

## What is assessment?

### From an assessor's perspective

Assessment is the process of gathering and judging evidence in order to decide whether a person has achieved a standard or objective.

That means that assessment involves working out a number of things:

- which standards or objectives are being assessed
- which types of evidence are best to collect
- which evidence is best for this particular candidate
- which evidence is the best indicator of achievement

But, before we can even begin to work out those things, there is a bigger picture that we need to think about.

### What is evidence?

According to the Rules of Evidence, evidence must be:

- Valid
- Sufficient
- Authentic
- Current
- Validity
  - when deeming a learner competent, the assessor is confirming that the learner has demonstrated the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements
- Sufficiency
  - When deeming a learner competent the assessor is confirming that the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence has enabled a judgement to be made of a learner's competency
- Authenticity
  - When deeming a learner competent, the assessor is confirming that they have been assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work. Furthermore, if the assessor has not observed the learner in person, they have used valid means of identification to confirm the authenticity of the work submitted.
- Currency
  - When deeming a learner competent, the assessor is confirming that the assessment evidence has been provided from the present or the very recent past thus assuring them that the assessment evidence demonstrates current competency.

### *Types of evidence*

It is very easy to get too much evidence. It is also very easy to get too much evidence that doesn't really help us to make good decisions. Because of this, it is in everyone's interests to guide our candidates through the selection, organisation and submission of evidence.

The first thing we need to do, however, is work out what makes quality evidence. The answer to this is quite simple. It is evidence that enables assessors to make decisions about whether someone can do what it is that they are meant to be able to do, i.e., it will help the assessor to recognise competency.

Specifically, quality evidence addresses the rules of evidence as described above and:

- Reflects the skills, knowledge and attributes defined in the relevant unit of competency – (e.g. work samples, third party reports (confirming skills to industry standard))
- Shows application of the skills in the context described in the range statement in the unit of competency (e.g. range of evidence addressing the range of skills, knowledge and attributes described in the range statement)
- Demonstrates competence over a period of time (e.g. for higher level qualifications assigning tasks that involve generating designs and ideas, analysing and solving problems, leading teams and developing long-term plans which are likely to take place over an extended period of time and involve a range of people who support the learning and assessment and help with the collection of evidence. For new learners, undertaking lower level qualifications, the time taken to absorb and understand concepts will demonstrate period of time.)
- demonstrates repeatable competence (e.g. assigning a number of similar tasks, providing the learner with the opportunity to demonstrate competence on more than one occasion)
- is the work of the candidate (e.g. face – face discussion; sighting photo ID (drivers' licence))
- can be verified (e.g. asking learner probing questions, discussion with workplace supervisor to confirm performance level, feedback from relevant personnel)
- demonstrates the candidate's current skills and knowledge (e.g. observation, certification by authorised personnel)
- does not require language, literacy and numeracy levels beyond those needed for the performance of the competency e.g. meets the AQF requirements for the unit of competency being assessed)
- meets the requirements of the dimensions of competency:

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- task skill (e/g/ observation of skills)
- task management skills (e.g. addresses the required skills and knowledge of the unit)
- contingency management skills (e.g. by providing learner with the opportunity to address “what if” scenarios)
- job/role environment (e.g. by meeting the required attributes as described in position description)

In this respect, we need to ensure that our evidence and the way it is collected meets the VET Policies & Frameworks that influence our work, e.g., Disability Discrimination Act, Racial Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act.

### **What is the purpose of the assessment?**

The first thing we need to know is why we want to assess in the first place. There are many different reasons why we might assess someone, and each of them might lead to a different way of assessing. So, we need to be clear on our purpose before we start. Some of the more common reasons to assess may be:

- to recognise prior learning or current competencies (discussed and documented in the Assessment Plan)
- to establish candidate’s progress towards achievement of competence (assessment requirements for each unit addressed in Assessment Plan for the unit or cluster of units)
- determine language, literacy, numeracy needs of candidate (LