and crisis problem solving, Identifying the strengths of team members, Coaching and mentoring skills, including giving feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem solving</strong></td>
<td>Developing creative, innovative and practical solutions, Showing independence and initiative in identifying and solving problems, Solving problems in teams, Applying a range of strategies to problem solving, Using mathematics, including budgeting and financial management to solve problems, Applying problem-solving strategies across a range of areas, Testing assumptions, taking into account the context of data and circumstances, Resolving customer concerns in relation to complex project issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initiative and enterprise</strong></td>
<td>Adapting to new situations, Developing a strategic, creative and long-term vision, Being creative, Identifying opportunities not obvious to others, Translating ideas into action, Generating a range of options</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Initiating innovative solutions

### Planning and organising that contribute to long and short-term strategic planning

- Managing time and priorities - setting time lines, coordinating tasks for self and with others
- Being resourceful
- Taking initiative and making decisions
- Adapting resource allocations to cope with contingencies
- Establishing clear project goals and deliverables
- Allocating people and other resources to tasks
- Planning the use of resources, including time management
- Participating in continuous improvement and planning processes
- Developing a vision and a proactive plan to accompany it
- Predicting - weighing up risk, evaluating alternatives and applying evaluation criteria
- Collecting, analysing and organising information
- Understanding basic business systems and their relationships

### Self-management that contributes to employee satisfaction and growth

- Having a personal vision and goals
- Evaluating and monitoring own performance
- Having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and visions
- Articulating own ideas and visions
- Taking responsibility

### Learning that contributes to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes

- Managing own learning
- Contributing to the learning community at the workplace
- Using a range of mediums to learn - mentoring, peer support and networking, IT and courses
- Applying learning to technical issues (e.g. learning about products) and people issues (e.g. interpersonal and cultural aspects of work)
- Having enthusiasm for ongoing learning
- Being willing to learn in any setting - on and off the job
- Being open to new ideas and techniques
- Being prepared to invest time and effort in learning new skills
- Acknowledging the need to learn in order to accommodate change

### Technology that contributes to the effective carrying out of tasks

- Having a range of basic IT skills
- Applying IT as a management tool
- Using IT to organise data
- Being willing to learn new IT skills
- Having the OHS knowledge to apply technology
- Having the appropriate physical capacity
Employability Skills Summary

An Employability Skills Summary exists for each qualification. Summaries provide a lens through which to view Employability Skills at the qualification level and capture the key aspects or facets of the Employability Skills that are important to the job roles covered by the qualification. Summaries are designed to assist trainers and assessors to identify and include important industry application of Employability Skills in learning and assessment strategies.

The following is important information for trainers and assessors about Employability Skills Summaries.

- Employability Skills Summaries provide examples of how each skill is applicable to the job roles covered by the qualification.
- Employability Skills Summaries contain general information about industry context which is further explained as measurable outcomes of performance in the units of competency in each qualification.
- The detail in each Employability Skills Summary will vary depending on the range of job roles covered by the qualification in question.
- Employability Skills Summaries are not exhaustive lists of qualification requirements or checklists of performance (which are separate assessment tools that should be designed by trainers and assessors after analysis at the unit level).
- Employability Skills Summaries contain information that may also assist in building learners' understanding of industry and workplace expectations.

Industry requirements for Employability Skills

IBSA has used the Generic Employability Skills Framework for IBSA Training Packages to further identify facets of Employability Skills that describe industry occupations for each IBSA Training Package qualification.

These facets were used to create an Employability Skills Summary for each qualification as an example of how facets would apply to one specific job role covered by the qualification. The text making up the Employability Skills Summary for each qualification was developed directly from the units of competency to ensure that the language and essence of the job role were appropriately reflected.

From the Employability Skills Summary, trainers and assessors can then work out how facets of Employability Skills would apply to other job roles relevant to the particular qualification they are using.

Dimensions of competency

The concept of competency includes all aspects of work performance and not only task skills. The assessment of competency should involve a demonstration of competence in all of the dimensions of the competency, including:

- Task skills
- Task management skills
- Contingency management skills
- Job/role environment skills.
Task skills

Task skills focus on being able to perform the task at an acceptable level to the organisation or industry.

This might include carrying out individual tasks such as operating equipment, serving customers, processing an invoice, or using a software application to make a presentation.

Task management skills

Task management skills refer to the ability to manage a number of different tasks that form part of the job. This involves being able to integrate a number of different tasks to achieve a complete work outcome.

This might include:

- Following OHS procedures while operating machinery
- Completing documentation for an order while serving a customer
- Responding to an audience while making a presentation using a software application.

Contingency management skills

Contingency management skills refer to the ability to respond appropriately when things go wrong or if there are irregularities and breakdowns in routine. If the equipment breaks down, alternative strategies need to be employed. Responding to difficult customers and responding to emergency evacuation situations are further examples of situations requiring contingency management skills.

Job role/environment skills

Job role/environment skills refer to the need to fulfil the requirements and expectations of the organisation. Each workplace is unique and requires the individual to be able to adjust to the environment they are working in and fulfil the needs of the organisation. This could include: working in different teams; following workplace procedures and communicating effectively with colleagues; interacting with clients; and complying with organisational policies and procedures.

Curriculum documentation

Some nationally recognised AQF qualifications in VET are derived from accredited courses rather than Training Packages. Under the AQTF, these can be based on units of competency from Training Packages; units of competency developed to meet identified industry needs; or modules comprising learning outcomes where it is not possible to develop units of competency.

If you are using an accredited course, make sure you obtain the relevant curriculum documentation so you are clear on the assessment requirements and, if the course is based on modules, interpret the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in your assessments.
Context of assessment

The context of assessment refers to the different situations in which assessment occurs. Context is about the variety of circumstances that surround different assessments. Context includes all the factors that affect assessment—from the environment in which the assessment is to take place, to the purpose of assessment and the candidates.

The characteristics and factors affecting assessment in your practice environment will create an assessment context.

For example:

- Where will assessment take place? —on-the-job, off-the-job or a combination?
- If on-the-job, what kind of environment will it be? For example, manufacturing or service industry?
- Where is the location? For example, is it a remote location?
- Who will you be assessing? For example, trainees or apprentices, experienced workers or entry level learners?
- What is the purpose of the assessment?
- Will assessment be in the same place or in a variety of workplaces or institutional settings?

Different assessment contexts will affect the choice of assessment methods, for example:

- If training and assessment occurs only in a training and assessment institution, such as a TAFE or a private RTO, then demonstration of skills may have to be through simulations rather than in real workplaces. Check the relevant assessment guidelines in the Training Package to see if simulation is allowed.
- Assessment in the workplace may require assessment to occur outside normal operating hours so that the workflow is not affected.
- When using questioning in the workplace you may need to organise to go to a quiet or private place away from the workflow.
- Third party reporting can only be used where a candidate has access to a third party who can evaluate the candidate's performance in relation to the benchmark.

In your practice environment, what are some workplace and legislative requirements you will need to consider when assessments are conducted? How will this affect the assessment methods you choose?

Key considerations relating to the context of assessment

Accepted assessment systems and processes may already be in existence in your industry or in an enterprise where you may be required to assess.

These might include:

- Training and assessment policies and procedures
- Recording and reporting of assessment results
- Maintenance and retrieval of assessment information
- Established methods and tools for assessment.
**Existing assessment tools**

In planning assessment, you should consider what kinds of tools already exist that could be used or modified. This is very cost and time effective, as the tools have already been developed and trialled. You can look for existing tools in a number of areas.

Check the support materials developed for the Training Package, ask other trainers, or search online through the Assessment Generator (see the Resources section for how to access this online resource).

**Clustering competencies**

As far as possible, assessments should be determined by the logical application of skills and knowledge required in the workplace, not by the way Training Packages/courses are written.

An assessment can cover more than one unit of competency at a time and this grouping of competencies is often called clustering competencies. The process of gathering evidence can apply to part of a unit, a whole unit, a cluster of units or an entire qualification.

Many work activities are not adequately described in a single unit of competency. Often, real work activities draw on competencies from a number of units simultaneously.

Competencies might be drawn together for a number of reasons:

- Logical sequencing of actions—for example, plan, deliver and review
- Common types of tasks—for example, monitor machinery and OHS
- Competencies applied simultaneously in the workplace—for example, WRRC3B Interact with customers and WRRC2B Apply point of sale handling procedures.

The benefits of clustering competencies for assessment are:

- It is an efficient use of time and assessment resources
- It reflects ways in which competencies are applied in the workplace
- Evidence for dimensions of competency and Employability Skills are more readily available
- It leads to holistic assessment rather than atomised assessment.

Holistic assessment assesses knowledge and skill together, which reflects the way skills and knowledge are applied in the workplace. This drawing together of groups of skills and knowledge is often referred to as integrated assessment.

Clustering is a mechanism to support integrated assessment.

It is important that the key stakeholders know clustering is occurring.

Assessment methods can be chosen that assess over a cluster of:

- Parts of different units of competency
- More than one unit of competency.
Others parties involved in the evidence-gathering process

There may be other parties involved in evidence gathering for the assessor, for example, a third party report from supervisors. Reports (verbal or written) can be used when the candidate:

- Has a workplace
- Is undertaking a Recognition process.

Real time or simulated

Depending on where and when the assessment takes place, you will either have a real or simulated assessment. In a real work or real-time situation, evidence can be collected through a person’s actual performance in the workplace, and third party reporting, if an assessor cannot carry out the observation personally.

Where evidence is collected external to real work time or place, it is known as structured evidence because it has to be designed to simulate or reflect actual performance. Structured evidence is useful when it is not possible or desirable to collect real work/real-time evidence. This may be due to safety, cost or resource considerations. Structured evidence is also useful in providing indications of underpinning knowledge.

Examples of structured evidence include demonstrations, role-play, projects, work-related activities and questions.

Partnership arrangements

If you are in a partnership arrangement with another party, the way in which assessment is conducted and who does it is extremely important. It is important to ensure that those assessing have the capacity and understanding of how to assess and what to assess.

A useful resource on assessment in partnership arrangements is DETYA 2001, Guide 7: Assessment Using Partnership Arrangements, A guide to developing Training Package assessment materials. Details on how to access this resource online are included in the Resources section of this guide.

Costs of assessment

The cost of assessment needs to be kept in mind when additional resources need to be obtained. If your practice environment is based in the workplace, candidates and others might need to be taken away from work activities to undertake the assessment.

You might also need to consider the cost-effectiveness of the assessment method and tools. For example:

- Use methods which will allow you to assess more than one candidate at a time, where appropriate
- Choose methods which assess clustered units of competency, such as projects
- Design checklists so that they fulfil more than one function—recording tools can double as feedback tools
- Consider tools that are already available (consider modifying available tools, if necessary)
Cost considerations are important when planning and organising assessment and they must be negotiated with either the organisational representative or the learner.

**Organising assessment timeframes**

The assessment timing and timeframes need to be estimated and planned to ensure that the learner is ready and that all relevant arrangements have been made.

**Organisational requirements**

The range statement provides information that will help you interpret the unit of competency to meet organisational and legislative requirements and the context of assessment. You need to look at what the Training Package says, and then think about what it means for your organisation. This will vary depending on your practice environment. Organisational requirements may relate to matters such as:

- Quality assurance procedures
- Systems and processes
- Operating procedures
- Goals, objectives, business and performance plans
- Ethical standards
- OHS policies and procedures, and confidentiality requirements
- Resource parameters
- Workplace documents
- Specific roles performed by staff.

**Legal and ethical requirements**

As a planner and organiser of assessment, you could set in place arrangements to ensure assessment is ethical, for example, a code of practice. Other ethical standards, such as those set out within the AQTF 2010 Essential Standards for Continuing Registration, will also operate in your assessment environment, and legal requirements will affect your assessment planning. These might include:

- OHS policies, procedures and programs
- Industry or enterprise specific legislation, for example, New Apprenticeships regulations
- Confidentiality and privacy regulations
- Access and equity regulations
- Anti-discrimination legislation
- Award and enterprise agreements and other relevant industrial arrangements
- The AQTF 2010 standards
- Your RTO's scope of registration
- Environmental issues and regulations
- Equal opportunity legislation
- Industry codes of practice.
**Organisational culture**

Organisational culture is the predominant or unquestioned set of ideas, beliefs, knowledge and activities exhibited by an organisation.

Here are some questions to ask about your assessment environment in relation to organisational culture:

- Does the organisation have a tradition of training and assessment or has it only recently commenced a training/assessment program?
- Is the organisation familiar with criterion/standards-based assessment/competency-based assessment?
- Are employees in this organisation used to being active participants in processes?
- How is the organisation structured? Are there levels of managers and supervisors or do employees work in self-managing teams? Are these large teams or small teams?
- What sort of responsibilities do individual employees have?
- What emphasis is placed on OHS, access and equity principles, and privacy?

You could look for indications of an organisation’s culture in its:

- Goals, objectives, plans, systems and processes
- Quality assurance and/or procedures manuals
- Business and performance plans
- Collaborative or partnership arrangements
- Quality and continuous improvement processes and standards.

**Organisational policies and procedures**

You will need to have an understanding of the organisation’s policies and procedures if you are to assess your candidate’s understanding of how to carry out their work procedures in accordance with them.

**Available resources**

Assessments need to be carried out within the limits of available resources, for example, existing assessment tools, time available and the number of candidates to be assessed.

**OHS requirements of the work environment**

There are two aspects concerning OHS that will affect your assessment planning and organisation. These are:

- The OHS components of the competency being assessed
- The OHS requirements of the workplace environment in which the competency or competencies will be applied.

You have a duty of care to understand and accommodate the OHS requirements of the environment for which you are planning and organising assessment. You need to plan and organise assessment in accordance with the legislative requirements for OHS and ensure that assessments can be carried out in a safe and responsible manner.
Many competency standards incorporate OHS requirements and some relate specifically to these requirements. You should familiarise yourself with OHS requirements and incorporate them in planning and organising your assessments.

**The needs of the candidate/s**

The individual needs of candidates for assessment must be considered when determining and customising evidence-gathering methods and tools. This process is called reasonable adjustment and it means choosing alternative assessment methods or tools to meet the individual needs of candidates.

Adjustments are considered reasonable if they still allow for a valid and reliable assessment within the resource capabilities of the training/assessment organisation.

While there may be times that you need to make generalisations about the average candidate being assessed, you must be aware that individual differences need to be identified. Candidates are individuals and they will each have different ideas and experiences—even if those differences and special needs are not always immediately obvious.

You need to know the characteristics of the candidates so that you can plan and organise assessment according to their needs. If you do not know the candidates, then you will need to identify their characteristics that are relevant to assessment. Throughout your investigation, you must comply with confidentiality considerations.

Here are some starting points for identifying and confirming the candidates' characteristics:

- In the first instance, your candidates should be encouraged to let you know if they have any equity or additional support needs so you can work out how best to cater for them
- Discuss with experienced teachers, trainers and assessors by phone, email or survey
- Check any pre-enrolment information
- Speak to relevant workplace personnel or other trainers who may be aware of less obvious needs, for example low levels of literacy or numeracy
- Check files for background information, but be aware of confidentiality considerations
- Check with relevant Industry Skills Council (ISCs replace the former national ITABs). ISCIs might have profiles of existing workers and entry-level learners.

Some of the special needs that you might need to consider could relate to the candidate's:

- Level and experiences of previous learning and assessment
- Motivation for assessment—personal or organisational
- English language, literacy and/or numeracy levels or needs
- Physical impairment or disability such as those involving hearing, vision, voice, or mobility
- Intellectual impairment or disability
- Hidden disability such as arthritis, epilepsy, diabetes, asthma
- Learning progress
- Psychiatric or psychological disability
- Religious and spiritual observances
- Cultural background
- Self-image/perceptions
- Age
- Gender.
You might need to plan for and provide/organise support such as:

- English language, literacy and numeracy support
- Disability support
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support
- Ethnic support services
- Interpreting services
- Counselling services
- Community support.

It is important to remember that accommodating special needs is part of your role in planning and organising assessment. But also remember that there may be others working towards catering for equity or additional support needs. These people can help you develop strategies and methods. It is part of your role to:

- Understand equity and support issues
- Provide information on access to support
- Keep up-to-date with issues and information about who can provide assistance.

The websites of your State or Territory training authority will include information about equity and other additional support needs. This could include policy statements and information about how you can provide and/or organise support.
Choosing assessment methods

The assessment method is the particular technique used to gather different types of evidence. It is a way of collecting evidence in order to demonstrate competency. This Learning Topic explores the different assessment methods or techniques to be used, and assists you to choose the most appropriate methods.

Determining assessment methods

Evidence is the information which, when matched against the performance criteria, provides proof of competency. There are many evidence-gathering methods that can be selected to assess an individual’s competence against a benchmark. The methods chosen will depend on a number of factors, including the evidence requirements of the benchmark:

- Industry or enterprise assessment systems, processes and culture. Which methods will suit and be acceptable to stakeholders?
- Evidence-gathering opportunities. What are the possibilities and options available? Before assessment methods and tools are decided upon, ensure that there will be suitable evidence-gathering opportunities for the chosen methods—the methods and tools may need to be selected according to the available evidence-gathering opportunities.
- Legal, ethical and OHS requirements. How will these be considered in the assessment methods and tools? Where there are specific legal, ethical and OHS requirements, they will need to be reflected in the assessment method and tools.
- Amount of time, cost, and dollars available. Will this affect the selection of assessment methods?
- The needs of the candidate/s. Which method will best accommodate individual needs, while meeting the rules of evidence?
- Single and multiple units of competency. Will there be a clustering of units of competency?
- Risks and requirements associated with different assessment applications in various contexts. Are there licensing requirements to be taken into consideration?
Assessment methods

Many different methods of assessment can be used, and these can be grouped in the following way. This is not a complete list, and you may add other methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Real work activities at workplace or simulated environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Self-assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written questionnaire</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of products</td>
<td>Work samples or products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>Documents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product with supporting documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historical evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third party feedback</td>
<td>Testimonials or reports from employers/supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview employer, supervisor, peer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured activities</td>
<td>Project</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case study</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role-play</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Progressive tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Or they can be categorised as:

- The assessor watches the candidate (real work, demonstration, role-play)
- The assessor asks the candidate what they know and what they can do (interview, written questions, verbal questions)
- What other people say the candidate knows and can do (third party reports)
- Items the candidate has produced (product, project, event, portfolio).

Sometimes assessment methods are categorised in the following way:

**Direct evidence**

Evidence that can be observed or witnessed by the assessor, for example, observation of performance in real work or simulated environments.

**Indirect evidence**

Evidence of candidate’s work that can be reviewed or examined later by assessors, for example, a finished product or portfolio.

**Supplementary evidence**

Additional evidence presented to support a candidate’s claim of competence, for example, third party reports; work diaries or journals; or evidence of completed training.
Whichever way you categorise the assessment methods, one method is not necessarily superior to another. What is important is that you select a range of methods to meet the evidence requirements of the benchmark, the needs of the candidate, and organisational and legislative requirements.

The context or situation will also influence the assessment methods chosen. If you are assessing in a workplace, evidence consisting of observation of work tasks and products, combined with third party reports may be used; while in a training situation the assessment might be observation of a simulated task, and review of a project, combined with questioning.

**Observation**

During an observation, you watch someone doing a task or performing a process or series of tasks or processes to gather assessment evidence. Observation can be in a structured manner, or unobtrusive, as a person goes about their normal duties. Observation is very useful for the assessment of practical skills, for example operating equipment or trouble-shooting. It can be supplemented with other assessment methods, for example, questioning or third party reports.

**Real work activities**

Observing activities being performed at work can lead to good quality evidence. It can assist with the assessment of the dimensions of competency, as the person performs a number of tasks that make up a job role; responds to contingencies; and demonstrates the ability to function in the environment they are working in according to the organisation's needs.

**Activities undertaken at another time or location**

It is not always possible to observe activities being performed at work. This might be due to a number of factors including:

- Logistics
- Safety
- Confidentiality
- Cost
- Candidates not attached to an appropriate workplace.

In many cases, candidates are not in a work situation, but might be training in a training/assessment organisation. Regardless of whether they are training on- or off-the-job, there are many circumstances when real work cannot be observed. For example, it might be unsafe, too costly, or not practical to perform a task during work time.

If the task involves the operation of equipment in a training institution, it is important that the equipment reflects current industry standards, and that realistic workplace standards for completion are set, for example, time limits, and quality and OHS specifications.
Simulation

In simulations, the candidate is involved in an activity away from the workplace that is designed to replicate the workplace context. Simulations include:

- Demonstration of a skill or range of skills in a simulated workplace environment—for example, a practice restaurant, office or workshop
- Role-plays or practical exercises based on reconstruction of workplace situations. These can be small scale—for example, dealing with difficult customers—or large scale—for example, security exercises involving the deployment of personnel and equipment
- Electronic simulators or virtual situations—for example, those used for pilot or driver training
- ‘in tray’ exercises—for example, a set of workplace documents which have to be dealt with in a time frame following workplace procedures; or research findings which need to be analysed
- Hypotheticals, where a facilitator asks participants a series of ‘what if...?’ questions as a way of eliciting ideas or developing a solution to a problem
- Table-top exercises, where the layout of buildings and surrounding areas are reproduced as a scale model. Participants are presented with a situation—for example, a security officer with a scale model of a shopping centre is asked what plan they would put into action if ‘Exit A’ was blocked.

Simulations can be used when it is not possible to observe tasks in real work time, for example, because of safety issues, lack of opportunity to demonstrate the real situations, or confidentiality and privacy issues. Simulations are useful for exploring potential responses to situations—for example, conflict resolution, meeting procedures or responding to a range of customer issues.

However, many people are not comfortable with simulations, and this can affect the candidate’s behaviour. If this is the case, students will need to be adequately briefed and prepared for the simulation.

Questioning

Verbal questioning can take many forms, for example:

- Informal one-on-one question and answer
- Structured interviews
- Questions from a panel
- Telephone or video links

Verbal questioning provides an opportunity to assess underpinning knowledge as well as the application of essential knowledge. It allows for interaction and exploration of points, for example, ethics, values or attitudes. It is also a useful method to help with assessment for Recognition purposes.

Verbal questioning is often used in conjunction with other assessment-gathering methods, for example, with observation or presentation of a product or portfolio. Questioning is useful when there are concerns about a candidate’s writing skills, and if writing is not being assessed. To a candidate, verbal questions are less formal than written questions. However, preparation of the questions, or areas of questioning, is the key to successfully using questioning in assessment. Assessors can ask many types of questions. Some examples are:
Questions of invitation
How did you design the training program for your client?

Questions of exploration
Who were your key stakeholders?
What were the results of your discussions with key stakeholders?

Questions of confirmation
How did you know that you were following the correct process to design a training program for your client?

Questions of investigation
How did you prepare for your meeting with your key stakeholders?
What happened when you met with your key stakeholders?
What questions did they ask?

Questions of reflection
What did you think of the steps you followed to design the training program?
What worked well?
Is there anything you would do differently next time?

Open-ended questions
When a more detailed response from the candidate is needed, open-ended questions are used. Open-ended questions are used to assess higher-level cognitive skills such as the candidate’s ability to compare, analyse, synthesise, interpret, contrast, develop and evaluate information and ideas.

Open-ended questions can involve problem-solving, or they can be used to explore what a candidate would do in different circumstances to assess contingency management skills and transferability of the competency. By using ‘what, when, where, why and how’ questions, the assessor will be able to probe the candidate’s underpinning knowledge and understanding.

Examples:
- What would you do if you had $1 million?
- In what ways can you assist others to learn?
- What would you do in the event of an emergency or accident?
- What would you do if the equipment broke down or did not work?

Closed questions
Closed questions elicit a specific response such as ‘yes’, ‘no’ or the name of a part of machinery, location or procedure. Closed questions are used to find out specific facts and are used when only one answer is correct.

Closed questions are usually combined with open-ended questions to allow the assessor to gain sufficient information about the candidate’s competence. They are used to assess lower level cognitive skills, such as the candidate’s ability to name, identify, choose or estimate.

Examples:
In what year did humans first land on the moon?
Can this tool be used to dismantle this equipment?

Scenarios and scripts
When selecting scenarios and scripts for role-plays at lower levels, make sure they are simple, yet provide enough information to set the scene and provide the basis for the role-play.

Remember you are not assessing an individual's ability to improvise as an actor! You may have to explain verbally as well, and use prompts to replicate workplace situations. When choosing scenarios and scripts, be aware of the candidate's literacy levels and any special needs. Consider what you are actually assessing and check that this will be covered by the scenarios or scripts. Trial the script to make sure it achieves what you want it to achieve. Scripts could be produced as role cards.

Third party reports
In some situations it is necessary to use reports from a third party to gather evidence, for example, in a workplace where the assessor has difficulty observing the candidate because of work schedules, geographic location, privacy or confidentiality. Third party reports can be used as supplementary evidence.

It is important to carefully select or target the third party. The assessment decision is always made by the assessor, using evidence from the third party, usually in conjunction with other evidence.

Providing structured reports can ensure the third party feedback is targeted. Third party reports can be obtained from people who are regularly in contact with the candidate and the candidate's work, including managers, supervisors and customers. These people will need to be fully briefed to make sure that the feedback is reliable.

Projects
A project is a task or series of tasks with a defined outcome. With projects, candidates can work together in a group, or independently, bringing together the knowledge and skills developed.

Examples of projects include the development of a product or process; researching and writing a report; solving a problem; producing a performance or event or making a presentation.

Depending on the nature of the project tasks, projects can be a good way of assessing dimensions of competency beyond the task skill. The project can be assessed at strategic intervals during the project (formative assessment) as well as at completion (summative assessment).

Projects can be based on real-time work, or can be simulated projects.

Work-related projects are useful ways of assessing a range of work activities over a period of time. Projects can also form part of assessment in a training institution situation, where simulated work activities can be used to complete the product.
Portfolios
Portfolios can take many forms, but are usually an assembly of evidence such as documents or products produced over a period of time and from different sources, arranged in a systematic way.

They usually include documentation of the process or reflections on the development. They can be used to gather evidence during a project and in other situations where direct observation is not always possible. Portfolios can contain a range of evidence that can be used to assess a process and/or a product. Portfolios are often useful as a technique for Recognition purposes.

Journal
A journal is an account of activities undertaken in a workplace or learning environment. Journals can be hand-written, electronic or audio. A journal can be used as supplementary evidence, and should be confirmed by a third party.

Case study
Case studies can be used to assess the application of principles and processes to the workplace or other real situation. They can take many forms—for example, a description of a process, problem, chart, diagram or scenario, with related questions or actions. They are useful for presenting issues or situations that require analysis and problem-solving. They are often linked with other methods of assessment, particularly questioning.

Written questions
Written questions can be used to assess underpinning knowledge, or in conjunction with other assessment-gathering methods, such as case studies and observation of demonstrations or simulations.

Questions can take many forms, for example, short answer questions, true/false questions or multiple-choice questions. Constructing questions takes time and knowledge. Questions are often difficult to write and if they are poorly constructed or allow for margins of error or guessing, this will distort the validity of the results. However, they are easy to administer and are cost-effective, particularly when used with large groups, for example, through online assessment.

When selecting this method, be aware of the literacy and comprehension levels of candidates as this may hinder their responses. If necessary, choose alternative assessment methods. It is also important to avoid stereotyping, or language which could be controversial or offensive. Written questioning alone is usually not enough to assess competence, as it is difficult to assess the application of skills.

Self-assessment
Self-assessment is formative assessment whereby the candidate makes judgements about their own progress towards competence.

Methods used for self-assessment include questions in a checklist, or gathering evidence from work and life experience to prove competence against criteria. Evidence can include records of past training, work documents, products, testimonials, or diaries. Self-assessment is often used
as the starting point for a Recognition process, and should be supplemented with other evidence-gathering methods such as an interview.

**Choosing assessment methods for integrated assessment**

Integrated assessment is an approach to assessment that covers the clustering of multiple units and/or elements from relevant units of competency. This approach focuses on the assessment of a ‘whole-of-job’ role or function that draws on a number of units or parts of units of competency. This assessment approach integrates or combines the assessment of the application of knowledge, technical skills, problem-solving and demonstration of attitudes and ethics.

In integrated assessment, there will be a range of assessment requirements that need to be identified. You will need to select which methods best collect the evidence to support competence.

To do this, you will need to list all the assessment evidence requirements and then consider each assessment method to see which one best allows the learner to show their competence in underpinning knowledge and skills. It may be that one activity can cover a range of evidence requirements.
Assessment tools

After you have decided on which method of assessment you will use, you need to decide what you need in order to actually conduct the method.

This Learning Topic briefly covers information about assessment tools. A more detailed description of how to develop these assessment tools is covered in Part 3 of this Learner Guide.

What is an assessment tool?

Assessment tools are the instruments and instructions to support the gathering and interpretation of evidence. The careful selection and review of assessment tools will ensure the assessments are conducted according to the principles of assessment, and that the evidence collected will meet the rules of evidence.

Have you ever had to change a tyre on a car? Imagine how difficult it would be if you did not have the tools and equipment to change the tyre. For example, if you didn’t have a jack, you couldn’t raise the car.

Assessment tools for assessment methods

A handy table that matches the types of assessment tools suitable for particular assessment methods is located at Appendix B. This table provides a list of assessment tools to be considered.

Tools to support observation methods of assessment

A tool that assists with the assessment of real work activities is an observation checklist. An observation checklist details the aspects of performance that an assessor will be looking for. Examples of checklists to be used for observation can be found in DETYA 2001, Guide 1: A Guide to developing Training Package assessment materials, and Guide 2 Assessing competencies in higher qualifications, A guide to developing Training Package assessment materials. Details about how to access these guides online can be found in the Resources section of this guide.

Instructions for the candidate

Candidates need clear instructions about the nature of the task/s to be performed and any materials or equipment required. These instructions can be separate or incorporated into the checklist.

The instructions for the candidate could include the following:

- Type of task required
- Where the assessment is to take place
- Specifications for a project or assignments
- Duration of the assessment
- Evidence requirements
- How to gather evidence to support claims of Recognition
- Requirements of demonstration
- Resources required—for example, what equipment or tools they might need for the assessment
• Assessment instructions.

**Instructions for the assessor**
The instructions for the assessor could include the following:

• Where the assessment may take place, for example in a training room or on-the-job
• How to use the assessment tool
• Evidence requirements
• Resources required to conduct the assessment
• How to complete the checklist
• Prepared responses
• Administrative tasks such as recording assessment results
• Reporting on use of tools
• Duration of assessment task using different tools in different contexts.

**Tools for questions**

**Prepared questions**
Designing questions is an important part of making sure you get the responses you are looking for, so it is important to make sure you ask suitable questions.

**Prepared responses**
Make a list of acceptable responses to ensure reliability of assessments and to help with recording. Give guidance to the candidate about how much information is needed when responding to a question.

**Instructions for candidates and assessors**
Instructions for the candidate and the assessor could be separate, or included on the question sheet.

**Recording mechanisms**
Recording of responses could be used for record keeping, in case of an appeal or to provide feedback. It could be a written record, or audio or video recordings of the questioning. The recording tool could include:

• Information about the candidate, assessor and context
• A list of questions or sample questions
• A place to indicate a satisfactory response, according to the response sheet. The response sheet could be separate, or included in the checklist
• A place to indicate a satisfactory response overall, and that feedback has been given to the candidate.

**Tools to support simulation activities**
You can follow the same procedures as you would for selecting and reviewing a checklist for an observation in real work time, except that the observation will be of a simulated situation.
Mapping assessment tools

After assessment methods and tools have been selected, it is important they are reviewed to ensure they meet the requirements of the assessment benchmark. The mapping process will help you check that there is a clear relationship between the assessment evidence and the requirements of the benchmark.

You can carry out a mapping process using the 'Assessment Mapping Matrix' template on your learner USB.

Reviewing assessment tools

After assessment methods and tools have been selected, it is important they are reviewed to ensure they meet the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.

This task can be completed by one or more assessors and is also a process of validation of the assessment tool. You may wish to trial assessment methods and tools with a pilot group to get feedback from another source. This section will give guidance on how to trial and review the assessment methods and tools.

The checklist on the following page provides some trigger questions to consider to ensure that the principles of assessment and rules of evidence have been met. When evaluating the assessment methods and tools against the criteria, you could consider the methods and tools collectively rather than individually.

For example, if you were using demonstration, questioning and a portfolio as your assessment methods, you would consider the three together against the criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for evaluation</th>
<th>Evidence that will be produced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Validity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the method and tool assess all components of the benchmark including knowledge and skills?</td>
<td>YES NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reliability</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the method and tool consistently measure what it is supposed to? Do the instructions ensure consistent application of the tools? Can the method and tool be used by different assessors in different situations and with different candidates to achieve consistent results?</td>
<td>YES NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flexibility</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the tool allow for flexibility in the assessment to meet the needs of the candidate or organisation?</td>
<td>YES NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RULES OF EVIDENCE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Fairness**      | Does the tool meet the needs of the candidate?  
|                   | Is it free of bias?  
|                   | Can it be adapted to prevent barriers for individuals with special needs?  
| **Currency**      | Is the evidence provided current?  
| **Sufficiency**   | Is enough evidence collected to match all parts of the benchmarks?  
| **Authentic**     | Does it ensure that the evidence that is collected is authentic?  
| **Valid**         | Does the evidence match the benchmark?  
| **Are the assessment methods and tools cost efficient?** | 

Other key questions you could ask to review the efficiency and effectiveness of assessment methods and tools are:

**System requirements**
- Does it meet relevant legislative requirements including OHS requirements?
- Does it comply with organisational requirements?
- Will it be easy to administer?

**Ease of use**
- Are the assessment tools easy to use?
- Do assessment tools reflect the task?
- Are the instructions and information easy to understand?
- Is there enough time to complete the tasks?
- Are there any grammatical or spelling mistakes?
- Is the layout clear?
- Is there any ambiguity or other weaknesses in the assessment tool?
- Can you think of any more questions you could ask to see if other changes are required to assessment methods or tools?

**Modification of assessment methods and tools**
You have now checked that your assessment methods and tools meet the principles of assessment and will produce evidence that meets the rules of evidence, and you have gained
feedback from stakeholders. Refining methods and tools will ensure that you gain objective evidence to make your assessment decision.

Earlier in this guide, you covered a range of considerations that needed to be made when planning an assessment. The following factors may affect the assessment method/s or tool/s selected and you will need to consider each in the context of the practice environment in which the assessment is to take place.

**Meeting the special needs of candidate/s**

You looked at the special needs of candidates in Learning Topic 2: ‘Planning for Assessment’. Below is a list of the possible special needs of candidates; a list of the potential issues; and a description of alternative assessment methods and tools that can be chosen to meet the special needs of different groups of candidates. The categories are not always discrete, and individuals may not fall neatly into one or more of these categories, so when choosing assessment methods and tools, you won’t always treat each candidate with particular needs in exactly the same way. Altering the assessment methods and tools to cater for specific characteristics of candidates, and making reasonable adjustments, will ensure that the assessment is carried out fairly and flexibly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate’s special need</th>
<th>Potential issue</th>
<th>Possible range of methods and tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low literacy or numeracy</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Verbal assessment using predetermined questions. This could be recorded or someone else could be a scribe. Presentations or demonstrations can be used rather than writing. Use of diagrams as visual cues when asking questions, or when the candidate is explaining answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calculating</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People whose first</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Demonstrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language isn’t English</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Use of diagrams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Production of a product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Organise assessment times which are suitable to the client to allow for prayer times or reschedule to allow for special religious events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural and religious differences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates with a</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Observation checklist using adaptive technology such as braille for people who are visually impaired. Asking questions and getting assistance from an Auslan interpreter (for deaf candidates). Using an interpreter, reader, attendant carer, or scribe to write down answers to questions. Observation of tasks performed on suitably adjusted equipment or environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disability</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older candidates</td>
<td>Different age of the assessor</td>
<td>Use case studies instead of role-plays as some older candidates may feel uncomfortable. Make sure font size is not too small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited technology skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate's special need</td>
<td>Potential issue</td>
<td>Possible range of methods and tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill health</td>
<td>Fatigue, Lack of concentration, Effects of medication</td>
<td>Shorter assessment tasks that allow for medication or fatigue, Specific instructions on projects that can be submitted at various stages, Longer period of time allowed to finish tasks, Use a scribe or tape recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Culture of workplace with women in non-traditional trades, Different gender of the assessor, Child care issues</td>
<td>Use same gender assessor if appropriate, Check times to suit childcare responsibilities, Make sure assessment tools are not gender specific in content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous candidates</td>
<td>Differences in cultural background, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Numeracy, Confidence</td>
<td>Use of support person, Check that assessment strategies are not culturally sensitive, for example it may be more appropriate to demonstrate knowledge rather than talk about knowledge, Encourage candidates to use alternative ways of demonstrating competence, for example drawing instead of writing, using a video to record demonstration of skills rather than demonstrating in front of the assessor, Read any printed information to the candidate or use graphics for instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates with low levels of education</td>
<td>Reading, Writing, Numeracy, Limited study skills, Confidence</td>
<td>Check if language, literacy or numeracy issues are likely to impact on the assessment, Demonstration and oral questioning, perhaps recording answers or using a scribe, Read any printed information to the candidate or use graphics for instructions, Use short assessment tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates who have recently returned to the workforce</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Make sure the candidate is aware of workplace procedures, including OHS, If demonstrating on the job, find a time when there are not many people around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family responsibilities</td>
<td>Requirement to care for family members</td>
<td>Ensure time and place of assessment does not clash with care responsibilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs 2001, *Guide 4: Kit to support assessor training, A guide to developing Training Package assessment materials, DETYA, Melbourne* (Figure 29: Possible strategies for adjusting the assessment process) pp. 154-156. See the Resources section for how to access this resource online.

Accommodating special needs may require extra training on your part, for example, in the use of software to convert speech into text for candidates with a hearing impairment.
What experiences have you been involved in, as a learner or as a facilitator/assessor, where equity or additional support needs have been provided. Think about what the need was and why there was a need. Also, think about how the support was provided. Who provided it? What occurred?

The website of your State or Territory training authority will include information about equity and other additional support needs. This could include policy statements and information about how you can provide and organise support.

These sites also have links to other organisations that can assist you or provide more information.

Organising Recognition processes

Have you ever heard someone say 'I've done this before. Why do I need to study it again?' In vocational education and training, that person, and everyone enrolled in accredited programs, should have been informed about Recognition processes.

What is Recognition?

Recognition is the acknowledgement of an individual’s skills and knowledge against identified benchmarks.

Recognition is the term that covers Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC), skills recognition, and upfront assessment. People learn skills and build knowledge in many different ways—from work experience, life experience and from other education and training.

Individuals who may have relevant prior experience will need support to:

- Clarify what Recognition is
- Understand the benchmarks
- Self-assess their experience, skills and knowledge
- Identify evidence
- Follow the steps in the process
- Make an application or portfolio.

Key aspects of planning for the Recognition process

Identifying and confirming the purpose

This process is important in helping all key stakeholders to understand the purpose of Recognition and how the learner can begin to make a decision about whether they have the pre-existing knowledge and skills to be able to apply for Recognition. At this point, the learner may be referred to complete a self-assessment activity.

It may be that, after a discussion with the assessor and other relevant key stakeholders, the learner decides they do not have sufficient experience and evidence to support their claim of competence.
The people

In this phase, there needs to be due consideration of the candidate, assessor, supervisor and technical expert and other assessors. Each party needs to know their role, responsibilities and be clear on the expectations of the Recognition process.

Failure to inform and involve the relevant people may result in less than acceptable outcomes for the candidate.

The process

A key part of the Recognition process is identifying and interpreting the units of competency or other benchmark in a manner that is readily understood by candidates, assessors and others involved in the process.

Once this is done, a process is established for how the information will be relayed to candidates; what evidence is required from the candidates; how the Recognition process and procedure will be conducted; what materials may be needed to support the Recognition process; and how the results will be recorded.

Key components of the process should include:

**Support for candidates**

All potential candidates need to be aware of and understand Recognition in order for them to make a decision about whether to proceed with the process. This can include clarification of the benchmark and an explanation of the type of evidence that is required. It can be provided verbally, for example a one-to-one explanation or in a group information session; or written, for example a brochure, website or other resource.

**Self assessment**

Candidates who are unsure of whether they should proceed with a Recognition application should undertake a self-assessment activity. Reviewing the benchmark and identifying the evidence and experiences that relate to them can help them self-assess.

**Application forms**

It is important to have supporting information and an application form for the candidate to document their evidence and experiences that relate to the benchmark. This can also be retained for record keeping purposes.

**Assessment methods**

Once a candidate is ready to proceed with the Recognition process, the candidate and the assessor need to negotiate the assessment methods. For example, this may include producing a portfolio and a follow up interview or observation in the workplace.

**Making a decision**
Once the assessor makes a decision, the candidate needs to be informed of whether Recognition is granted or not. If it is not granted, feedback will need to be provided about what other options the learner has.

*Recording results*

The results of the Recognition application need to be recorded so that it can be retained as evidence of how the decision was made. It is also necessary in the case of an appeal or enquiry about the decision.

**Organising assessment arrangements**

*Organising assessment*

Organising assessment may involve identifying and planning a number of arrangements. The planning and organising must identify the candidate's needs. To determine these needs, there may be discussions with relevant stakeholders.

*Ensuring OHS requirements are met*

It may be that for some assessments, OHS issues will need to be considered. It is important that, as an assessor, you are aware of and plan for any OHS requirements. There may need to be discussions and approvals with key stakeholders prior to the assessment being carried out.

*Identify material and resource requirements*

Depending on what the assessment involves, you may need to purchase or obtain materials or resources. This can affect the time and costs involved with assessment. Consider items like the
availability of plant; the venue; technology; other personnel and equipment; sufficient and appropriate protective equipment; or other pre-existing assessment resources.

**Explaining and confirming roles and responsibilities of assessors**

For all those involved in the assessment process, there needs to be a clear explanation given as to their roles and responsibilities. This will ensure that clear outcomes are achieved in line with the assessment requirements and that everyone is clear on the division of work.

**Record keeping and documentation arrangements**

Evidence of assessment plans and outcomes will need to be obtained and retained in line with organisational requirements. This will need to be negotiated between the parties involved to ensure that AQTF or other organisational requirements are met. Those involved in the assessment process will need to be involved in understanding and completing the assessment requirements.

**Establishment of communication strategies**

As assessment arrangements are made and changed it is important to advise all relevant parties.

This can be done at different stages of assessment including:
- Before the assessment takes place
- During the assessment process
- After the assessment process
- At the end of a program or specific segment of study and assessment
- At a regular review period established in conjunction with the stakeholders.

This can be done in different ways including:
- Written methods—for example, email, memo, letter, SMS
- Verbal methods—for example, face-to-face, phone, meetings, teleconferences.
Reviewing the assessment plan

Reviewing the assessment plan is critical to ensure that the proposed outcomes of the assessment plan have achieved what was intended.

It may be that you will have a couple of versions of the assessment plan and it is important that any changes made are communicated and confirmed with key stakeholders, and recorded. This can be achieved using version control.

Review of the assessment plan may occur for the following reasons:

**Reflection of the contextualisation needs and organisational resource requirements**—when these factors are considered, it may be that the assessment plan needs to be altered. For example, a major cinema entertainment client would like customer service training contextualised to the organisation’s venues and facilities. The RTO must ensure that its trainers and assessors are aware of the contextualisation and the assessment plan must reflect this requirement.

Remember, any contextualisation must ensure that the integrity of the unit of competency is maintained. Therefore, it is important to remember that contextualisation must be done in accordance with:

- Unit of Competency contextualisation guidelines

Note: These can be found in Section 5 of the National Quality Council’s Training Package Development Handbook Guidelines: Units of Competency (Version 2), available at: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Overview/Policy/TPDH/ (click on ‘Overview’ in the right-hand menu then click on ‘Guidelines’ and download the file available under the heading ‘Units of Competency’).

- Training Package contextualisation guidelines.

In general, contextualisation:

- Cannot involve changes to the wording of Elements
- Cannot involve the addition or removal of Elements or Performance Criteria
- Can include substitution of specific industry terminology to generic wording in the Performance Criteria where this does not distort or narrow the competency outcomes
- Can include amendments and additions to the Range Statement as long as such changes do not diminish the breadth of application of the competency and/or reduce its portability
• Can add additional detail to the Evidence Guide in areas such as knowledge and skill requirements, and resource and infrastructure requirements, where these expand the breadth of the competency but do not limit its use.

**Project review**—

there may be key milestones where reviews are conducted that will affect the assessment requirements For example, an organisation has decided to implement OHS training for its entire staff in each State and Territory. It is a major project expected to last two years. The organisation and the RTO have built in review periods and one of the key items will be the assessment processes and outcomes. Review periods have been built in at three-monthly periods.

**Program review**—

this may occur at the end of a program or each learning topic. For example, a car manufacturer has decided to offer a management development program for its front line supervisors. This program is made up of ten learning topics and each has a separate assessment. It has been negotiated that there will be a review of the assessment outcomes at the middle and end-point of the total program.

**Feedback from stakeholders and candidates**—

useful feedback can be obtained from this group, to inform what is assessed and how. For example, a group of students provide feedback to a program coordinator highlighting that they have had repetitive assessment tasks because of the way the course has been structured. The coordinator reviews the assessment plan and decides to cluster some of the units for the next program.

**Results of reviewing the assessment tools**—

when choosing assessment methods and tools, it is important to ensure that they meet the principles of assessment. For example, an assessment tool is developed and, when checked for validity and reliability by two assessors against the unit of competency, it is found not to be valid or reliable. The assessors must review the assessment tool and update the assessment plan when a new one has been developed.

**Results of validation processes**—

when validation of assessment between assessors occurs, changes may need to be made to ensure that the assessment meets the principles of assessment. For example, a previously used assessment task is validated by a group of assessors by using the moderation process. The outcome is that the assessment task must be changed as not all the elements and performance criteria have been covered sufficiently. The assessment plan must be updated accordingly.
Part 2: Assess Competence

Understanding assessment

Assessment can mean different things in different contexts. This introductory Learning Topic looks at the general picture of assessment in the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

Types of assessment

Norm referenced assessment

Norm referenced assessment is assessment where individuals are assessed against each other.

Norm referenced assessment involves comparing individuals with each other and may include ranking them according to the number of places and opportunities available. For example, an Olympic gold medal event or the tertiary entrance ratings related to senior secondary school assessment.

Criterion referenced assessment

Criterion referenced assessment (or standards-based assessment) is where individuals are assessed against fixed or predetermined criteria, for example, as expressed in units of competency.

Competency-based assessment is another term for criterion referenced assessment. Unlike norm referenced assessment, competency-based assessment does not compare individuals to each other. Instead, competency-based assessment compares individuals to predetermined criteria which are written in endorsed competency standards or accredited curriculum. Fixed criteria can be any predetermined reference point including:

- National competency standards
- Objectives from a training session
- Learning outcomes from modules in accredited courses
- An enterprise skill set
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs)
- Outcomes of induction programs
- Learning objectives of in-house courses
- Local job activities and knowledge requirements.

Features of competency-based assessment

Competence is about being able to consistently apply the knowledge and skills required to perform in the workplace to a specified level.

In competency-based assessment, candidates:

- Are assessed against a clear benchmark (criterion referenced)—usually a unit of competency
- Are guided to provide evidence to support their competence (evidence-based)—that is, evidence is provided or demonstrated by the candidate but can be gathered by either the candidate or the assessor interact with the assessor in the process of assessment (participatory).
Competency-based assessment is the process of gathering sufficient evidence to make a judgement about whether the specified standards have been met.

In summary, to undertake competency-based assessment for nationally recognised training, the assessor must:
- Have assessment competencies
- Have vocational competencies to the level being assessed (or in some cases, work with someone who has the vocational competencies)
- Work closely with the candidate/s.

In competency-based assessment, the candidate is supported to:
- Understand the criteria against which they are being assessed
- Fully understand the assessment process
- Take an active part in the process.

In a competency-based system, a candidate can be assessed through two pathways:
- Assessment through training
- Assessment only.

**Assessment through training**

The candidate is assessed during and/or on completion of training.

**Assessment only**

Where skills and knowledge have already been gained, the candidate is ready to be assessed against the relevant criteria/benchmarks without the need to go through a training program. This is referred to as Recognition, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Recognition of Current Competency (RCC).

**Purpose of assessment**

The ‘purpose of assessment’ is the reason why assessment is being conducted. You will find the purpose of assessment documented in the assessment plan. This unit, TAEASS402A: Assess competence, addresses the process of competency-based assessment in accordance with a developed assessment plan.

Assessment might be carried out for a variety of reasons including:
- Recognition
- Issuing qualifications or a Statement of Attainment
- Employee classification or reclassification
- Checking progress towards competence
- Identification of education or training needs
- Establishing language, literacy and numeracy requirements.

You and others involved in the assessment process need to be very clear about the purpose of assessment.
The purpose may affect:
- The choice of criteria used
- How you go about confirming the assessment plan
- The way in which you conduct the assessment
- The candidate’s future.

**Context of assessment**

**The big picture**
The purpose of an assessment can be considered from the big picture perspective; that is, as part of a larger context. For example, the vocational education and training (VET) system is directed at up skilling Australians with an expectation of both national and individual benefits; industrial relations agreements might mean that qualifications are linked to performance expectations and salary; or training could be related to changes in workplace policies and procedures or the creation of a professional development pathway.

You could also see this training and assessment you are currently undertaking from the big picture perspective—it is related to national agreements whereby all assessors and trainers are expected to have the relevant competencies to deliver training and assess competence leading to nationally recognised VET qualifications and Statements of Attainment. This requirement is aimed at increasing the professionalism of VET practitioners and improving outcomes.

**The local picture**
The assessments you will be carrying out will be conducted in the context of a workplace. This workplace will affect the way you conduct your assessment process.

You will be looking at the smaller, local picture or context in more detail in the Learning Topic Implementing the assessment plan, as part of organisational, ethical and legal requirements.

**Assessing in the vocational education and training (VET) sector**
Assessment in VET is determined and influenced by a range of factors. The diagram below shows the key considerations.
State and Territory bodies

In each State and Territory, relevant bodies implement nationally recognised training under their VET legislation and decision-making frameworks. These bodies are responsible for all the processes related to the registration of training organisations in their jurisdiction. This guide collectively refers to these bodies as ‘training authorities’.

Training authorities provide a wide range of relevant information about vocational education and training on their websites.

Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)

The AQTF means the nationally agreed quality arrangements for the VET system agreed to by the National Quality Council. The AQTF 2010 includes the Standards for Registered Training Organisations which all Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) must meet in order to obtain (AQTF 2010 Essential Standards for Initial Registration) and maintain (AQTF 2010 Essential Standards for Continuing Registration) their registration. Given your role, it is important that you are familiar with the AQTF and its associated Standards.

Research the AQTF by going to <http://www.training.com.au> to become more familiar with the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations and to view associated explanatory materials.

Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) provides a national framework for all qualifications in Australian post-compulsory education and training. Some key objectives of the AQF are:

- To provide nationally consistent recognition of outcomes from post-compulsory education
- To encourage access to qualifications and life-long learning
- To assist with flexible pathways for moving through education sectors and achieving qualifications
- To promote national and international recognition of Australian qualifications.

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

Under the AQTF, only Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) with the particular qualifications or units of competency on their scope of registration can issue nationally recognised AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)

ISCs are bodies progressively formed to replace the former Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs) and to take on a broader industry advisory role. The ISC for the industry in which you are training and assessing will be a valuable resource. Among other functions, ISCs provide an important source of advice about the industries they cover and current and future industry training needs.

If you work in an area where there is no ISC coverage, for example general education, you will be able to find relevant information, such as how curriculum is maintained, from your State or Territory training authority website.
For example, in Victoria, Curriculum Maintenance Managers (CMMs) manage the stock of Crown copyright curricula and provide advice regarding Training Packages for specific industry areas.

**Training Packages**

Nationally endorsed Training Packages are developed by the Industry Skills Council (ISC) with coverage of the particular industry or sector (or sometimes by individual enterprises). The endorsed component includes competency standards relevant to workplace performance in the industry or sector; assessment guidelines that set out the rules for assessment; and a qualifications framework that sets out the titles and codes of the nationally recognised qualifications.

The units of competency within the competency standard section of the Training Package outline the skills and knowledge needed by employees at various levels in that industry. Together with the assessment guidelines, they also outline the requirements for assessment.

Resources to support learning, assessment and professional development are known as Training Package support materials. While you must use the endorsed components of Training Packages, you have free choice with support materials. They are not endorsed although they might have been reviewed by a quality adviser and ‘noted’ by the National Training Quality Council (NTQC)—the body that endorses Training Packages. Noted resources are listed on the National Training Information Service (NTIS) website at <http://www.ntis.gov.au>. While not all Training Package units of competency might have noted support materials, there is a wealth of material available that you can purchase and/or customise. Contact the relevant ISC for more information.

You should have a copy of the Training Package for your industry area on site. Talk with the appropriate people in your practice environment about ensuring that you have access to your relevant Training Package.

**Principles of assessment**

There are four principles of assessment. These are:

- Validity
- Reliability
- Flexibility
- Fairness.
Validity

When you assess you must be sure that the candidate has the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the relevant unit of competency.

Reliability

A reliable assessment shows consistency between assessors. Would another assessor make the same decision based on the evidence provided?

Flexibility

Assessment should be either on- or off-the-job and at a mutually convenient time and place.

Fairness

A fair assessment involves the assessor objectively considering all evidence, being open and transparent about all assessment decisions, and taking into account all relevant characteristics and needs of the candidate.
Using competency standards for assessment

To decide whether a person is competent you need a set of criteria or benchmarks against which to assess their competencies. This Learning Topic looks at the benchmarks used for assessment; because this resource focuses on the VET sector, it will mainly be looking at units of competency as the benchmark for assessment.

Benchmarks

In VET, most benchmarks are in the form of competency standards from Training Packages. In other practice environments they may be in the form of:

- Organisational standards
- Codes of conduct
- Organisational requirements
- Standard operating procedures
- Product specifications

It is essential that you address all assessment requirements set out in any benchmark you are using.

Competency standards

What is a unit of competency?

Units of competency specify knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace; they are expressed in terms of outcome.

A unit of competency consists of:

- Unit code
- Unit title
- Unit descriptor
- Pre-requisite units (optional)
- Application of the unit
- Competency field (optional)
- Sector (optional)
- Elements of competency
- Performance criteria
- Required skills and knowledge
- Key Competencies
- Range statement
- Evidence guide.

A person who is deemed competent can demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge required by the unit of competency and could apply them appropriately in the workplace including the four dimensions of competency (task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills).
The unit of competency format and content is designed to guide you in providing appropriate assessment for your candidate.

Units of competency from endorsed Training Packages can be found on the National Training Information Service (NTIS) website at <http://www.ntis.gov.au>.

**Why is it important to know about the benchmarks you use for assessment?**

It is important that assessors are very familiar with the unit of competency being used because the assessor:

- Uses this to make a judgement about whether competence has been achieved
- Must explain the unit of competency requirements to the candidate.

**Examining competency standards**

You need to be able to ‘pull the units of competency apart’ in order to analyse and understand their relevant components. If you can do this, it will make it much easier to explain them to someone else, for instance your candidates.

Also, in order to assess competence and make the assessment decision, you need to be able to determine if all of the evidence requirements of the unit of competency have been met.

Finally, when you confirm the assessment plan, you need to be able to decide if the selected units of competency or benchmarks need to be contextualised to meet candidate and workplace needs (and you can only do this in line with the rules set out in the Training Package).

**Key Competencies**

Key competencies have been replaced by Employability skills, however many training packages still include units of competence that have ‘Key Competencies’ within them.

Key Competencies are generic competencies that are applied to all competency standards and are essential for effective performance in any job or role. They relate to the tasks that are common to workplace activities.

The Key Competencies can be demonstrated at three levels (note that these levels do not correspond directly with particular AQF qualifications). The levels are:

- Level 1—perform
- Level 2—perform and administer
- Level 3—perform, administer and design.

Assessment of the Key Competencies should be built into the overall assessment for your particular industry competency. The relevant performance level is indicated on the unit of competency (or less commonly, for the qualification as a whole).
Dimensions of competency

**Competency involves all aspects of successful work performance and includes:**

- Task skills—undertaking a variety of activities or tasks
- Task management skills—managing a number of different tasks, for example, welcoming guests and answering the phone at the same time
- Contingency management skills—knowing what to do when things go wrong, for example, the computer screen freezes while booking in a guest
- Job/role environment skills—using the skill appropriately in the workplace environment, for example, working as part of a hotel team.

**When using a unit of competency you should ask the following questions:**

- What are the task management skills required here?
- What are the contingency management skills required here? That is, what are the types of things that could go wrong?
- What are job role environment skills associated with this task?
- Does the candidate have the appropriate combination of knowledge and skills to perform the functions now and in other situations? Are the skills and knowledge transferable?

Integrated assessment

Integrated assessment is an approach which combines the assessment for a group of related competencies, elements or outcomes. (It is possible that you will be undergoing integrated assessment if you are being assessed for other related units as well as this one.)

Recommendations for integrated assessment can be found in the evidence guide of a competency standard under headings such as Integrated Assessment or Interdependent Assessment of Units.

**Clustering**

Clustering is the process of combining a number of units of competency or grouping parts of units together. Generally, clustering occurs around competencies that are:

- Similar in content or work function
- Follow on from each other in time sequence, for example, prepare and then conduct
- Used simultaneously in the workplace, for example, serve customers, process payments.

So... clustering is useful when units of competency (or parts of units) can be assessed together because the work functions or industry needs that they cover are related. This relationship of meaning and purpose means that it makes sense to combine the units for assessment. Clustering enables integrated assessment of more than one unit of competency to occur.
**Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)**

There are two aspects concerning OHS that will affect your conduct of assessment. These are the:

- OHS components of the competency you are assessing against
- OHS requirements of the workplace environment where you will be assessing.

The specific OHS competencies are assessed in the same way as other competencies. For example, the assessor must hold the relevant competencies and should be aware of current industry practices.

The unit in which you are participating requires the assessor to address OHS implications of the assessment process, whatever the competency being assessed.

Remember that when a person is being assessed, you cannot be sure they will carry out the roles or tasks in the correct way. Ask yourself—if they are not yet competent—if there is potential for injury to themselves or others.

Necessary precautions will depend on the task being assessed, the assessment environment and the level of risk.

If you do identify an immediate risk to yourself and others in a practice environment, do not proceed with the assessment. Attend to the matter in line with workplace procedures and/or seek advice from the designated OHS person at the workplace.

**Language, literacy and numeracy**

Language, literacy and numeracy skills (LLN) are critical to most employment situations. As an assessor, you will need to consider the LLN requirements of the competency standards.

Although the terms language, literacy and numeracy are often used together, they are not interchangeable, and do not they mean the same thing.

Language, in its broadest sense, involves the words, verbal structures and gestures we use to convey meaning.

Literacy is about our social application of language—for example, in our homes, communities, schools and workplaces.

Numeracy involves the practical application of mathematical skills to absorb, use and critically evaluate information in numerical or graphical form.

**Adapted from:** ANTA 2002, Frequently asked questions about language, literacy and numeracy issues in the Australian Quality Training Framework.
Language, literacy and numeracy in job roles

The unit of competency describes the tasks that make up a job role or function. This might include tasks such as completing forms, reading or recognising safety information, giving or receiving instructions, answering the telephone and checking off production sheets.

These tasks require certain language, literacy or numeracy skills, for example, listening and speaking, communicating information, reading, writing, and the ability to carry out mathematical procedures.

Language, literacy and numeracy in assessment

You should consider all aspects of communication during the assessment, as well as the nature of the evidence that a candidate will be required to provide to establish competence. This might include:

- Reading assessment information
- Listening to and speaking with the assessor
- Reading instructions
- Writing responses to questions
- Demonstrating tasks
- The language, literacy and numeracy aspects of the candidate’s specific role.

You will also need to look for any other specific language, literacy and numeracy issues relating to your candidate that may affect their ability to demonstrate competence.

It is vital to remember that you should not make the assessment process more difficult than the job itself in terms of language, literacy and numeracy.

Access specialist support

It is important to remember that accommodating special needs is part of your role in conducting assessment. But also remember that there may be others working towards catering for the equity or additional support needs. These people can help you develop strategies and methods. It is part of your role to:

- Understand equity and support issues and requirements, including requirements under legislation
- Provide information on access to support
- Keep up-to-date with the issues and with information about who can provide assistance.

The website of your State or Territory training authority will include information about equity and other additional support needs. This could include policy statements and information about how you can provide or organise support.

These sites also have links to other organisations which may be able to provide more information.

The websites for all State/Territory training authorities can be accessed through the DEEWR website.
Interpreting the benchmark for the candidate

To interpret a benchmark for assessment, such as the unit of competency, you will need to do the following.

For yourself:

- Read it
- Discuss it with other assessors using it.

For the candidate:

- Give a copy to the candidate
- Explain it
- For units of competency, clarify each component (e.g. the elements, performance criteria, range of variables, evidence guide, employability skills)
- Check understanding by asking the candidate to explain where it applies to their current or future job.

You will find some useful information on interpreting standards for assessment purposes in the Design Learner Guide.
Implementing the assessment plan

Let’s get down to action! In this Learning Topic you will put your assessment plan into action.

What’s in the assessment plan?

You should have already developed the assessment plan that you will be following. This is covered in part 1 of this guide. The plan will be in a format similar to that shown below.

Review the assessment plan and ensure that you are able to meet all aspects. If not, seek assistance from the relevant people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENT PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit/s of competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit code/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target group (to be assessed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Place for assessment to occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment arrangements confirmed with appropriate personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials/resources needed for assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment procedures/systems to follow (e.g. self-assessment, RPL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special arrangements/contexts for assessment (e.g. OHS assessment tasks and control strategies, access and equity organisational procedures and documentation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline for assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting arrangements for assessment devices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who needs to know about the assessment plan?

Now that you have familiarised yourself with your assessment plan, you need to consider who you should confirm the assessment plan with.

Participants in assessment

Assessment is a collaborative process. There can be a number of other people or groups involved in or affected by the assessment process. These might include:

- The candidate/s
- Other assessors, trainers or facilitators
- The client, company or organisation
- Team leaders, managers, supervisors
- Technical and subject experts
- Training and assessment coordinators
- Industry regulators
- Employee and employer representatives
- Members of professional associations
- Commonwealth department officials, Centrelink staff or caseworkers
- New Apprenticeships Centres (NACs) personnel.

All people involved in or affected by the assessment process need to be aware that assessment is taking place and how it will affect their role. You will need to ensure that they know:

- How the assessment and evidence gathering processes work
- How they will be affected by these processes
- Their responsibilities.

This should be done before the assessment takes place.

Explaining how the assessment process works

Briefing the candidate

What will you need to tell the candidate?

The first step in briefing the candidate is to determine what the candidate needs to know.

1. Go back to the assessment plan.
2. What is in the plan that affects the candidate?
3. What are the aspects of the plan that you need to tell the candidate about?
4. How will you communicate it?
Organisational, ethical or legal requirements

Organisational, ethical or legal requirements must be adhered to in the development of the assessment plan.

At this stage, your responsibility is to confirm and implement the assessment plan with the relevant people.

As a summary, the key requirements that may need to be confirmed are included in the following checklist.

Organisational, ethical or legal requirements checklist

- Assessment system policies and procedures
- Reporting, recording and retrieval systems for assessment
- Licensing and/or legal ramifications of assessing competence
- Requirements of training/assessment organisations relating to assessment and validation
- Quality assurance systems
- Business and performance plans
- Collaborative and/or partnership arrangements
- Policies, procedures and programs
- Defined resource parameters
- Mutual recognition arrangements
- Industrial relations systems and processes, awards and enterprise agreements
- AQTF standards on RTO assessments
- RTO scope of registration
- Human resources policies, procedures and legal requirements including antidiscrimination, equal employment, job role, responsibilities and conditions
- Relevant industry codes of practice
- Confidentiality and privacy requirements of information relating to completed assessments
- Occupational health and safety considerations
Working with the candidate to gather evidence

In order to assess candidates you need to understand how evidence is gathered and how you can support the candidate to collect their own evidence of competency.

Evidence

Evidence is information that supports a person’s claim of competency. Evidence can take many forms and can be collected in a variety of ways, depending on the purpose and context of assessment and the benchmark being assessed. The following flowchart outlines the evidence gathering process.

- Confirm criteria (eg unit of competency or other benchmark)
- What evidence would match these criteria?
- Confirm evidence (eg products and processes)
- How could this evidence be collected?
- Confirm assessment method(s) (Eg direct observation, verbal questioning)
- What tools will be required to use these assessment methods?
- Confirm assessment tools (eg observation checklist and list of verbal questions)
- Will assessment methods and tools produce evidence to assess competence?
- Confirm that an assessment judgement can be made against criteria
Evidence can be collected by the assessor, the candidate, or by others including supervisors, trainers and team members.

How do you know that the evidence you are gathering is the right evidence to enable you to effectively assess competence?

When gathering evidence, assessors need to ensure they collect the information according to the assessment process.

**Rules of evidence**

There are some basic rules that will help you to determine whether the methods and tools you have chosen provide adequate, quality evidence of competence.

The evidence must be:

- **Valid**
- **Sufficient**
- **Current**
- **Authentic.**

**Validity**

You should choose assessment methods that ensure that the evidence collected covers all the requirements in the benchmark or criteria. For example, if the benchmark is a unit of competency then the evidence must cover:

- All elements
- All performance criteria
- The dimensions of competency
- The Employability Skills
- The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) requirements
- All the 'musts' in the range statement
- All the critical evidence and essential skills and knowledge listed in the evidence guide.

**Sufficiency**

You must collect enough evidence to ensure that you can make a judgement across components of the competency standard. A good way to make sure there is sufficient evidence is to use a combination of different assessment methods.

Does the evidence show competency over time? Does the evidence show that the candidate can apply the competency in different contexts as listed in the range statement of a competency standard?

**Currency**

You should ensure that the evidence shows that the candidate is up-to-date in knowledge and skills. Can the candidate currently apply the up-to-date skills and knowledge?
**Authenticity**

You must be certain that the evidence gathered is the candidate’s own work. Quality evidence means that it must meet the rules of evidence and must:

- Reflect the skills, knowledge and attitudes described in the relevant unit/s of competency
- Show application of the skills in the context described in the range statement
- Demonstrate competence over time
- Demonstrate repeatable competence
- Be the work of the candidate
- Be able to be verified
- Demonstrate the current skills and knowledge of the candidate
- Not inflate the language, literacy and numeracy requirements beyond those required in the performance of the competency

Do documents need verification? You might need to refer to someone else, for example, a supervisor, or use an alternative assessment tool to help determine authenticity.

**Gathering evidence for Recognition**

Recognition is the acknowledgement of relevant skills and knowledge held by candidates regardless of when, where or how the learning occurred.

It is critical that the candidate’s existing knowledge and skills match the required benchmark. The candidate may have gained this competence through a number of ways—life experience, work experience, or formal or informal training.

To make a decision about whether to undergo Recognition, the candidate will need information to support the following:

- Clarification of the benchmarks
- Steps in the Recognition process
- Self-assessment
- Typical experience
- Typical evidence.

Depending on your training/assessment organisation’s Recognition procedure, you may be involved in explaining any of the above points.

The role of the candidate in gathering evidence for Recognition is vital. Your role is to help candidates make the connection between their experience and the requirements of the unit of competence.

The candidate should be given every opportunity to decide what experiences and information would best demonstrate competence. To do this, the candidate must be familiar with the unit of competency and the variety of methods and tools that they can use to demonstrate competence.
**Current competence can be assessed by a combination of the following:**

- Guided list—collection of evidence into a portfolio
- Interview to clarify evidence portfolio
- Observation of current performance using real or simulated activities, with observation checklists.

Evidence in a portfolio could include:
- Third party reports
- Examples of current work
- Photographic or video evidence.

**Confirm criteria**

Criteria are the benchmarks against which candidates are assessed. These were covered in Learning Topic 2.

In the VET sector, the benchmarks or criteria are usually units of competency from a Training Package. In some organisations, benchmarks can take the form of policies and procedures, or standard operating procedures.

**Assessment methods**

An assessment method is a way of collecting evidence that will demonstrate competency. You will need to use different types of evidence for different criteria/competencies. Where possible, you should draw on evidence that would naturally occur in the workplace. Often this is easier with skills than with knowledge.

Evidence can include products that are made through a process; information, such as reports relating to the process; observation of that process; and answers to questions about it.

**Direct observation tips:**

- Be unobtrusive
- Ensure the candidate is aware of what you are doing
- Be ready to note observations.

**Verbal questioning tips:**

- Be sure you have questions and model answers ready
- Be prepared to re-word questions
- Ask questions in simple and concise language using open and closed questions as required to elicit the best responses.

**Third party report: tips**

- Ensure the candidate is aware who is providing the third party report
- Provide third party key points to respond to
- Have a timeframe for the return of information.
Assessment tools
Assessment tools are the means by which you can ensure the quality and quantity of the evidence provided. The term can be used to describe both the instructions you use to communicate information to candidates as well as the instrument you use to enable the candidate to provide evidence.

Examples of structured tools include:

- Information/instructions to the candidate and assessor
- Activity sheets including case studies, role-plays, problem solving, and sets of questions
- Oral or written questions to confirm underpinning knowledge
- Documentation of achievements
- Observation and documentation checklists
- Recognition application form
- Model performance profiles
- Work sample checklists
- Self-assessment materials for candidate
- Project activity details
- Workplace documents.

A number of these tools may be clustered together in order to give you a comprehensive overview of your candidate’s competency.

The assessment tools specified in your assessment plan will have been determined by the following considerations:

- What tools are available
- The purpose of assessment
- The context of assessment
- The needs of the candidate.

You need to confirm that the assessment tools are appropriate for your workplace and ensure that:

- There is consistency in how different candidates are assessed
- Assessment is valid, reliable, flexible and fair.

Adjusting tools to meet candidate needs
Among the other requirements, assessment must be flexible and fair, so you need to use assessment tools which suit a range of needs and differences.

The unit of competency you are using makes specific reference to language, literacy and numeracy needs as well as the OHS needs of candidates, and you have already considered how to work within the criteria to meet these needs.

These needs might apply right across a workplace or just to individual candidates.
**Individual differences**

Individual differences must also be taken into account when confirming and applying the appropriate assessment tools.

You will need to establish whether you should consider any or a range of these differences in your practice environment. This can be done in consultation with the appropriate workplace personnel or with the candidate directly.

Individual differences of candidates might include:

- Language barriers
- Learning difficulties
- Age
- Gender
- Physical impairment or disability
- Intellectual impairment or disability
- Disability due to a medical condition
- Psychiatric or psychological disability
- Religious and spiritual observances
- Cultural images or perceptions.

**Making reasonable adjustments**

Assessment tools and strategies may be reasonably adjusted in response to the needs of candidates; however, they must still meet the principles of assessment. The following table outlines particular needs and responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Potential issue</th>
<th>Possible range of methods and tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low literacy or numeracy</td>
<td>Writing, Reading, Calculating, Confidence</td>
<td>Verbal assessment using predetermined questions. This could be recorded or someone else could be a scribe. Presentations or demonstrations can be used rather than writing. Use of diagrams as visual cues when asking questions, or for the candidate to explain answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People whose first language isn't English</td>
<td>Writing, Reading, Speaking, Confidence, Cultural and religious differences</td>
<td>Demonstrations, Use of diagrams, Production of a product, Organise assessments times which are suitable to the client to allow for prayer times or reschedule to allow for special religious events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Potential issue</td>
<td>Possible range of methods and tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates with a disability</td>
<td>Speaking, Reading, Writing, Movement, Hearing</td>
<td>Observation checklist using adaptive technology such as Braille for sight impaired learners. Asking questions and getting assistance from an Auslan interpreter for candidates who are hearing impaired. Using an interpreter, reader, attendant carer, or scribe to write down answers to questions. Observation of tasks performed on suitably adjusted equipment or environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older candidates</td>
<td>Different age to the assessor, Confidence, Limited technology skills</td>
<td>Use case studies instead of role-plays as some older candidates may feel uncomfortable. Make sure font size is not too small.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill health</td>
<td>Fatigue, Lack of concentration, Effects of medication</td>
<td>Shorter assessment tasks that allow for medication or fatigue. Specific instructions on projects that can be submitted at various stages. Longer period of time allowed to finish tasks. Use a scribe or tape recorder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Culture of workplace for women who work in non-traditional trades, Different gender of the assessor</td>
<td>Use same gender assessor if it is appropriate. Make sure assessment tools are not gender specific in content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous candidates</td>
<td>Variety of cultural Background, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Numeracy, Confidence</td>
<td>Use of support person. Check that assessment strategies are not culturally sensitive, for example it may be more appropriate to demonstrate knowledge rather than talk about knowledge. Encourage candidates to use alternative ways of demonstrating competence, for example drawing instead of writing, using a video to record demonstration of skills rather than demonstrating in front of the assessor. Read any printed information to the candidate or use graphics for instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates with low levels of education</td>
<td>Reading, Writing, Numeracy, Limited study skills, Confidence</td>
<td>Check if language, literacy or numeracy are likely to impact on the assessment. Demonstration and oral questioning, perhaps recording answers or using a scribe. Read any printed information to the candidate or use graphics for instructions. Use short assessment tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates who have recently returned to the workforce</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Make sure the candidate is aware of workplace procedures, including OHS. If demonstrating on the job, find a time when there are not many people around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family responsibilities</td>
<td>Requirement to care for family members</td>
<td>Ensure timing and place of assessment does not clash with care responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Source: Adapted from Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs 2001, Guide 4: Kit to support assessor training, A guide to developing Training Package assessment materials, DETYA, Melbourne, Figure 29: Possible strategies for adjusting the assessment process, pp. 154-156.

Assessment judgement

Assessment is a participatory process in which the assessor and candidate work through the assessment process; making sure that the communication is clear and conducive.

How do you create a participatory assessment environment in cases where the candidate may be feeling anxious and apprehensive?

Assessors need to:

- Communicate a clear understanding of each other’s roles and responsibilities
- Develop a shared expectation of how the assessment process will work
- Provide opportunities for two-way feedback
- Involve candidates.

Codes of practice for assessors

Ethical conduct is vital to the assessment process. Issues such as confidentiality, privacy, discrimination and appeal processes can all affect the relationship between assessor and candidate.

Assessors have a great deal of power and should use that power correctly and ensure that the proper procedures are followed.

Codes of practice for assessors can provide guidelines for ethics that assessors should follow. Use your preferred Internet search engine to find samples.

What ethical issues have arisen in each of these examples? What would you suggest is the best way to handle each example?

Roles and responsibilities of the candidate

Candidates need to:

- Understand and feel comfortable with the assessment process
- Know the unit of competency against which they are being assessed
- Take an active part in the assessment process
- Be ready for assessment.

Largely, these roles and responsibilities of candidates are dependent on the way in which assessors fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

An assessor who is fully prepared and able to effectively communicate and collaborate with everyone involved in the assessment process will be well-equipped to meet the needs of the candidate.
In particular, assessors should be able to:

- Explain the assessment process and evidence-gathering process
- Display the appropriate attitudes and behaviours to support the candidate
- Understand the candidate’s needs
- Communicate well with all those involved in the assessment process.

**Two-way feedback**

Feedback is a vital component of any communication process.

During assessment, feedback should occur throughout the process.

When you brief the candidate about the process you need to ensure that you have been understood. Allow the candidate plenty of time to take in what is being said and provide opportunities for them to ask questions about what they have to do and what is expected of them.

You also need to confirm that the candidate is on the right track throughout the process, and making positive progress. It is not the right time to inform the candidate after you have made the assessment decision, that they have not understood what they needed to do in order to be assessed as competent.

Once the assessment decision has been made, you and the candidate should discuss the decision and the way forward. This might involve an appeals process or opportunities for further development. This is covered in the following Learning Topic: ‘Making the assessment decision’.

The ability to provide appropriate opportunities for feedback is related to a number of other communication skills such as being able to make the candidate feel comfortable and knowing how to listen and ask appropriate questions. The key to this is to remember that the candidate is central to the process.

**Attitudes and behaviours**

To successfully carry out an assessment, you need effective communication and interpersonal skills to clearly inform the candidate. These include being able to:

- Empathise with the candidate
- Put the candidate at ease
- Actively listen
- Ask the right questions
- Give clear instructions.

**Empathy**

You should try to understand how the candidate is feeling throughout the assessment process. Consider how you have felt throughout your own assessment processes. All candidates have the right to be fairly assessed, and performance and outcomes can often be affected if they are feeling threatened or scared.
**Putting the candidate at ease**

There are a number of things that you can do the put the candidate at ease. You should make sure that you:

- Create a positive atmosphere
- Meet the candidate in a suitable environment
- Greet the candidate by making eye contact and welcoming him or her
- Allow the candidate to settle in by chatting about something unrelated to the assessment to begin with
- Tell the candidate what will happen and how long it will take
- Invite the candidate to ask questions as you proceed rather than at the end
- Get regular feedback to ensure that the candidate understands what you are discussing.

**Active listening**

Good listening skills make other people aware that you are interested in and following what they are saying. Signs of active listening include:

- Making appropriate physical responses such as retaining eye contact and nodding to indicate agreement or understanding
- Asking appropriate questions
- Reflecting on what has been said and including it in your responses.

**Questioning skills**

The way you ask questions will determine the quantity and quality of the response you get. Your questions should draw out the information that you need in order to assess the candidate. Good questions:

- Allow the candidate to give the correct response
- Cover what is being assessed
- Are easily understood.

**When questioning candidates you should:**

- Use language that is familiar to the candidate
- Plan a logical sequence of questions to be asked
- Involve the candidate as much as possible
- Avoid ambiguous or unclear questions
- Avoid asking too many questions in sequence
- Avoid asking leading questions that may influence the responses
- Ask follow up questions to confirm range and depth of experience.
**Give clear instructions**

Candidates need to have clear directions which provide guidance on what needs to be done. The communication needs to:

- Be clear
- Be concise
- Use language familiar to the candidate
- Be in logical order
- Cover everything that needs to be completed
- Avoid negative language
- Address the candidate directly.

**Recognition**

The Recognition process can often occur at a distance from the assessor and this will mean that you might need to communicate the assessment plan without a face-to-face interview. The assessment process, the unit of competency and its evidence requirements must be explained well enough for the candidate to work independently of the assessor, if necessary, and may require specific methods/tools.

You will also need to use a range of communication methods for feedback about progress, to guide the candidate through the evidence-gathering process and to consider an action plan for the candidate after assessment.
Making the assessment decision

This Learning Topic covers information about when to assess, giving feedback and the appeals process.

In order for the assessment process to be a positive experience, candidates should ideally only undergo assessment if they are ready.

How do you determine if a candidate is ready?

Sometimes it is obvious to both assessor and candidate that the time is right for assessment. However, there can be times when candidates believe that they are ready and you do not agree.

In this case you should counsel candidates and help them to work out whether they are able to provide enough evidence and, if not, support them as they continue to build up enough evidence.

Candidates can often say that they are or are not ready for assessment. In both cases you should be careful to determine the underpinning reasons for such opinions. For example, it may be to either avoid or to hurry-up assessment.

Self-assessment

Candidates should, as far as is practicable, be involved in determining their own readiness for assessment. The process of self-assessment is a useful and practical first step in encouraging candidates to take responsibility for their own assessment. This applies especially to candidates for Recognition or those candidates who are at a distance from the assessor.

During the evidence-gathering process, you should ensure that candidates know they are on the right track.

You can do this by asking questions of, and seeking feedback from, candidates about how they are progressing.

You can also watch part of a work sequence or structured activity and give feedback to the candidate.

Making the judgement

Assessors often worry about how much evidence is enough to prove competency. You need to be certain that the evidence you and your candidate have collected covers all parts of the benchmark. If the benchmark is a unit of competency standard, then the evidence as a whole must cover:

- All elements
- All performance criteria
- All the ‘musts’ in the range statement
- All of the critical evidence listed in the evidence guide
- All essential skills and underpinning knowledge listed in the evidence guide
- Employability Skills
• The dimensions of competency.

Make sure that you are familiar with and have made allowable adjustments for the special needs of your candidate/s.

At the higher AQF qualifications, the skills and knowledge are more complex. It may be inefficient or impossible for the assessor to see or witness all the behaviours. Use of a range of sources of evidence, for example, work projects, third party reports or simulation, can help the assessor make a professional judgement.

To help make the decision about competency, assessors can ask themselves if they feel confident that the candidate:

• Could perform the function in a different environment
• Knows what and why they are doing things
• Has performed consistently over time.

If ‘yes’, then the candidate is competent.

Judging the evidence for Recognition
The same criteria and considerations apply to an assessment for Recognition purposes.

Areas which may need special attention include:

• Authenticity (is it evidence of their own performance?)
• Currency (do they currently have the knowledge and can they perform functions now?)
• Transferability (if they learnt in a particular context, can they use the knowledge and skills in other situations?)

Providing feedback on the outcome
When communicating the outcome of assessment to the candidate, you should:

• Be very clear about whether the candidate is competent or not yet competent
• Outline where competence has not been achieved
• Outline how the candidate can achieve competence.

Written feedback
After the completion of the assessment, give the candidate written feedback which could include an action plan for further development by the candidate, assessor and any other relevant personnel.

Reassessment
Candidates need to be informed that there is the opportunity for reassessment when a candidate is judged as not yet competent. Sometimes there are limitations associated with reassessment. These can include:
- Time limitations
- Resource limitations.

For example, during demonstration and observation a candidate may not have met all of the requirements and clearly needed extra practice.

As the assessor you will only need to reassess those parts where the candidate was not yet competent.

The alternatives could be that after an appropriate period of time you might ask to see the supervisor’s reports or you might arrange for a video of the candidate’s performance.

Can you identify limitations for reassessment that may occur in your practice environment?

**Appeals**

Before assessment begins, all candidates must be informed about the right to appeal. You should be familiar with the appeals process of your organisation and be able to explain it to the candidate. Candidates should be given a copy of the appeal process (hard copy or via the internet).

Under the requirements of the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations the organisation responsible for the assessment process must have an appeals process in place. During your confirmation of your assessment plan checklist you should have already done the following:

- Confirmed that the appeals process was in place
- Informed the candidate during the briefing about the appeals process and how it works.
Recording and reviewing assessment outcomes

Keeping accurate and secure assessment records is a critical part of the assessment process. This Learning Topic covers the types of records that need to be kept. The topic also covers how the assessment process can be reviewed.

Documenting the assessment

Under the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations, RTOs must keep records, including those relating to assessment. In addition to other requirements, these records must be kept for a certain time-period and can be used as evidence, for example if there is an appeal.

In your practice environment, what are the requirements for creating, storing and accessing assessment records?

Why record?

Keeping accurate documentation of the assessment process is extremely important as these records may be:

- Used in providing feedback to candidates
- Used to confirm the issue of a qualification or Statement of Attainment
- Referred to in guiding future study options
- Used for promotion or salary increases
- Used as evidence that the training and/or assessment organisation has complied with legislative or regulatory requirements
- Placed in employment or personnel files
- Referred to in an appeal.

What should be recorded?

All formal documentation from the assessment process can be used as assessment records. For example, performance checklists, assessment tools and any other records relating to how you made the assessment decision.

At the very least your records should include the following information:

- Name of candidate
- Name of assessor
- Date of assessment/s
- Location of assessment
- Benchmarks assessed
- Evidence required/provided
- Methods and tools used
- Assessment results
- Feedback details
- Any appeals or follow-up procedures.

Your practice environment may already have the relevant instruments required to record all stages of the process.
Where could you find advice or extra information about records?

**How should assessment results be recorded?**
The outcomes of the assessment process should be documented promptly and accurately in accordance with the policies and procedures of the:

- Practice environment
- Enterprise or organisation in which you are assessing.

**Reporting the assessment decision**
Who should be informed of the assessment decision?

What should be reported?

After the assessment decision has been made, depending on the key stakeholders, there will be different reporting requirements.

The following is a guide to what may be included in an assessment report:

- Personal details of the candidate
- Date, time and venue of the assessment
- Details of assessors
- Summary of evidence
- Copies of assessment related paperwork
- Assessment decision
- Feedback to and from the candidate
- Justification of decision
- Summary of the candidate's action plan
- Other critical information including appeals and outcomes
- Sign-off by assessor and candidate
- Electronic or paper reports to justify findings.

The report can also include recommendations for further action, for example further training, further opportunities for practice or reassessment.

The content of the final assessment report should be aligned to your key stakeholder's requirements. Make sure you discuss this with the key stakeholders who need to know your assessment decision, before you produce the report. Key stakeholders may include:

- Line supervisors or managers
- HR or training manager
- Funding bodies
- Parties nominated by the candidate
- Parties to be informed under contractual obligations.
**Review checklist**

A review checklist will enable you to ensure that:

- All steps in the assessment process have been followed and completed
- All organisational requirements have been met
- The assessment plan has worked
- The assessment process has been reviewed.

Information gathered in the completion of the checklist will also provide a basis for any improvements that you may need to make to the assessment process.

You can use the following checklist at several stages in the assessment process. For instance:

- As a reminder of what will need to be done before you start the assessment process
- As you complete each detail, noting any comments about that item
- For its intended purpose, as a check after the process to ensure that everything has been done.

You will note that there is a space at the bottom of the first column for you to add any further questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVIEW CHECKLIST</th>
<th></th>
<th>Other comments (problems encountered and suggested improvements)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment process</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the assessment plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confirmed/followed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were all organisational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and legal requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confirmed or addressed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the candidate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>properly briefed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were the rules of evidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>applied in gathering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quality evidence?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the candidate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>properly supported</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>throughout the process?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were methods and tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>used appropriately?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Were reasonable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>adjustments made?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Was clear and constructive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>feedback provided?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have all relevant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>documents been recorded?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other questions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 3: Design and Develop Assessment Tools

Overview of assessment tools
Assessment means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements about whether competency has been achieved to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace as expressed in the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards or the learning outcomes of an accredited course.

Assessment tools are used to collect evidence in the assessment process. They include the:

- Instruments for gathering evidence based on selected assessment methods chosen to meet the evidence requirements
- Instructions and procedures to be followed when conducting the assessment.

Criterion referenced assessment
In the VET sector, assessment is criterion referenced—that is, you are assessing an individual against predetermined criteria, a benchmark or a standard usually expressed in a unit of competency.

In criterion referenced assessment, the criteria is made clear to all people involved in advance and individuals are not compared with each other or ranked (as occurs in norm referenced assessment).

Competency-based assessment
Competency-based assessment is another term for criterion referenced assessment.

In a competency-based system, evidence is any information that supports the candidate’s claim of competency. When matched against criteria in units of competency, the evidence provides proof of competency. Evidence can include products that have been made, processes undertaken and procedures completed.

Different types of evidence you can collect are detailed below.

Direct evidence
Direct evidence is obtained when an assessor observes the candidate’s performance and makes a judgement about whether the candidate has competently performed the required task or series of tasks. This observation could be conducted in a variety of ways. For example the assessor could observe the candidate performing a range of tasks in the workplace, and question the candidate; view a video of the candidate’s performance; or observe the candidate’s performance in a simulated workplace.

Indirect evidence
Indirect evidence is used when it is not possible or desirable for a candidate to be observed during their actual performance of tasks in the workplace; it may be too costly, involve risks or potentially breach confidentiality or privacy. Assessment methods used to collect indirect
Evidence could include examination of a finished product with evidence to authenticate that it is the candidate’s work.

**Supplementary evidence**

Supplementary evidence is additional evidence supporting direct and indirect evidence. It is often obtained through third party sources, for example, from members of the candidate’s work team or managers, work journals or evidence of completed training.

**Combination of types of evidence**

Usually, a combination of types of evidence is used to assess competence. For example, in the retail sector, you could observe someone on the job performing a task such as serving a customer; observe them in a simulation when the actual performance is difficult to observe, such as serving a difficult customer; and ask their supervisor a series of questions about how the candidate would perform if something went wrong.

The following diagram broadly illustrates the relationship between benchmarks; evidence requirements; assessment methods and tools; and evidence produced. It is important you understand these concepts and relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
<th>Evidence requirements</th>
<th>Assessment (evidence gathering) methods</th>
<th>Assessment (evidence gathering) tools</th>
<th>Evidence produced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXAMPLE</td>
<td>EXAMPLE</td>
<td>EXAMPLE</td>
<td>EXAMPLE</td>
<td>EXAMPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell products to customers</td>
<td>What is learner’s product knowledge?</td>
<td>Real work observation • Third party assessment</td>
<td>Observation checklist Third party report Instructions for candidates and assessors</td>
<td>Demonstration of product knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customer service/selling skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstraton of customer service and selling skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidence aligned to benchmark

Benchmarks determine evidence requirements
Confirming evidence requirements

Before you can develop or adapt suitable assessment tools, you need to be clear about the evidence you are required to collect.

Evidence requirements can be found in the benchmarks or the criteria you are assessing against such as the unit of competency—this Learning Topic will help you confirm those evidence requirements. In addition, you will need to identify the target group being assessed, any special needs of individuals within this group and any organisational, ethical, OHS and legislative requirements to be taken into consideration.

What are the benchmarks?
The benchmarks are the criteria you are assessing against. Depending on your practice environment they could include:

- Units of competency and requirements of the associated Training Package assessment guidelines and guidelines for AQF qualifications
- Assessment criteria or evidence requirements from accredited courses or informal training programs such as employee induction programs
- Organisational benchmarks such as standard operating procedures, internal enterprise specific training, internal OHS standards and product specifications.

Who is the target client group?
To help you develop appropriate assessment tools it is essential that you identify your target group. This could be people employed in (or undergoing training so they can be employed in):

- An enterprise
- A department or division within an enterprise
- A job role or occupation
- An industry sector
- A professional association
- A trade
- A community organisation
- A government organisation
- A group defined by a funding body, such as people who are unemployed; people with nominated levels of English language, literacy and numeracy; or people on a particular class of visa.

Establishing evidence requirements

Now that you have identified the benchmark and target group, it is time to identify the evidence requirements. The following diagram shows different factors that need to be considered when establishing evidence requirements.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

A critical consideration in deciding on the evidence requirements is the AQF qualification involved. Units of competency are written to reflect work activities within an industry, industry sector or enterprise. They are organised, or packaged, into groupings which reflect the requirements of a qualification as prescribed within the AQF. Each AQF qualification for the vocational education and training (VET) sector has clear guidelines including characteristics and distinguishing features. The AQF qualification characteristics cover:

- Performance of a prescribed range of functions
- The breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills for a specified range of activities
- Applications such as whether the requirements are complex, routine or non-routine.

Where additional information is required, the AQF distinguishing features assist in determining the AQF qualification and include aspects such as:

- Demonstration and application of skills in a prescribed range of areas
- The level of discretion or judgement in the work
- Ways information is received and conveyed
- Responsibility for own work
- Responsibility for the work of others.

The AQF qualification descriptors have an impact on assessment requirements and possibly assessment methods. For example, at AQF Certificate I, demonstration of a sequence of tasks involves performance under clear direction; at AQF Certificate III, the candidate is required to show some discretion and judgement in processes that require a range of well-developed skills.

Information about AQF qualifications can be found on the Australian Qualifications Advisory Board (AQFAB) website <http://www.aqf.edu.au>.
Assessment guidelines in the Training Package

Training Package assessment guidelines provide critical information about conducting assessments—they are part of the endorsed component of each Training Package and must be followed.

The assessment guidelines underpin assessment and set out the industry approach to valid, reliable, flexible and fair assessment. They usually include: an overview of the assessment system including the benchmarks for assessment, AQTF requirements, licensing requirements, pathways and assessor requirements; guidelines for designing assessment tools; mandatory requirements for conducting assessments; and a list of further resources and information you could use in conducting assessments.

Assessment guidelines for each Training Package can be downloaded from the National Training Information Service (NTIS) website at [http://www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au).


The evidence guide

The evidence guide details specific evidence requirements. It's a good idea to look at this first, as it usually gives an overall view of what a person needs to be able to do to demonstrate competency, and the extent of the assessment. Its purpose is to guide assessment of the unit of competency in the workplace and/or a training environment.

The evidence guide gives an overview of assessment requirements and the context of assessment. It details the required knowledge, skills and attributes, as well as the critical aspects of evidence. There are often examples of evidence that may be collected for each unit of competency. The evidence guide relates directly to the performance criteria and range statement defined in the unit of competency.

Discuss your suggested tools list with your facilitator/trainer and colleagues.

Elements and performance criteria

An element describes, in terms of outcomes, the significant functions and tasks that make up the competency. They are the building blocks of the unit that together make up the broader function or job that is described by the unit of competency.

The performance criteria specify the standard of performance required in the tasks, roles and skills in the element. They can also specify the knowledge that competent performers apply in the workplace. You might find key words italicised in the performance criteria—these are then explained in the range statement in the same sequence as they appear in the unit.

The elements and performance criteria in combination will give you a clearer idea of the performance, and hence the evidence, required.

Units of competency from endorsed industry Training Packages can be downloaded from the National Training Information Service (NTIS) website at [http://www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au). Download a few samples and look at their elements and performance criteria.
What information do the elements and performance criteria give you about evidence requirements for assessment in this unit?

**The range statement**

The range statement is the part of the unit of competency which sets out the range of contexts such as the workplace environment or situations in which performance can take place. This helps the assessor identify the specific industry or enterprise application of the unit.

The range statement will describe any essential operating conditions that may be present depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts.

As applicable, the meanings of key terms used (and usually italicised) in the performance criteria will also be explained in the range statement.

Use the range statement to interpret the context of assessment of the unit; for example, to meet organisational, ethical, occupational health and safety (OHS) and other legislative requirements. You can use the range statement to guide you in selecting and/or modifying assessment methods and tools to suit your practice environment.

In summary, for organisational, ethical, OHS and legislative requirements you need to consider:

- Assessment system policies and procedures
- Reporting, recording and retrieval systems for assessment
- Licensing or legal ramifications of assessing competence
- Requirements of training/assessment organisations relating to assessment and validation
- Quality assurance systems
- Business and performance plans
- Access and equity policies and procedures
- Collaborative or partnership arrangements
- Policies, procedures and programs
- Defined resource parameters
- Mutual recognition arrangements
- Industrial relations systems and processes, awards or enterprise agreements
- AQTF standards on assessment
- Scope of registration
- Human resource policies and procedures and legal requirements including antidiscrimination, equal employment, job roles, responsibilities and conditions
- Relevant industry codes of practice
- Confidentiality and privacy requirements of information relating to completed assessments
- OHS considerations, including
  - Ensuring OHS requirements and specified benchmarks are accounted for within evidence requirements and assessment materials
  - Identifying hazards and relevant risk control procedures associated with the assessment environment.

**Key Competencies**
Key competencies have been replaced by Employability skills, however many training packages still include units of competence that have 'Key Competencies' within them.

The Key Competencies are seven defined employment related generic competencies essential for effective participation in the workplace. Each unit of competency includes the Key Competencies. They have three levels (but these do not relate to specific AQF qualifications). The three levels of the Key Competencies are:

Level 1—perform
Level 2—perform and administer
Level 3—perform, administer and design.

In summary the levels cover:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Competency</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicating ideas and information</td>
<td>Simple activities in a familiar setting</td>
<td>Complex communication within a particular context</td>
<td>Complex communication in a variety of settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting, analysing and organising information</td>
<td>Access and record from a single source</td>
<td>Access, select and record from more than one source</td>
<td>Access, evaluate and organise from a range of sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and organising activities</td>
<td>Under supervision</td>
<td>With guidance</td>
<td>Independently initiate and evaluate complex activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with others and in teams</td>
<td>Familiar activities</td>
<td>Help formulate and achieve goals</td>
<td>Collaborate in complex activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using mathematical ideas and techniques</td>
<td>Simple tasks</td>
<td>Select appropriate tasks</td>
<td>Evaluate ideas and techniques and adapt as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving problems</td>
<td>Routine—minimal supervision. Exploratory—close supervision</td>
<td>Routine—independently Exploratory—with guidance</td>
<td>Complex problems Implement systematic approach Explain processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using technology</td>
<td>Reproduce or present basic product or service</td>
<td>Construct, organise or operate products or services</td>
<td>Design or tailor products or services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DETYA 2001, Guide 1: Training Package Assessment Materials Kit, A guide to developing Training Package Assessment Materials, p 28. You can find out how to access this resource online from the Resources section of this guide.

When developing your assessment tools, you need to think about how to design or modify the tools so that evidence of Employability Skills is also collected.

Discuss with others how you could incorporate collection of evidence of the Key Competencies.
**Dimensions of competency**

The concept of competency includes all aspects of work performance and not only narrow task skills. Assessment of competency should involve a demonstration of competence in all dimensions of the competency. When confirming your assessment requirements, check that the dimensions of competency have been considered and incorporated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task skills</strong></td>
<td>Task skills are focused on being able to perform the task at an acceptable level to the organisation/industry. This may include carrying out individual tasks such as operating equipment, dealing with customers, processing an invoice or using a software application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task management skills</strong></td>
<td>Task management skills refer to the ability to manage a number of different tasks that form part of the job. This involves being able to integrate a number of different tasks to achieve a complete work outcome. This may include completing documentation for an order while dealing with a customer, following OHS procedures while operating machinery, responding to an audience while making a presentation using PowerPoint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contingency management skills</strong></td>
<td>Contingency management skills refer to the ability to respond appropriately when things go wrong or if there are irregularities and breakdowns in routine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job role / environment skills</strong></td>
<td>Job role/environment skills refer to the need to fulfil the requirements and expectations of the organisation. Each workplace is unique and requires the individual to be able to adjust to the environment they are working in and fulfil the needs of the organisation. This may include dealing with different teams, following workplace procedures and communicating effectively with colleagues, interacting with clients, complying with organisational policies and procedures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section you have been confirming evidence requirements already established by you or by someone else. For more information on how to analyse the evidence requirements, refer to:

- Part 1 of this Learner Guide: Plan assessment activities and processes.
Selecting and confirming assessment methods

Evidence is the information which, when matched against the performance criteria, provides proof of competency. There are many evidence-gathering methods that can be selected to assess an individual’s competence against a benchmark. The methods chosen will depend on a number of considerations, including the analysis of evidence requirements, the specific needs of the candidates and the context of assessment. This Learning Topic will explore the different assessment methods or techniques to be used.

Assessment methods

The assessment method is the particular way/s used to gather different evidence. It is a way of collecting evidence that will demonstrate competency. Numerous methods of assessment can be used and some examples are provided below. This is not an exhaustive list and you may add other methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct observation</td>
<td>Real work and/or real time activities at workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work activities in simulated workplace environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Self-assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written questions (including on a computer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal or written examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of products</td>
<td>Work samples or products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Products as a result of a project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured activities</td>
<td>Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role-play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fault finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>Documents such as work samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product with supporting documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historical evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journal/log book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information about life experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collecting of work samples compiled by candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third party feedback</td>
<td>Testimonials or reports from employers or supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview employer, supervisor, peer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authenticated prior achievements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is important is that you select a range of methods to meet the principles and rules of assessment; the evidence requirements of the benchmark; the needs of the candidate; and organisational, ethical, OHS and legislative requirements.

The context of assessment will contribute to the selection of assessment methods. For example, if you are assessing in a workplace, evidence consisting of observation of work tasks and products, combined with third party reports may be used. However, if the same assessment was in the context of a training situation, the assessment method selected might be observation of a simulated task or review of a project, combined with questioning.
Selection of assessment methods is covered in more detail in the unit TAEASS401A: Plan assessment activities and processes.

Below is a description of some of the most commonly used assessment methods. The next Learning Topic will help you design tools to support the selected assessment methods.

**Self-assessment**

Self-assessment is when the candidate makes decisions about their own progress towards competence. This can take the form of a response to questions in a checklist, or can involve the gathering of evidence to demonstrate competence against performance criteria. Self-assessment is a logical starting point for a Recognition process. In a Recognition process, self-assessment is used as a way for candidates to decide whether to apply for Recognition.

**Direct observation**

During an observation, the assessor watches the candidate doing a task or performing a process or series of tasks or processes. Observation can be of a real work activity in real time. It can also involve watching work activities in a simulated workplace environment.

Observation is very useful for the assessment of practical skills and can be supplemented with other assessment methods, for example, questioning to assess the way underpinning skills are being applied in practice, and third party reports to make sure the tasks are assessed over a period of time.

**Verbal questioning**

Verbal questioning is often used in conjunction with other assessment-gathering methods to gain further insight into the candidate’s understanding of the work. For example, verbal questioning can be used with observation, or with the presentation of a product or portfolio.

Questions could be used to find out knowledge of aspects of the competency that were not observed, or to check what the candidate would do if the circumstances changed, using ‘what if...?’ questions and other hypothetical questions. They could be used to check understanding of why a certain action was taken or to check underpinning knowledge or understanding of principles, and analysing problems.

Verbal questioning is useful when there are concerns about a candidate’s writing skills, or if writing is not part of the benchmark being assessed.

Verbal questioning can take the form of structured interviews which provide an opportunity to assess attributes that underpin competence as well as understanding and application of essential knowledge. This is appropriate where the candidate is the best source of information about their knowledge and skills. It allows interaction and exploration of points, for example ethics, values or attitudes. It is a useful assessment method for Recognition purposes.
Simulation

In simulations, the candidate is involved in an activity that replicates the workplace context. Simulations include:

- Demonstration of a skill or range of skills in a simulated workplace environment, for example, a practice restaurant, office or workshop
- Role-plays or practical exercises based on reconstruction of workplace situations. These can be small scale—for example, dealing with difficult customers, or large scale—for example, security exercises involving the deployment of personnel and equipment
- Electronic simulators and virtual situations, for example, those used in pilot or driver training
- ‘in-tray’ exercises, for example a set of workplace documents which have to be dealt with in a timeframe following workplace procedures; or research findings which need to be analysed
- Hypotheticals, where a facilitator asks participants a series of ‘what if...?’ questions as a way of eliciting ideas or developing a solution to a problem
- ‘Tabletop’ exercises, for example correctional officers analysing options in response to a breakout, using a model of a building.

Simulations can be used when it is not possible to demonstrate tasks in real work time, for example, because of safety issues, lack of opportunity to demonstrate the real situations, or because of confidentiality and privacy issues. They are useful in exploring potential responses to situations, for example conflict resolution, meeting procedures or responding to a range of customer issues.

However, some people are not comfortable with role-playing, and this can affect the candidate’s behaviour. If this is the case, alternative assessment methods may have to be chosen. All simulations and role-plays need to be carefully prepared with clear instructions, scenarios and debriefing.

Information on designing simulations to assess higher level competency can be found in Guide 2: Assessing competencies in higher qualifications, A guide to developing Training Package assessment materials, Chapter 8: ‘Designing simulations in workplaces and institutions’.

Third party reports

In some situations, it is necessary to use reports from a third party to gather evidence; for example, in a workplace where the assessor has difficulty observing the candidate because of work schedules, privacy, confidentiality or because the circumstances may only occur rarely. Third party reports can also be used as an adjunct to direct observation, to make sure the candidate can demonstrate the skills on an ongoing basis, or when the presence of another person would cause a safety issue. It is important to be careful about who to choose when asking for third party reports.

The assessment decision is always made by the assessor, using evidence from the third party, usually in conjunction with other evidence.

Third party reports can be obtained from people who are regularly in contact with the candidate and the candidate’s work, including managers, supervisors, peers and suppliers. These people will need to be fully briefed to make sure that the feedback is reliable. Ideally, the candidate will know who the third parties are and may even nominate them. Other reports can
be used to contribute evidence such as client responses, customer satisfaction reports, feedback from participants and candidate’s training.

**Projects**

A project is a task or series of tasks with a defined outcome. With projects, candidates can work together in a group, or independently.

Examples of projects include the development of a product or process, researching and writing a report or case study, analysing and responding to a problem, producing a performance or event or making a presentation.

Because projects often involve operating as part of a team, they are a good way of assessing dimensions of competency beyond the task skill. For example, questioning can be used to draw out knowledge and the ability to deal with contingencies, teamwork or job roles. The project can be assessed at strategic intervals during the project, or when the project is completed.

Projects can be based on real work requirements or simulated requirements that reflect real work requirements. Work related projects are useful ways of assessing a range of work activities over time. Projects can also form part of assessment in a training institution situation, where simulated work activities need to be used to complete the product.

**Portfolios**

Portfolios can take many forms, but are usually an assembly of evidence such as documents or products produced over a period of time and from different sources. Portfolios are arranged in a systematic way, and often include documentation of the process or reflections on the development.

If candidates are given clear guidelines, portfolios can be a very useful way to gather evidence for Recognition purposes. They can be used to gather evidence during a project and in other situations where direct observation is not always possible. Portfolios contain a range of evidence which can be used to document and assess a process as well as a product.

Examples include:

- Design portfolio—for example, for a clothing product including concept, design and costing up to the finished product
- Document portfolio—containing workplace documents produced
- Recognition portfolio—containing examples of current work and previous work and life experiences, qualifications, third party reports, self-assessment documents.

**Journal**

A journal is an account of activities undertaken in a workplace or learning environment. It can be written, electronic or audio. A journal can be used as supplementary evidence. Often journals are used for recording personal reflections.

Sustained over time, journals can document a candidate’s observations, analysis, use of processes and procedures, problem-solving, decision making processes and changes or development of behaviour and attitudes.
Case study

Case studies can be used to assess the application of principles and processes to the workplace or other real situations. They can take many forms, for example, a description of a process, problem, chart, diagram or scenario, with related questions or actions. Case studies are useful for assessing analysis and problem-solving in situations where direct observations are not possible. They are often linked with other methods of assessment, particularly verbal questioning.

Written questions

Written questions can be used to assess underpinning knowledge. They can be used in conjunction with other assessment methods such as case studies and observation of demonstrations or simulations.

Questions can take many forms, for example, short answer questions, true/false questions, multiple-choice questions, and responses in short or long essays. Apart from essays, these are easy to administer, cost-effective (particularly when used with large groups), and can be used for online assessment and marking.

However, when using written questions, the assessor must be aware of the literacy and comprehension levels of candidates which may hinder responses. If necessary, choose alternative assessment methods. Written questioning alone is usually not enough to assess competence, as it is difficult to assess the application of skills and may not be a valid form of assessment.

Questions are often difficult to write and, if poorly constructed or allow for a margin of error or guessing, could distort results and the validity of the outcomes.

A range of written question types are often included in a set of questions, to assess different knowledge areas.

Knowledge-based tests

A knowledge-based test is a means of determining whether a candidate has the underpinning knowledge required to perform the skills and tasks outlined in the units of competency. Knowledge-based tests should be used in conjunction with other forms of evidence collection. For further information about knowledge-based tests, see Designing Tests: Guidelines for Designing Knowledge Based Tests for Training Packages, WA Dept of Training and Employment, VETASSESS, 2000.

Confirming the assessment methods

Other key considerations to be made when confirming assessment methods to be used include:

- Principles of assessment
- Rules of evidence
- Clustering of competencies
- Language, literacy and numeracy requirements
- Needs of the candidates
• Complying with organisational, OHS, ethical and legislative requirements
• Reflecting the workplace or institutional context
• Supporting any claim for Recognition.

**Principles of assessment**

Assessment is required to conform to the principles of assessment. These principles influence the selection of appropriate assessment methods. Even if you are using existing assessment methods, check that they observe these principles.

**Validity**

A valid assessment assesses what it claims to assess. Evidence collected is relevant to the activity and demonstrates that the criteria have been met. Assessment of competency should be a process which integrates knowledge and skills with their practical application. As far as possible, the assessment tasks should be demonstrated in the workplace or in a simulated environment closely resembling the workplace. During assessment, judgements to determine a learner’s competency should be made on evidence gathered on a number of occasions and in a variety of contexts or situations. Using a variety of assessment methods will assist with validity.

**Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency of interpretation of evidence by assessors and the assessment outcome. Assessment practices should be monitored and reviewed to ensure that there is consistency across assessors in interpreting evidence. The development of well constructed assessment tools which include instructions for candidates and assessors will assist with reliability.

**Flexibility**

Assessment is a process that should be conducted at a mutually convenient time and place. The assessment methods and tools used need to be adjusted to suit the needs of the candidates. Assessment procedures should provide for the recognition of competencies no matter how, where or when they have been acquired.

**Fairness**

Assessment practices and methods must be fair for all candidates. Assessment procedures and the criteria for judging performance must be made clear to all candidates seeking assessment, and the process of assessment should be jointly developed and agreed between the assessor and the candidate as much as possible. Opportunities must be provided to allow learners to challenge assessment decisions and provisions must be available for reassessment and appeals.
Rules of evidence

The selected assessment methods need to comply with the rules of evidence. Rules of evidence are closely related to the principles of assessment and provide guidance on the collection of evidence to ensure that it is valid, sufficient, authentic and current.

Validity

All assessment methods chosen and tools developed must ensure that the collected evidence meets the requirements of the unit of competency. For the assessment to be valid, it should cover all aspects of the unit including the knowledge and skills required to demonstrate competence, the dimensions of competency, the Employability Skills and the AQF qualification requirements.

Sufficiency

When choosing assessment methods and developing assessment tools, the assessor must ensure that the tools can collect enough evidence to make a decision about the candidate’s competency. Usually, this means collecting evidence to show competency over time and in different situations; it is important to ensure you assess all aspects of competency. To make sure there is sufficient evidence, a combination of different methods might have to be used. It is important to achieve a balance of evidence—not so little that it doesn’t cover the benchmark and not so much that it is over the assessment requirements.

Currency

When developing assessment tools, the assessor must determine whether the evidence-gathering opportunities will demonstrate that the candidate can apply the competency in current practice. This is particularly important when assessing for the purpose of Recognition.

Authenticity

All assessment tools must be able to demonstrate that the evidence gathered is the candidate’s own work. It may not always be appropriate or feasible to directly observe the candidate, so there will be times when this may need to be verified by a third party such as a manager or supervisor. If documentation is used it must be verified. A range of assessment methods will assist with establishing authenticity.

Clustering

One consideration is to combine or cluster units of competency for the purposes of delivery and assessment. Many work activities are not adequately described in a single unit of competency. Often, workplace activities draw on competencies from a number of units. Assessment methods can be chosen that assess a number of units of competency simultaneously. As far as possible, assessment should be determined by the logical organisation of work. The process of gathering evidence can apply to part of a unit, a whole unit, a cluster of units or, in some cases, an entire AQF qualification.

Clustering can occur around:
Like or similar competencies as expressed in a number of units of competency
- Workplace activities requiring sequential use of competencies
- Workplace activities requiring simultaneous use of competencies (or parts of competencies)
- Competencies that build on each other.

**Language, literacy and numeracy requirements**

When deciding which evidence-gathering methods to use, the language, literacy and numeracy requirements of the units of competency need to be considered. This will guide the choice of methods so that you are not assessing skills beyond those specified in the units of competency. For example, in many units of competency writing is either not required or is a minimum requirement. In this case, written methods of assessment may not be appropriate, due to the possibility that you may be assessing the candidate’s English language or literacy skills instead of the competency. Other methods can be used, including verbal questioning, demonstrations or use of pictures and diagrams.

How will a candidate’s language, literacy and numeracy skills affect the assessment methods chosen?

**The needs of the candidate**

Once the target group has been identified, and the relevant benchmark accessed and analysed for evidence requirements, the needs of candidates within the target group should be considered.

These needs can vary and must be considered in determining and customising evidence-gathering methods and tools to meet identified needs. This is often called reasonable adjustment, which means that you might need to choose alternative assessment methods or alter the assessment tools to meet the individual needs of candidates. Adjustments are considered reasonable if they still allow for a valid and reliable assessment within the resource capabilities of the training/assessment organisation.

While there could be times that you need to generalise about the candidate being assessed, you need to be very aware that special needs of individuals should be identified. It is important to recognise that learners are not a homogeneous group—they will have different ideas and experiences, even if those differences and special needs are not always immediately obvious.

**How to determine candidate needs**

There are several ways of determining if there are any special needs of candidates.

If you are assessing in a training environment, the special needs of the candidates will probably already have been determined before and during the training, for example on enrolment and during training activities.

If you are assessing in a workplace, especially without having worked with the candidate before, you might need to:

- Spend time with the candidate prior to assessment, ask them if they have any special needs and discuss ways to meet these
• Speak to relevant workplace personnel, who may be aware of less obvious needs, for example low literacy or numeracy
• Check files for background information, being aware of confidentiality considerations
• Examine anything written by the candidate as part of their work
• Speak to the trainer.

Range of methods and strategies to cater for candidate needs

You need to confirm that the chosen assessment methods meet the needs of candidates. If assessment methods create any obstacles for candidates, choose a different method or make reasonable adjustments. The table below provides a list of potential issues for different groups of candidates and a description of alternative assessment methods which might meet identified needs. However, the categories are not discrete and individuals might not neatly fall into one or more of the categories. When choosing assessment methods and tools, consider individuals needs; it might not be appropriate to treat each candidate with particular needs in exactly the same way. The best person to tell you about their needs is the candidate themself—ask them what they require.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Potential issue</th>
<th>Possible range of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low literacy or numeracy</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Verbal assessment using predetermined questions. This could be recorded or someone else could be a scribe. Presentations or demonstrations can be used rather than writing. Use of diagrams as visual cues when asking questions, or for the candidate to explain answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calculating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People whose first language isn't English</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Demonstrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Use of diagrams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Production of a product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Organise assessments times which are suitable to the client to allow for pray times or reschedule to allow for special religious events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural and religious differences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates with a disability</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Observation checklist using adaptive technology such as Braille for a visually impaired candidate. Asking questions and getting assistance from an Auslan interpreter (for deaf candidates). Using an interpreter, reader, attendant carer, or scribe to write down answers to questions. Observation of tasks performed on suitably adjusted equipment or environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older candidates</td>
<td>Different age to the assessor</td>
<td>Use case studies instead of role-plays as some older candidates may feel uncomfortable. Make sure font size is not too small.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited technology skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill health</td>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Shorter assessment tasks that allow for medication or fatigue. Specific instructions on projects that can be submitted at various stages. Longer period of time allowed to finish tasks. Use a scribe or tape recorder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of concentration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effects of medication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Culture of workplace with women in non-traditional trades</td>
<td>Use same gender assessor if it is appropriate. Make sure assessment tools are not gender specific in content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Different gender of the assessor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Potential issue</td>
<td>Possible range of responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous candidates</td>
<td>Differences in cultural Background</td>
<td>Use of support person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Check that assessment strategies are not culturally sensitive, for example it may be more appropriate to demonstrate knowledge rather than talk about knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Encourage candidates to use alternative ways of demonstrating competence, for example drawing instead of writing, using a video to record demonstration of skills rather than demonstrating in front of the assessor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Read any printed information to the candidate or use graphics for instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates with low levels of education</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Check if language, literacy or numeracy are likely to impact on the assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Demonstration and verbal questioning, perhaps recording answers or using a scribe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>Read any printed information to the candidate or use graphics for instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited study skills</td>
<td>Use short assessment tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates who have recently returned to the workforce</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Make sure the candidate is aware of workplace procedures, including OHS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If demonstrating on the job, find a time when there are not many people around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family responsibilities</td>
<td>Requirement to care for family members</td>
<td>Ensure timing and place of assessment does not clash with care responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs 2001, Guide 4: Kit to support assessor training, A guide to developing Training Package assessment materials, DETYA, Melbourne, Figure 29: Possible strategies for adjusting the assessment process, pp. 154-156.

**Complying with organisational, ethical, OHS and legislative requirements**

You have already considered organisational and legislative requirements when interpreting the competency standards. However, when confirming assessment methods you also have to consider these requirements. This could include making sure that:

- The assessment methods do not breach organisational requirements, policies and procedures, for example
- Privacy and confidentiality, if using third party reports as evidence
- Human resource and legal requirements (including anti-discrimination, equal employment, job roles, responsibilities and/or industry codes of practice) if using workplace reports or projects as evidence
- The methods comply with any assessment system policies and procedures in your practice environment, including reporting and recording systems
- Demonstrations on-the-job follow OHS policies and procedures, and assessors (including any external ones) follow OHS instructions themselves
- Quality assurance systems are followed, for example, in how assessments are planned, their format and validation processes
- Collaborative or partnership arrangements (for example, in assessment and recording) are taken into account when designing tools and instructions
The RTO’s scope of registration is considered (you might need to check this if your practice environment is an RTO as you can only assess units of competency for the purposes of nationally recognised training if they are on its scope of registration).

**Reflecting the workplace or institutional context**

The context of the assessment will affect the methods you choose, for example:

- If training and assessment activities occur in a training/assessment organisation only, demonstration of skills might have to be through simulations rather than in real workplaces (in line with the Training Package rules)
- If demonstrations in the workplace could affect workflow they might have to occur outside normal operating hours
- Sometimes permission needs to be gained—identify people involved with the candidate in the workplace who might need to be informed of the assessment process
- Where the workplace is noisy, you might need to go to a quiet or private place if assessment involves questioning
- Where evidence is gathered over time, you will need to make decisions about how this will be done (for example, by demonstration and third party reports)
- You should consider who carries out the assessment (for example, if you are assessing under a partnership arrangement)
- Where the candidate is in a workplace, their real work activities should provide relevant assessment opportunities (map the relationship between the assessment benchmarks and the candidate’s workplace activities).

Check the context in which assessment will take place when you are confirming assessment methods.

In your practice environment, investigate the workplace, ethical and legislative requirements you will need to consider when assessments are conducted. How will this affect the assessment methods you choose? How will the context of the assessment affect the choice of assessment methods?

**Supporting the claim for Recognition**

It is important to think about the methods to be used when a claim for Recognition is being considered. Recognition involves examining evidence of skills and knowledge gained through a range of work, study, life and other experiences.

While in this and related resources we have used the term ‘Recognition’, in the AQTF and other national documentation, this process is referred to as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Other terms that are used include Skills Recognition, and Recognition of Current Competency (RCC).

Depending on the needs of the candidate, a range of methods suit a claim for Recognition. You could use a combination of these methods. These include:

- Self-assessment, where the candidate is encouraged as a starting point to consider their own competence against the established benchmark
- A portfolio documenting historical evidence, such as testimonials, records of training, completed documents, awards, third party reports, work samples
• A completed product
• Questioning through an unstructured interview, where the candidate can discuss what they have done in the past which shows competency against the benchmark; for example, to explain what is included in the portfolio or how the product was planned and constructed, and to check current knowledge. Evidence should be recorded during this process.

You can devise methods to suit the needs of the candidate and the qualification or unit of competency requirements. For example, for a person being assessed for a Diploma qualification where access to workplace documentation is readily available, self-assessment and a verified portfolio could be adequate. However, for a person being assessed for a Certificate II qualification, self-assessment and an informal interview, possibly with a support person present, might elicit some or all of the required evidence.

Whatever methods are chosen, you have the option of using any of the assessment methods discussed above. For example, you could set a project or ask for a demonstration of skills to observe current performance levels.

Further information about Recognition methods can be found in Guide 3: Recognition Resource, A guide to developing Training Package assessment materials. Information on how to access the Guide is provided in the Resources section of this document.
Designing assessment tools

Assessment tools are the:

- Instruments for gathering evidence based on the selected assessment methods
- Procedures to be followed in conducting the assessment.

The careful design of assessment tools will make sure that:

- Assessments are conducted according to the principles of assessment
- The collected evidence meets the rules of evidence
- The evidence requirements are addressed
- Legislative, ethical and organisational requirements are met
- The needs of candidates are taken into account.

This Learning Topic will help you design and adapt a range of tools to help you use some of the most commonly used assessment methods.

In the previous Learning Topic, you selected and confirmed the appropriate assessment methods for use in your practice environment. Your selection included the assessment methods that you will use to assess against a particular benchmark that you will submit as evidence of your competence.

The following Learning Topic includes information about the tools you could develop to support your chosen methods.

Purposes of the assessment tool

Before you design an assessment tool, you need to be clear about its purpose. You have already considered the evidence requirements, the context of the assessment, needs of candidates, and legislative, ethical and organisational requirements. However, you also need to ask why the tool is being developed and how it will be used. Some purposes of assessment tools are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of assessment tool</th>
<th>Example of assessment tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To provide guidance and structure for the candidate/assessor in collecting evidence.</td>
<td>A checklist to be used in the demonstration of a series of tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To guide and support the candidate in understanding and participating in the assessment process.</td>
<td>Instructions to the candidate about how to be involved in a role-play activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To give clarity and confidence to the assessor and/or candidate in working through the process.</td>
<td>Clear criteria for a product to be assessed against.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To define the key performance indicators to be met by the candidate.</td>
<td>List of criteria for a candidate when being involved in a simulation, so they know what particular areas will be assessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure the rules of evidence and principles of assessment are addressed in the assessment process.</td>
<td>Matrix of assessment methods against the evidence requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be used as a recording and reporting mechanism.</td>
<td>List of questions with space to record responses and feedback given, as well as whether candidate is competent or not yet competent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide objectivity and consistency in evidence collection.</td>
<td>Set of predetermined questions to be asked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enable Recognition.</td>
<td>Self-assessment checklist, with suggestions of types of evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide a tool to document the need for further action.</td>
<td>Any checklists that provide room for feedback and advice given for further action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Uses and application of assessment tools

An assessment tool can be used for a range of different assessment methods. The following table provides an overview of the relationships between assessment tools and assessment methods. If you require further clarification, speak to your facilitator or trainer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Tool</th>
<th>Examples of uses and application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation checklist</td>
<td>Real work, role-play, simulation, third party observation checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal questions</td>
<td>Interview, case study, real work performance, simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared responses</td>
<td>For each set of verbal and written questions used in interviews, case study, real work performance, simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario, script</td>
<td>Case study, role-play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructions</td>
<td>For each tool, for the:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Third party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debriefing guidelines</td>
<td>Role-play, simulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording tool</td>
<td>For each method of assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For each method for third party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written questions</td>
<td>Tests, exams, case studies, true/false questions, multiple-choice, essay, self-assessment items, completion question, short answer questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project brief</td>
<td>Project, assignment, product, process design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review checklist for product</td>
<td>Project, practical demonstration, portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio guidelines</td>
<td>RPL/RCC portfolio, project portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal guidelines</td>
<td>Journal, diary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Designing assessment tools

Assessment tools are critical aids for assessors.

Just like you need a roadmap to get to an unknown destination, assessors and candidates need instructions and materials to help identify and interpret evidence and make the judgement of whether competency has been achieved. This section includes tips for developing meaningful assessment tools.

Assessment tools should include instructions for the people being assessed and for the people administering the tool. These instructions will vary, depending on the method of assessment, the level of candidate and the context. However, they should include:

- Resources needed to conduct the assessment
- Where the tool will be used
- Guidance on how to make a decision about competence
- How reasonable adjustments could be made
- Any variations or restrictions on the tool
- Rules for verifying the assessment decisions
- Any OHS considerations; for example, identifying hazards in the assessment environment, appropriate controls and reporting mechanisms
- Information on access and equity considerations
- Mechanisms for recording outcomes.
When designing assessment tools, consider:

- Whether there are assessment tools that already exist which could be used or modified. It might be cost and time effective to use existing tools. Check the Training Package support materials, ask other trainers or search online.
- The time available to develop new tools to support a particular method; if the tool will take too long to develop, or be too costly, you may have to choose another assessment method.
- Your skill and expertise and whether you need support.
- Whether it is possible to integrate assessment of several units.
- Cost effectiveness of use of the assessment method and tools. For example, you could use methods which allow you to assess more than one candidate at a time, such as a role-play; methods which can be used in assessing several units of competency holistically, such as a project; or you could design checklists in a way that enable their use as both recording and feedback tools.
- Whether the assessment methods have any impact on OHS regulations.

Tools to support the observation method

Tools that can be developed to assist with the observation of real or simulated work activities include:

- Observation checklists
- Instructions for the candidate
- Instructions for the assessor.

These tools to assist with observation are covered in more detail below.

Suggestions for developing the tools

Observation checklist

A checklist can be designed to support observations.

The checklist should be written in plain English and include:

- Candidate details
- Assessor details
- The benchmark/unit of competency
- Any prerequisite competencies
- Specific OHS requirements
- The specific task, action or activity to be performed
- Methods of assessment
- Number of assessments to be observed
- Standard of performance to be observed
- Capacity to record results and comments or feedback.
Instructions for the candidate

Instructions to candidates can be included on the checklist or in a separate document. Instructions should be written in plain English and include:

- The nature of the task or tasks to be performed
- Any materials or equipment needed
- Any other information useful for the candidate.

Instructions for assessors

Instructions for assessors can also be included on the checklist, or in a separate document. The instructions for assessors should contain clear and specific directions on the administration and use of the tools and specify:

- Conditions and resources needed for the candidate
- Occupational health and safety considerations and any other legislative considerations
- Workplace policies and procedures to be observed by the candidate
- How to make the demonstration as realistic as possible if not conducted in real work time.

Tools to support the simulation method

Simulations can be used when it is not reasonably practical to conduct the assessment in a real time/real workplace environment, for example, when it is too costly, dangerous, a risk to confidentiality or there is no workplace environment available.

Tools that can be developed to assist with the observation of simulated work activities such as role-plays and practical activities could include:

- A scenario describing the situation
- Scripts for each person involved in the simulation
- An observation checklist
- Instructions for the assessor
- Instructions for the candidate
- Debriefing guidelines
- A recording tool.
Suggestions for developing the tools

A scenario describing the situation

In developing a scenario describing the situation:

- Make the situation as realistic as possible
- Keep it simple, yet provide enough information to set the scene and provide the basis for the role-play
- Be aware of the literacy levels of the candidates, and any special needs
- Consider what you are actually assessing and check that these will be covered by the scenarios and scripts (that is, you are not assessing the role-play; you are assessing the demonstrated competency)
- Be aware of any OHS issues, particularly if you are simulating activities which could be dangerous such as extinguishing a fire
- Establish clear criteria for making judgements, particularly if you are observing processes rather than end products.

Scripts for each person involved in the simulation

In developing scripts:

- Brief candidates well about the activity and their role
- Explain the context of the activity, performance expectations, and duration of the activity
- Trial the script to make sure it achieves what you want it to achieve.

Observation checklist

The section above titled ‘Tools to support the observation method’ gives hints on developing tools to support observation. See the suggestions for developing an observation checklist and the Flood Plains Clothing example.

Instructions for the assessor

Instructions for assessors should contain clear and specific directions on the administration and use of the tools and must ensure the intent of the simulation is followed. Instructions should include:

- What is being covered by the simulation
- Background on the scenario and how it can be reasonably adjusted if necessary to meet candidate needs
- Any resources needed and where to access them
- The assessor’s role in the simulation—whether they are one of the participants, for example, a supervisor giving instructions
- Who to notify about the simulation if necessary
- Instructions to give the candidate, including how to relax and a reminder that you are not assessing their acting ability
- How the simulation will be recorded, for example, on a checklist or video for later evaluation (this can be useful where it is not practical for the assessor to travel to remote locations).
Instructions for the candidate

Candidate information for simulations could include the types of resources available to the team or individual and any additional problems or issues to which participants need to respond.

Instructions should be in a written format and include:

- The scenario (which could be on cards used in the role-play)
- Any equipment needed
- OHS procedures to be followed
- What is being assessed
- Hints on how to relax during the simulation.

Debriefing guidelines

In any role-play or simulation it is important to debrief after the event. Your assessment tools could include instructions for this.

Depending on the potential impact of the role-play, an opportunity could be provided for the candidate to clearly express afterwards that the activity was a role-play and not a reflection of them as an individual. Getting candidates to state their name and work role, and the differences between their situation and the one being role-played can help, as can feedback from observers.

Recording tool

You should have provision in the assessment tool or in related documentation to record the outcomes. Ideally, these recording mechanisms would be able to capture performance over time and the full dimensions of competency.

You might want to record the simulation on video to form part of the record of assessment, or for validation purposes. This could also be useful for providing feedback in the event of an appeal about a decision or if the workplace is remote. If videoing a performance, you must make sure the candidate is comfortable with both the recording method and any planned use for the video.

Case study: Flood Plains Clothing

Flood Plains Clothing is a chain of retail outlets throughout Australia. As part of the assessment for WRRCS3B Interact with customers from the Retail Training Package, Jana, the assessor, decided to use role-play to allow candidates to demonstrate how they would respond to customer complaints.

Five assessment tools were developed:

- Scenario
- Scripts
- Observation checklist that records what the assessor observed
- Instructions for the assessor on how to use the observation checklist
- Instructions for the candidate on how the role-play will be conducted (included in the scenario).

These are included on the following pages.
Candidate Instructions

The scenario
In the unit of competency WRRCS3B Interact with customers you will be assessed on how you deal with a series of customer complaints in your own work environment.

Your assessor will explain the exercise to you. You will be given time to prepare. This assessment will be conducted outside work hours, on a date and time agreed between you and your assessor.

You will be given a separate checklist which shows what we will be looking for when we are assessing you. Make sure you always follow OHS procedures—we don’t want anyone getting injured.

You will be given a card which outlines a scenario to which you will need to respond. You will need to respond to the customer’s complaint.

Remember, we are not assessing your acting skills! Respond in the way you have been taught while working in the store. Make sure you follow all the store policies and procedures.

Script for ‘customer’

You purchased a pair of walking boots one month ago and live and work a hundred kilometres from the Flood Plains Clothing store. After two weeks you noticed the boots came apart at the stitching toward the toe. This is the first opportunity that you have been able to personally bring the boots back to the store and you are quite upset about the quality of the boots. You will not leave the store until the boots have either been replaced or your money refunded. The boots were on sale, but were not seconds.

Script for retail staff member
(candidate to be assessed)

Flood Plains Clothing had a sale four weeks ago on walking boots and other items. Store policy on refunds for all sale items is one week after purchase unless the item is clearly faulty and can be returned to the manufacturer. Some items that were clearly marked as seconds had no refund policy. You are required to deal with a refund for a pair of boots.
### Criteria for assessor observation checklist

Complete the checklist using the performance criteria of element 2, *Respond to customer complaints* from unit WRRCS3B, and by observing candidate performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessor name:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements/Unit(s) of competency:</td>
<td>Element WRRCS3B/02 Respond to customer complaints (from WRRCS3B <em>Interact with customers</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of workplace:</td>
<td>Flood Plains Clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of assessment:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**During the simulation, did the candidate:**

- Show a positive, helpful attitude to customers when handling complaints? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] N/A
- Handle complaints sensitively, courteously and with discretion? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] N/A
- Establish the nature of the complaint by active listening and questioning and confirm with the customer? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] N/A
- Take action to resolve the complaint to the customers' satisfaction wherever possible? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] N/A
- Promptly refer unresolved customer dissatisfaction or complaints to a supervisor? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] N/A
- Complete documentation regarding customer dissatisfaction or complaints accurately and legibly? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] N/A
- Take follow-up action as necessary to ensure customer satisfaction? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] N/A

**The candidate’s performance was:**

- Not satisfactory [ ]
- Satisfactory [ ]

**Feedback to the candidate:**

........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................

**Candidate signature:**

**Assessor signature:**

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Instructions for assessor

Some candidates can be nervous about being part of a role-play. You might like to practice with candidates first. Remind the candidate that you aren’t assessing their acting skills.

When you give out the scenario and role-play, you may need to explain them to the candidate rather than just let them read the role-play cards.

It’s a good idea to have another member of staff act as the customer. If you are assessing more than one candidate, use the same person for the customer, for consistency. When you have completed the checklist, discuss with the person who acted as the customer to confirm your assessment.

Make sure the role play is conducted in a private place—you want to make the candidate as comfortable as possible.

Resources: Set up the room to resemble a shop with a desk, or conduct the assessment in the store outside store hours. You will need to provide the boots to be returned.

Give the scenario and script to the candidate. You may wish to read it with them, and explain it. Give them time to think about it.

Hand the candidate the observation checklist. Go through this with the candidate and give examples to explain if necessary.

Before you begin, ask the candidate if they are ready.

Place yourself in an unobtrusive place while the role play is being conducted.

After the role play, give immediate feedback, using the checklist. If there is room for improvement, explain this to the candidate, and demonstrate a better response.

If the candidate’s performance is not satisfactory, give opportunities for further practice before reassessment.

Examine the tools for the Flood Plains Clothing role-play.

- Are the roles clear?
- Are the instructions clear? If you were an assessor, would they be useful?
- If you are a candidate, would you know what to do?
- What suggestions would you make to improve them, if any?
Tools to support the verbal questioning method

Tools that can be developed to assist with verbal questioning of real or simulated work activities include:

- Prepared questions
- Prepared responses
- Instructions for candidates
- Instructions for assessors
- Recording tools.

These tools to assist with verbal questioning are covered in more detail below.

Suggestions for developing the tools

Prepared questions

When developing an assessment tool containing prepared questions:

- Prepare a set of basic questions and be prepared for follow-up questions that might be required
- Identify the types of questions which would best suit your purpose, for example, closed, open, probing or hypothetical
- Test the questions before use to ensure they elicit the responses or information you want
- Be prepared to adjust questions depending on any special needs of the candidate
- Keep the questions short and focused
- Sequence the questions to extend candidates from familiar to unfamiliar situations
- Use terminology the candidate will understand such as that covered in training or in the workplace
- Ask single questions, not double-barrelled questions
- Frame the questions in the affirmative avoiding double negatives.
- Don't use trick questions
- Make sure your questions do not lead the candidate; avoid questions which suggest an answer or response.

Prepared responses

In developing prepared responses to use with questioning tools:

- Make a list of acceptable responses to ensure reliability of assessments and help with recording
- Give guidance to the candidate about how much information is needed in their response to a question.
**Instructions for the candidate**

Instructions for the candidate could be separate, or included on the question sheet. Instructions should include:

- When and where the questions will be asked
- Who will ask the questions
- The benchmark around which the questions will be asked
- Guidelines relating to the questioning process, for example, repeating the question, clarifying the question, candidate being able to read the question
- Length of time in which to respond to questions
- Method of recording responses.

**Instructions for assessors**

The instructions for assessors should contain clear and specific directions on the administration and use of the tools. They could be separate, or included on the question sheet. Instructions should include:

- When and where to ask the questions
- Reasonable adjustments that can be made to the questions
- Time allocation
- Recording of responses.

**Recording tools**

Responses should be recorded to:

- Provide feedback to the candidate
- Provide evidence of the process and outcome to be used in any appeal against an assessment decision
- Ensure adequate recordkeeping in line with RTO policies and procedures and other responsibilities.

Assessment recording tools could include evidence captured in written form as well as audio and/or video format.

The recording tool should include:

- Information about the candidate, assessor and context
- The list of questions, if appropriate
- A place to indicate a satisfactory response, according to the response sheet (however, the response sheet could be separate or included in a checklist)
- A place to indicate satisfactory response overall and the feedback given to the candidate.
Tools to support the written questioning method

Tools that can be developed to assist with written questioning of real or simulated work activities include:

- Prepared questions
- Prepared responses
- Instructions for the candidates
- Instructions for the assessors
- Recording tools.

These tools to support the written questioning method are covered in more detail below.

Suggestions for developing the tools

Multiple choice questions

Multiple-choice questions consist of a question or statement called the stem, the correct answer and a selection of responses or options. Multiple-choice questions can ask for the correct answer, the best answer from a list of possibilities, or for a sentence to be completed.

They usually consist of a question with grammatically parallel options or a statement with grammatically correct completions as options.

They are effective for assessing a broad range of knowledge, require a minimum of writing for the candidate and are easily marked. However, they are difficult to construct and can provide limited capacity for a full response.

When constructing multiple-choice questions:

- Present a single, clearly formulated problem
- Include only relevant information in the stem and use plain English
- Make sure only one answer is correct
- Avoid having the correct answer different in style or length to other options
- Make sure the options are all plausible and grammatically correct
- Place correct answers at random and use no more than four options
- Do not use ‘all of the above’ or ‘none of the above’
- Do not use negatives in the stem
- Keep statements brief
- Make sure there aren’t any clues in the options.

Prepared responses

In developing prepared responses, use plain English and develop appropriate questions to suit the purpose. The following table covers the types of written questions you can use.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of written question</th>
<th>What it means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple response questions</td>
<td>Multiple response questions are similar to multiple-choice questions, except there is more than one correct answer. Because the candidate does not know how many correct answers there are, it can minimise guess work. Multiple response questions can be easier to construct than multiple choice questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| True or false questions | True or false questions are good for assessing factual knowledge. They ask the candidate to confirm or deny a statement. They allow for testing a large amount of material at the same time, and are easy to mark. However, candidates could guess and have a 50/50 chance of choosing the correct answer. In addition they do not assess application, are not easy to write and often lead to a quite shallow assessment. When constructing true or false questions:  
- Use plain English  
- Use only one central idea in each item  
- Do not use double negatives  
- Make sure you are asking about knowledge related to the unit  
- Concentrate on factual statements not ones that can be disputed  
- Make instructions for responses simple, for example, tick or circle T/F rather then writing out true or false  
- A separate statement and response sheet makes marking easier, allowing the use of a marking template and the reuse of the statement sheets. |
| Matching questions or matching pairs | Matching questions ask the candidate to match one set of information with corresponding information in another set. They can be used in content areas where there are a lot of facts, for example in definitions or in showing cause and effect. When constructing matching questions:  
- Give clear directions  
- Make all options plausible and relevant  
- Make sure the questions are worded carefully to avoid distracting or confusing the candidates  
- Concentrate all the questions on a single concept  
- Don’t allow a response to be used more than once  
- Arrange both columns in a systematic order, for example alphabetically  
- Six to ten matching questions is a good size  
- Include more than the required number of options to be matched, to reduce the incidence of guessing. |
| Constructed response questions | These are suitable to assess ability to describe, explain, analyse or evaluate. They are usually easier for the assessor to write than selected response questions, but take longer to mark. |
| Completion questions or ‘fill the gap’ | In completion questions, the candidate fills a gap; these focus on one or two word answers. They are useful for the recall of information and facts. However, assessors need to make sure that they are suitable for the literacy level of the candidates, to make sure they are not assessing English ability or reading comprehension rather than facts. Labelling diagrams or pictures is a variation of completion questions. When constructing completion questions:  
- Make sure there is a correct answer  
- Avoid leaving too many gaps so that the sentence becomes a puzzle  
- Leave a blank towards the end of a sentence rather than at the beginning  
- Make blanks the same length so that clues about the length of the word aren’t given  
- The blank should be a key word. |
| Short answer questions | These concentrate on a single issue or concept, and ask for a short response to a question. They are relatively easy to construct, minimise opportunity for guessing and assess recall of information. However, they also do not generally assess application of information, and assume a degree of language and literacy skills of the candidate. When constructing short answer questions:  
- Use direct questions using language familiar to the candidates  
- Give guidance on the parameters of the answer, for example how many words or sentences, or leave a certain amount of space on a question sheet to indicate parameters  
- Use question words such as: ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, and ‘when’ to focus the question. |
| Extended response questions | Extended response questions include essays and reports. They can be used, for example, to present arguments, analyse, evaluate, explain or describe. These give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate cognitive skills such as analysis and synthesis; to assess application of knowledge; and be creative in their response. However, they are more difficult to assess. When constructing the questions:  
- Make sure the writing has an audience, for example, based around a workplace task such as a report or a recommendation to management rather than just an essay for the assessor  
- Give parameters, for example size and time limits  
- Make the marking criteria clear  
- Give clear instructions  
- When assessing extended response questions, have model answers as a guide. |
**Sample response sheets**

For all written questions, response sheets or marking guides are essential. It is helpful to write the answers to the questions as they are being written, except for extended response questions which instead require a list of assessment criteria to be constructed.

**Tests**

Testing is one way of collecting evidence of underpinning knowledge. These can be written or oral. As an assessor, you will also need to consider other forms of assessment as knowledge-based tests cannot provide sufficient evidence to display competence.

Details about how to design knowledge-based tests can be found in Designing Tests: Guidelines for Designing Knowledge Based Tests for Training Packages (2000), WA Department of Training and Employment and VETASSESS.

**Prepared responses**

It can be helpful to make a list of acceptable responses to ensure reliability of assessments and to help with recording.

**Instructions for the candidate**

Instructions for the candidate regarding written questions could be in a separate document, or included on the question sheet.

- Provide some guidance as to the length of response required.
- Provide sufficient space for responses.
- Provide a timeframe for the responses to be given in.
- Provide details of the time and place for the candidate to provide written responses and the conditions under which it will be conducted.

**Instructions for the assessor**

Instructions for the assessor regarding written questions could be in a separate document, or included on the question sheet and should:

- Contain clear and specific directions on the administration and use of the tool
- Include details of when and where the written questions will be administered and any other associated conditions and time allocation.

**Recording tools**

Recording tools for written responses should include a:

- Response sheet for candidate
- Place for the assessor to indicate a satisfactory response overall and that feedback has been given to candidate.
Tools to support the third party report method

Tools that can be developed to assist with obtaining third party reports on candidates include:

- Instructions for the third party
- A third party observation checklist.

These tools to support the third party method are covered in more detail below.

Suggestions for developing the tools

Instructions for third party

In developing tools for use by a third party such as a supervisor:

- Keep instructions simple and clear
- Ensure reports require minimal effort to complete, unless the third party chooses to provide an extensive report
- Give clear advice on the third party’s responsibilities regarding completion of the report
- Ensure any checklist contains specific information about what is required, for example, what needs to be observed, at what standard and under what conditions
- Include an outline of the purpose of the third party report and how the evidence will be used
- Include a timeline for completion.

Third party observation checklist Include:

- Candidate details
- Details of the performance to be reported on
- Provision of space to provide comments
- A space for the candidate and the observer to sign, and the date of the observation/s.

Tools to support the project method

Tools that can be developed to assist with the project method include:

- Project brief or specifications of the product or steps and areas for negotiation
- Checklist for assessing the product or process.

These tools to assist with the project method are covered in more detail below.
Suggestions for developing the tools

Project brief or specifications of the product or process

The project should be designed around tasks the candidates can do in their workplace as part of their normal duties, or contain suggestions on how they could identify a relevant workplace project.

Clear specifications are critical. The project brief should be written in plain English and contain:

- Clear specifications for the product or event
- Steps needed to complete the project (or the candidate may identify these as an assessable component of the project)
- Realistic timeframes including milestones to be achieved
- Resources that might be needed or can be used, and cost considerations if applicable
- The type of support the candidate can receive
- Rules for dealing with the public if the project requires candidates to move outside their workplace or training institution, for example they might need to be provided with letters of recommendation before contacting outside organisations
- Risk management strategies (or have candidates consider these strategies, as an assessable component of the project)
- Processes for gathering evidence during the production of the product or event; for example, team meeting minutes, plans, concepts, or consultations as these should form part of the assessment.

Checklist for assessing the product or process

The checklist should contain the:

- Benchmark to be used for assessment of the project or process
- Criteria that the project or process must meet
- Candidate details
- Assessor details
- Specific OHS requirements
- Provision to document results
- Provision for comments or feedback

Tools to support the portfolio method

A portfolio is a variety of relevant pieces of evidence collected by the candidate.

Tools that can be developed to assist a portfolio method for candidates include:

- Instructions for candidates
- Instructions for assessors
- Portfolio evaluation list or form.

These tools to assist with the portfolio method are covered in more detail below.
Suggestions for developing the tools

Instructions for candidates

In the instructions for candidates, include:

- Suggestions of different types of evidence that can be included in the portfolio
- Recommendation on the amount of evidence required
- Judgement statements or criteria against which the portfolio will be assessed
- Timelines for submission
- Support available for further guidance
- How to verify that the items are authentic, such as verification by a supervisor
- How to cross-reference the evidence against the performance criteria, for example using a matrix or coding so the assessor can easily see which criteria the items in the portfolio relate to
- How to present the portfolio including a table of contents or other guide to find material in the portfolio
- Information on whether or not the portfolio will be returned to the candidate or kept as evidence, as there are issues of copyright in terms of who owns the product which need to be resolved
- Criteria for evaluation of the portfolio.

Instructions for assessors

In the instructions for assessors, include:

- Clear and specific directions on the administration and use of the tools
- A timeline for portfolio collection by candidates and return to the assessor.

Portfolio evaluation list or form

The list or form should contain:

- Details of the assessor, candidate, units being assessed and context
- Requirements of the units of competency
- Criteria against which the portfolio is assessed with space to make evaluation notes about how the evidence meets the criteria; any issues needing clarification; and any further evidence needed
- Space for a summative assessment, if applicable.
Tools to support the journal method

A journal is a mechanism for recording a candidate’s reflections on events or activities over time. Tools that can be developed to assist a journal method for candidates include:

- Instructions for the candidates
- Instructions for the assessor.

These tools to assist with the journal method are covered in more detail below.

Suggestions for developing the tools

Instructions for candidate

Instructions about how candidates might construct a journal could include:

- What information to include in the journal and how this could be done. For example, the candidate could write about tasks undertaken, action taken to deal with contingencies, reflections on these actions and interactions with other people and could include other evidence such as emails
- How often to record in the journal (at least once a week and it is a good idea to suggest a particular time of the day or week)
- Details of the format of the journal.

Instructions for the assessor

Instructions for the assessor should contain clear and specific directions on the administration and use of the tools. This should include:

- The purpose the journal fulfils in the assessment-gathering process
- Issues of confidentiality and privacy
- How to encourage the candidate to complete the journal regularly.

Tools to support the case study method

A case study is a scenario with follow-up questions. Tools that can be developed to assist a case study method for candidates include:

- Case study scenario
- Questions or activities
- Criteria for assessment
- Possible responses.

These tools to support the case study method are covered in more detail below.
Suggestions for developing the tools

Case study scenario

In devising a case study:

- Identify a relevant form, for example, written scenario, a video of an event, a diagram or chart, or an interview
- Include sufficient detail
- If the case study is written, make sure the language is appropriate for the level being assessed
- Provide it in an alternative format, for example, on audio or video tape, if the candidate has such needs.
- Ensure it is easy to read
- Base it as much as possible on real work situations; use your own experiences, or talk to people within the industry
- Identify the evidence required and base the case study and questions or activities around this.

Questions or activities

In devising a set of questions or activities:

- Make sure that they do not require skills at a higher level than specified in the unit of competency or other benchmark being used
- Write the questions or activities so they are clear and relate to the case study.
- Ask different types of questions depending on the AQF qualification and the requirement of the unit of competency. For example, short answer questions could be asked if wanting a response to a situation, whilst complex questions will allow for analysis.

Tools to support self-assessment

Self-assessment is the process whereby a candidate rates their experiences and evidence against the benchmark requirements. The following tools that have been explained previously in this section can be adapted for self-assessment purposes. Self-assessment can be for Recognition purposes and for formative assessment.

In self-assessment methods, a self-assessment checklist with instructions for candidates should be used. This should allow for reflection on performance and include guidelines on making judgements about the evidence gathered. This is covered in more detail below.
Suggestions for developing the tools

Self-assessment checklist with instructions for candidates

These tools are similar to the observation checklist (see above section 'Tools to support the observation method') used by assessors, except the candidate evaluates their own performance.

Include in self-assessment checklists:

- Information on the standard of performance required, for example, elements and performance criteria from the unit of competency and critical aspects
- Space for the candidate to respond with relevant experiences and evidence
- Guidelines on how the candidate can evaluate their own responses.

In providing instructions for candidates, include:

- The process to be followed for self-assessment and how to get support if required
- Where the information needs to be documented
- How the self-assessment information obtained will contribute to and be used in the formal process of assessing competency across all requirements of the unit.
Reviewing and trialling assessment tools

Has there ever been an occasion when you have prepared something for others only to find that it wasn't fit for the purpose. Perhaps you didn't consider something. If you had asked for feedback from others at the development stage you might have avoided this happening and reduced the amount of rework.

The quality and validity of any assessment tool is confirmed by reviewing, trialling and modifying the tool. You should get relevant people to review your assessment tools. You can then trial them on a sample target audience to identify potential problems and areas for improvement. From the review and trial, you will identify any changes that need to be made.

Before the assessment tool is used with real candidates, reflect on the context in which it will be applied and make further adjustments if necessary. After the assessment tool is used, you will need to validate it with other assessors.

This Learning Topic will give guidance on how to review and trial the assessment tools. If your practice environment is an RTO, this will help it meet the requirements of the AQTF. However, even if your practice environment is not an RTO, the processes will form part of your quality assurance system.

When reviewing and trialling assessment tools, assessors should:

- Identify the criteria by which the outcomes will be evaluated
- Determine the representative groups for the review and trial
- Set up the reviews and trials
- Conduct the reviews and trials
- Gather information after the reviews and trials
- Compile and analyse any results from the reviews and trials
- Modify the assessment tools based on results.

Who will review and trial the tools?

Review

Once you have checked and modified new or existing assessment tools, it is important to have other people review the tools. This involves people examining and providing feedback on the tools. Who is involved will depend on the context but could include:

- Former or potential candidates for assessment
- Managers or supervisors
- Technical or subject experts, including occupational health and safety experts, or English language, literacy and numeracy specialists
- Training and assessment colleagues
- Industry regulators, union and employer representatives or members of professional associations
- Industry Skills Council (ISC) personnel
- Personnel from State or Territory training authorities.
**Trial**

You also need to have the tools trialled or piloted. This involves people actually using the tools. You could trial them with:

- A representative group of candidates if you are confident they are ready for assessment
- Former candidates
- A group with similar characteristics to the target group, but who are not presenting for assessment
- Other assessors.

**What criteria will you use for the review and trial process?**

Think back to when you bought your last piece of furniture. You probably went through a process where you reviewed your decision against certain criteria. For example, is it too expensive, will the colour suit the room, will it fit in the room, is it practicable, is it comfortable? You could have discussed it with family or friends before you came to your final decision.

In the same way, as an assessor, it is also important to establish criteria to review and trial assessment tools and to discuss issues about assessment with others.

Some criteria you could evaluate assessment tools on include:

- Effectiveness and relevance to the competency standards
- Whether the assessment tool meets the principles of assessment
- Whether the assessment tool meets the rules of evidence
- Whether the assessment tool is appropriate to selected assessment methods
- Whether the assessment tool is appropriate to the target group/assessment context
- Whether the assessment tool provides guidance on reasonable adjustments
- Whether the assessment tool addresses organisational/legal/ethical requirements including OHS requirements
- Whether the assessment tool enables the candidate to demonstrate current competency
- Level of engagement and direct participation of candidates
- Appropriateness of language and literacy used for intended audience
- Clarity
- Simplicity/ease of use/practicability
- Inclusivity/avoidance of bias
- Guidance on reasonable adjustments
- Cost effectiveness

**The review and trial process**

As with any process you would like to proceed smoothly, in designing assessment tools you must undertake planning and conduct follow-up activities. The steps below show a review and trial process; as the assessor you must ensure any review of assessment tools occurs properly to maximise outcomes.

**Setting up**

Planning trials of assessment tools involves setting up the process, including:

- How data will be collected
- Who will be responsible for the process
• How information about the review, trial and results will be disseminated
• How issues that emerge from the review and trial will be documented
• Who will make the decisions about modification of the tools.

If you are a sole assessor, all these responsibilities will probably fall to you. If this is the case, it is a good idea to work collaboratively with assessors in other organisations.

Conducting the review

You could conduct the review in a number of ways. Make sure you always include a checklist of criteria. Some suggestions are below.

• Provide relevant personnel with the tools, including a checklist of criteria. This could be hard copy or electronic.
• Field test the tools with other assessors and content experts.
• Workshop with assessors and other stakeholders.

Conducting the trials

The people in the trial must be clear about the purpose of the trial, and whether it is being used for an actual assessment event. Conduct the assessment using the assessment tools on a representative group of candidates. Make sure you brief the people involved in the trial and provide opportunities for candidates to give feedback.

After the assessment, candidates can provide this feedback by:

• Completing a simple checklist
• Being part of a focus group
• Being interviewed.

You could use your checklist as a basis for questioning if you are conducting a focus group or interview. Record the feedback.

Compiling and analysing responses from the trials

After the trial, go back to the criteria for evaluation you established beforehand, as your questions will have been based around this criteria. Group collected responses according to the criteria. Compare the responses from the pilot candidates with those from others involved. A clear picture should emerge regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment tool being piloted.

Modification of assessment tools

Use information from the trial to decide the changes needed to be made to the tool. Some modifications will be minor, for example minor changes to a checklist, spelling or grammar, minor changes to instructions or diagrams. However, other modifications may be major, needing a complete reworking. For example if the tools:

• Are too costly or time consuming to use
• Did not meet the principles of assessment
• Were inappropriate for the candidate group.

If you make major changes it is a good idea to go through another trial once the modifications have been made.

**Formatting and filing the assessment tools**

Format the assessment tools so they are appealing, clear and easy to use. It is wise to have someone proofread the tools, or put them away after development for a while and re-read through them later (mistakes will often be more apparent when you are less familiar with a document). Include the date of development and version number on each tool.

File your tools so they can easily be located and accessed. If your organisation doesn’t already have a filing system, set one up. Electronic files should be clearly named, saved in logically named and ordered folders on your system, and backed up. If you keep hard copies, put them in a clearly labelled filing cabinet and hanging files.

Make sure your assessment tools are secure; lock filing cabinets and use systems such as passwords to protect electronic data.
Part 4: Participate in Assessment Validation

Assessment Validation

A strong validation process is the key to providing quality and consistency in assessment. This Learner Guide supports TAEASS403A: Participate in assessment validation, a core unit in the TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

This unit specifies the outcomes required to participate in an assessment validation process. Validation is a process involving assessors working in collaboration to review, compare and evaluate their assessment processes and outcomes. This includes validating assessment methods, assessment tools and interpreting the evidence collected to make a judgement of competence, in relation to the same unit/s of competency.

More specifically, this unit will help you develop skills and knowledge to enable you to:

- Prepare for validation by planning for participation in validation processes in your practice environment and gathering together the materials you will need to evaluate during the validation process.
- Contribute to validation by actively participating and ensuring that the critical aspects of validation are addressed.
- Analyse and document outcomes of validation by implementing recommendations formulated during the review process and changing your practices to support improvements in the quality of assessment.

Assessment validation requires competence in interpreting competency standards as benchmarks for assessment, planning and conducting assessments and developing assessment tools.

Preparing for validation

This Learning Topic examines the reasons for carrying out validation in assessment. It looks at the preparation you need to undertake so that you can participate successfully in validation processes.

Assessment validation is an essential part of continuous improvement in a training and/or assessment organisation, as it gives you information about the appropriateness and effectiveness of assessment. In the validation process, information is collected about various aspects of assessment. This information is collated and analysed; improvements are identified and then a plan is put in place to introduce these improvements. Progress is then reviewed against this plan. Good preparation is essential in any continuous improvement process.

What is assessment validation?

Assessment validation involves comparing, evaluating and reviewing assessment processes, methods and tools and the subsequent assessment decisions. Validation confirms the validity and reliability of judgements made by assessors against the benchmark—for example, a unit of competency. It assists assessors and their organisations to ensure consistent assessment to the standard required by the assessment benchmark. Validation can be applied to a range of assessment activities, products and processes.
For example, it is possible to validate the processes used to inform learners about assessment; the assessment tools used to assess against competencies within a Training Package; or the processes used when assessing using Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)—also known as Recognition of Current Competence (RCC), Skills Recognition or Recognition.

**Your role in assessment validation**

If you are participating in assessment validation, then your role may include:

**Preparation**—establishing the purpose, focus and context of the assessment validation.

**Obtaining, reading and interpreting materials**—these might be provided directly to you prior to the assessment validation or you might have to locate them yourself. You will probably be familiar with some of these materials.

**Submitting your materials**—you may be required to submit examples of assessment materials you use with candidates, such as assessment tools including instructions, assessment checklists, questions and case studies.

**Participating in assessment validation activities**—depending on the type of approach used, you may be part of an assessment panel, team assessment or any other approach used. You will need to be prepared to actively contribute to validation sessions using appropriate communication skills.

**Discussing validation findings**—and suggesting recommendations to improve the quality of assessment.

**The AQTF and assessment validation**

Validation is part of an organisation’s quality processes. For Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), it is a requirement of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) that:

The Registered Training Organisation (RTO) must validate its assessment strategies by:

- Reviewing, comparing and evaluating the assessment process, tools and evidence contributing to judgments made by a range of assessors against the same competency standards*, at least annually; and

- 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.
Why validate assessment?
For any organisation using assessment, validation will ensure that the assessment processes, methods, tools and decisions are valid and reliable.

Validation assists organisations to ensure that a quality assessment service is offered. It is also a mechanism that encourages assessors to learn from one another. It helps to raise the confidence of assessors and clients in the assessment processes used, and leads to greater accountability.

Assessment validation is a formalised process open to scrutiny. Tea room conversations about assessment, useful as they are, are not formalised validation activities. Assessment validation needs to be:

- Planned
- Targeted at a specific audience
- Documented
- Focused on identified areas such as assessment methods and tools.

Purposes of validation

The purposes of validation are to:
- Demonstrate compliance with the AQTF standards for RTOs
- Provide evidence for external and/or internal audits
- Improve assessment practices
- Evaluate the quality of assessment tools
- Provide professional development for assessors
- Increase assessor and facilitator confidence
- Determine whether different assessors/facilitators using the same tools collect the same types and levels of evidence
- Determine whether different assessors and facilitators interpret the same evidence similarly
- Determine whether assessment decisions reflect the rules of evidence.
- In addition, the assessment validation process should highlight areas that need further attention.

Depending on the focus, assessment validation should identify whether:
- Assessment policies and procedures are effective and are being followed
- Candidates are receiving the kind of information they need about assessment
- Assessment resources are properly designed
- Assessors are assessing consistently.

Validation could evaluate whether the assessment benchmarks—for example, competency standards—are being assessed in a consistent, fair and valid manner. Other benchmarks could include:

- The requirements of the national assessment guidelines of the relevant Training Package
- The performance criteria or evidence requirements of learning strategies, programs or assessment plans
- Requirements of OHS legislation, codes of practice, standards and guidelines
- Assessment requirements of the National Reporting System
- Organisational requirements or product specifications.
This Learner Guide focuses on the validation of assessment based on units of competency.

It is not feasible or necessary (nor possible in some situations) to validate the assessment in all of the qualifications and units of competency on the RTO's Scope of Registration once a year. However, the lessons learnt when validating the assessment of one set of competency standards can be used to inform assessment of other competency standards.

**When does validation occur?**

Validation can be carried out before, during and after assessment.

**Before assessment**

At this stage, validation concentrates on the design of the assessment tools and the interpretation of the units of competency to be assessed. It is important to ensure that assessors have a common understanding of the standard to be achieved and the evidence to be collected.

**During assessment**

At this point, assessment validation concentrates on the performance of the candidate during assessment, the process of assessment and the way the assessor carries out assessment.

**After assessment**

At this stage, assessment validation concentrates on how effective the assessment was, the standards of performance achieved, the validity of the evidence collected, and the accuracy and consistency of the assessment judgement.


**What approaches can the validation process take?**

Have you ever been involved in discussions about what constitutes valid and fair assessment? Validation approaches include:

- Assessment panels
- Validation and/or moderation meetings
- Collectively developing and/or reviewing banks of assessment tools and exemplars
- Benchmarking
- Field testing, trialling and piloting assessment tools
- Peer review
- Team assessment
- Internal audit process
- Client feedback mechanisms
- Mentoring by more experienced assessors and facilitators
- Use of an independent assessment validator to review.
Remember, as a participant in an assessment validation activity, it is assumed that the coordinator will have already decided which approach will be used. However, you may be asked to contribute to a decision about which approach to use. Each approach can be used to discuss or examine different aspects of the assessment process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach to validation</th>
<th>What can be examined, discussed or reviewed</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Validation and/or moderation meetings | • Rules of evidence  
• Interpretation of units of competency and Training Package requirements  
• Information to candidates about assessment  
• Assessment tools  
• Evidence collected leading to assessment decision  
• Assessment policies, procedures and processes  
• Checklists for scoring and providing feedback to candidate  
• Guidelines for assessment (for assessor and candidate) |
| Assessor networks | • Interpretation of Training Package requirements  
• Assessment procedures  
• Assessment strategies  
• Determining reasonable adjustment  
• Assessment tools and materials  
• Strategies for promoting access and equity |
| Peer assessment | • Assessment procedures  
• Assessment tools  
• Assessor effectiveness in preparing candidate/s  
• Conduct of the assessment  
• Feedback provided to candidate  
• Assessment judgement based on evidence collected |
| Assessment panel | • Assessment processes  
• Training Package requirements  
• Individual training plans showing how reasonable adjustment is planned  
• Assessment tool development  
• Interpreting and promoting a common understanding of units of competency  
• Advising on professional development for assessors  
• Assessment evidence leading to assessment decisions |

**What aspects of assessment are validated?**

The focus of the validation process should be an examination of any of the following aspects of assessment:

- Assessment processes
- Methods of assessment (the techniques used to assess, such as observation, simulations, questions, portfolios)
- Assessment or evidence-gathering tools (such as checklists, lists of questions, role-play scenarios, project briefs and the instructions for using these tools)
- The interpretation of the evidence collected that leads to assessment decisions.

These aspects will be examined against relevant Training Package requirements to ensure that they meet the principles of assessment (validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility) and the rules of evidence (valid, sufficient, current and authentic), where appropriate to the aspect of assessment being validated.
Assessment processes

These are the key steps in the assessment cycle and include:

- The timing and type of assessment information provided to candidates and assessors
- Preparing the candidates
- Collecting evidence and making the judgement
- Providing feedback on assessment
- Reassessment and appeals.

Assessment methods and tools

The validation process reviews the methods and tools in terms of:

- Appropriateness for candidates
- Validity of methods and tools
- Reliability of methods and tools
- Capacity for flexibility
- The instructions to candidates, assessors and third parties.

Interpretation of evidence

This involves collaboration with others to review whether the evidence collected:

- Meets the rules of evidence (validity, currency, sufficiency and authenticity)
- Covers all the requirements in the benchmark (including Employability Skills and dimensions of competency).

Importantly, it must be established whether the assessment process, methods and tools enabled the candidate to provide evidence that would meet the requirements of the benchmark.

In some cases, the focus of your practice environment’s assessment validation may be the assessment methods and tools or the evidence leading to assessment decisions. In these cases, you will need to clarify what the assessment requirements of the standards are. To do this, you will need to look at:

- The type of Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification
- The Training Package assessment guidelines. These guidelines give a broad description of how assessment should be carried out
- The performance criteria and range statements. These provide some detail about what competency entails and describe the contexts and conditions in which competency can be demonstrated
- The evidence guide. It is important to ensure that the scope of the evidence guide is covered. The evidence guide provides information about what kind of evidence is required and may describe how much of it is needed to demonstrate competency
- How Employability Skills/Key Competencies are addressed in the unit/s of competency
- How the dimensions of competency (task skills, task management, contingency management, and job role/environment skills) have been integrated into the assessment.
**Who will participate?**

The approaches that have been chosen will determine who will participate in the assessment validation activity.

Validation can involve internal processes with stakeholder involvement or external validations with other providers and/or stakeholders.

Where internal processes are used, the RTO uses its own personnel. However, external stakeholders can also be represented. These people can take the role of ‘critical friend’ so that the needs of the candidates and, where relevant, the enterprises or industry are represented. External stakeholders should provide constructive input to the internal validation process.

Where external validation processes are used, an RTO might work in partnership with other RTOs or with industry or licensing bodies to validate assessment strategies. Assessor networks are a useful source of validation partners.

**Gathering materials**

The next step in preparing for validation is identifying what you will need to look at during the validation process. What material will be needed will depend on the focus and approach of the assessment activity.

**You may need:**

- The current version of the Training Package that these competency standards or qualifications are drawn from. This can be downloaded from the National Training Information Service (NTIS). The web address for the NTIS is <http://www.ntis.gov.au>.
- Samples of assessment tools, evidence and assessment decisions, including any documentation outlining the basis for assessment decisions
- Assessment policies and procedures
- Feedback from candidates
- Audit or self-assessment reports
- Correspondence on assessment.

Some of this material, such as standard assessment tools, policies and procedures, should be available through your practice environment’s document register. A document register lists all the organisation’s documents that are version controlled. This is a requirement of the AQTF Standards for RTOs. Where assessors are using different assessment tools to assess the same competency standards, a range of these tools should be collected.

It is vital that you comply with your practice environment’s policies and procedures for record keeping, record storage, confidentiality and retrieval of information.

**Validation templates and checklists**

To prepare for validation, you will need to know how you are going to collect the information you need for validation and document your findings. Naturally, these collection techniques relate to the validation approach decided upon. The RTO needs to document validation to
record improvement action plans and to have evidence that validation has taken place when audited by the State or Territory Training Authority.

The following table provides details of some examples of assessment validation templates and checklists that could be used for assessment validation activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Validation approach</th>
<th>Template or checklist</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderation meeting/s</td>
<td>• Moderation action plan&lt;br&gt;• Assessment validation participant record&lt;br&gt;• Assessment validation cover sheet&lt;br&gt;• Pre- and post-evaluation checklists</td>
<td>• Documents planning process&lt;br&gt;• Documents who was present and where they were from&lt;br&gt;• Provides an explanation of how assessment materials are used—completed by assessor/s in preparation&lt;br&gt;• Useful for recording the outcomes of validation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
<td>• Assessment validation benchmarking summary&lt;br&gt;• Assessment exemplars and benchmarks</td>
<td>• Summarises decisions made and areas for review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor mentoring</td>
<td>• Sampling techniques&lt;br&gt;• Assessor mentoring agreement</td>
<td>• Documents responsibilities of the mentor and the assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, review and trialling of assessment materials by a group of assessors</td>
<td>• Assessment tools, processes and evidence checklist&lt;br&gt;• Samples of collected evidence and documentation outlining the basis of assessment decisions</td>
<td>• Reminds the assessors to apply the principles of assessment and meet evidence requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit of assessment materials</td>
<td>• Audit report</td>
<td>• Summarises audit findings and indicates areas where improvements need to be made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of client feedback</td>
<td>• Survey proforma</td>
<td>• Provides client feedback on the fairness, flexibility and ease of use of tools</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The people participating in validation would talk about:

- How they have used the assessment tool
- What evidence they have accepted in support of competence when using the assessment tool
- The people with whom they have used the assessment tool
- The outcomes of the assessment process.

**Conclusion—Preparing for validation**

No matter what approach to validation is used, the key purpose is to review, compare and analyse assessment to determine whether assessment is consistent and valid. The outcome of the validation process is not to ensure that everyone is assessing in exactly the same way; but that candidates for assessment are being assessed according to the requirements of the competency standards or other benchmarks.

This Learning Topic has covered why validation is important and has looked at some of the approaches used. It has taken you through the steps you need to consider when preparing to participate in validation of assessment.

The next Learning Topic asks you to act on the validation plan that you have developed.
Contributing to validation

This Learning Topic takes you through the methods that can be used in your review and evaluation of assessment processes. You will look at how best to participate actively in validation, and how to record the outcomes of the validation process.

Active participation

As you now know, assessment validation can take a variety of approaches. Whatever form of validation you are participating in, it is essential for successful completion of this unit that you participate actively.

You do this by being prepared and communicating openly and clearly about your assessment experiences.

Read the following short case study and identify how the participants promote clear communication during and after the assessment validation activity.

Validation is an opportunity to learn from other assessors. In reviewing and evaluating, it is important to ask meaningful questions.

Here are some examples of the types of questions you might ask when validating assessment:

- What kinds of candidates do you use these assessment tool/s with?
- How could we adjust this tool to suit people who:
  - Can't read well
  - Do not have a practice environment
  - Have a temporary or permanent disability?
- Can you explain the evidence you collected and show how it met the requirements of the unit of competency?
- What information should be given to candidates before assessment?
- How is this information best distributed?
- Have you had any assessment appeals when assessing against this benchmark? What was the basis of these appeals?
- For the questions on underpinning knowledge, do you have a guide on required responses?
- How do you check that the candidate is operating at the Key Competency level that is required by the standard?
- What steps did you go through to develop this assessment tool? Was there any industry input?
- Were there any situations where this method of assessment was impractical? What did you do instead?
- Have you had any feedback from employers or candidates on these assessment methods and tools?
- How have you integrated the dimensions of competency?
- How have you integrated the Employability Skills?
- In what way have you addressed the critical application of evidence?

Questions like these are designed to gain specific information about assessment tools, methods and processes as part of the validation process. Questions assist assessors to learn from one another and, just as importantly, they assist assessors to reflect on their own practice, without
feeling that they are being criticised. Validation should be a positive exercise for all those involved!

To establish an environment of openness and trust, you may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. This is a simple document that outlines the requirement for assessors to keep discussions confidential and not to use other people’s assessment materials without permission.

**Version control and accuracy of documents**

Validation also provides an opportunity to check that assessment documentation is accurate and that version control is being implemented consistently. When discussing assessment documentation, try to get into the habit of checking that everyone is working from the current version of the document. Check for accuracy of records. Some areas to look out for include:

- Assessors working from the same version of assessment materials—these should be checked against the organisation’s document register
- Correct titles and codes for competency standards and qualifications
- The correct use of the Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo (refer to usage guidelines <http://www.training.com.au/Pages/menuitemdf9eb488f6527cab9eb1f81017a62dbc.aspx>)
- Out-of-date assessment materials that have been developed for older versions of Training Packages
- Documents that should be version controlled.
- Assessment documents which conform to the policies and procedures of the organisation. For example, the information given to assessment candidates about assessment appeals must align with the appeals procedure.

**Summarising the outcomes of the validation activity**

It is vital that the outcomes of validation are recorded accurately using templates, checklists or other mechanisms decided by your practice environment.

As a participant, check that the outcomes of the validation session have been accurately recorded, including agreed future action. This documentation will need to be labelled and filed according to your organisation’s record keeping procedure, and copies circulated to the validation activity participants.
Conclusion—contributing to validation

This Learning Topic has examined some of the processes used during validation and the responsibilities of participants. It is important to:

- Be prepared (pre-reading, making initial notes)
- Communicate openly
- Listen to other assessors
- Ask probing questions
- Check documentation for accuracy
- Contribute to the discussion
- Contribute to and clarify recommendations for improvement.

Your active participation in assessment validation sessions will provide valuable information to contribute to continuous improvement of assessment practices.
Analysing and documenting validation outcomes—bringing it all together

This Learning Topic will cover how to analyse the information collected and how to bring it together as a report. This analysis will occur during the assessment validation activity.

What have you discovered?

The information collected as a result of assessment validation forms the basis for improvement. It is not enough to collect it—you then need to make sense of it so that it is clear how assessment can be improved. After determining where there are opportunities for improvement, you can then contribute to these improvements.

During the assessment meeting or activity, you will be required to analyse and discuss the findings in order to improve the quality of assessment. This will involve thinking about and suggesting recommendations to improve assessment processes, assessment methods and tools, and how evidence is collected.

Here are some examples of ideas for recommendations for improvement:

- Professional development strategies for assessors
- Changes to policy and procedures
- Management of record keeping systems
- Changes to resources to reduce time and/or cost
- Changes to assessment system procedures
- Partnership arrangements
- Improvements to evidence collection processes
- Additional or revised information for assessors
- Additional or revised information for candidates or third parties
- Suggestions about the timing of release of information
- Processes to be used in the development of assessment tools
- Identification or development of exemplars
- Liaison with technical experts.

Recommendations need to be clear, practical and effective. There should be a strong link from the findings of the validation activity to the recommendations.

Make a note of the recommendations agreed upon. Where relevant, you will need to act on these improvements. This can be streamlined by developing an action plan. If the action involves other people, get together with the others and draw up an action plan for implementing the recommendations and improvements. The action plan can include the action to be undertaken, by whom and when.

Finally, you will want to implement changes to your assessment practice arising from your participation in the validation process.
Keeping a record

AQTF 2010 Essential Standards for Continuing Registration Standard 3.4 requires that 'the RTO manages records to ensure their accuracy and integrity'. Your organisation may also have requirements for record keeping for continuous improvement with regard to:

- What information is kept
- Where information is kept
- How information is archived
- How information is accessed.

You also need to be aware of maintaining the confidentiality of records. For example, if your organisation is compliant with AQTF 2010 Essential Standards for Continuing Registration Standard 3.4, it will have a procedure that includes information about how confidential information is safeguarded.

Conclusion—analysing and documenting validation outcomes

In this Learner Guide you have looked at how validation is carried out and documented in line with an organisation’s continuous improvement processes. As with any continuous improvement activity, validation is not a one-off activity; it is part of a recurring cycle. As your practice environment continues to validate its assessment processes, the quality of assessment will improve because striving for good practice in assessment will become a part of your practice environment’s culture.
Appendix A: Resources

National Training Information System
<http://www.ntis.gov.au>

Assessment generator
The assessment generator developed by West-One Services can be located at:
<http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/innovations/wa015.htm>
The web-based assessment generator makes it possible for training practitioners to efficiently assemble assessment plans, methods and tools to assist them in meeting the requirements of the AQTF. This is achieved by providing a range of functionalities including:

- The ability to create and manage a repository of assessment plan and tool information that may be used across the organisation or in partnership with other RTOs
- Assisting RTOs in the construction of assessment materials through the easy and intuitive manipulation of training product and assessment task information to suit assessment delivery requirements. This includes the management of product information from Training Package through to performance criteria if required
- The incorporation of appropriate security and assessment plan/tool and validation features.

A guide to developing Training Package assessment materials
To access this resource online, go to <http://resourcegenerator.gov.au> then:
1. Select ‘Tell me more’
2. Select ‘Log on as guest’
3. Choose an industry area from the drop down menu, then select ‘Update’
4. Select ‘Training Package Assessment Guides’
5. Choose one of the ten guides, which are then presented in chapters.


Assessment strategies
## Appendix B: Assessment methods and tools

Below is a list of some assessment methods and tools, a description of each method and tool and suggestions about when to use them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples of Appropriate Use</th>
<th>Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Observation in workplace | Applicant undertakes real work activities at the workplace and demonstrates processes and/or the steps to produce products. | To demonstrate job specific skills, e.g.  
- Receptionist, taking telephone calls, greeting clients  
- Personnel officer conducting interview.  
Can be used to provide RPL evidence. | • Instruction to candidates and assessors  
• Observation checklist  
• Description of competent performance |
| Observation in simulated work environment | As above except the workplace situation is simulated. | Job specific skills are applied off the job, e.g.  
- Training kitchen  
- College workshop  
- Industry training centre. | • Instructions to candidates and assessors  
• Observation checklist  
• Description of competent performance |
| Fault finding | Product is given to applicant to analyse for errors or problems. Can be written or practical. | Identify why the engine does not work.  
Identify the inaccuracies in meeting minutes and correct them. | • Assessor observation checklist, or  
• Candidate checklist (with diagrams if needed) |
| Role-play | Participants are assigned roles and a scenario to enact potential responses to situations. Clear guidelines are required for all participants. Assessor must also undertake a careful role in briefing, debriefing. | Exploration of potential responses to situation, eg  
- Meeting procedures  
- Leadership techniques  
- Conflict resolution  
- Client complaint  
- Management techniques. | • Instructions to candidates and assessors  
• Scenario and outline of roles and key steps or issues to be covered |
| Construction of role-play | Applicant designs own role-play to demonstrate issues and responses. Requires applicant to consider potential scenarios and responses. Guidelines for design of role-play needed. | As above, except candidate develops roles and scenarios. Could be useful at higher AQF levels. | • Instructions to candidates and assessors  
• Boundaries, rules and guidance for the scenarios and roles to be constructed |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples of Appropriate Use</th>
<th>Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Games             | Formats such as quiz shows, board games such as Monopoly, Scruples, can be adapted to specific areas to enable participants to explore potential options, difficulties, short cuts, etc. | Problem-solving and decision making in management, small business, etc. e.g.  
  - ‘Management techniques’  
  - ‘Running a restaurant’  
  - ‘The Travel Game’ | • Instructions to candidates and assessors including clear purpose for assessment e.g. formative assessment |
| Game construction | As above. In this case, the candidates design and construct the game themselves. This further enables candidates to identify and analyse the situation being applied to the game. | As above  
Could be used at higher AQF levels. | • Instructions to candidates and assessors  
• Information on format/s to be used and purposes to be achieved through game |
| Verbal questioning | Assessor asks questions relevant to required underpinning knowledge and contingency skills | Useful for drawing out knowledge—especially if candidate has difficulty with literacy or where written questions are too formal.  
Useful in formative assessment to check progress. | • List of set questions or bank of questions from which assessors select questions  
• Corresponding answers (key aspects) |
Your Notes: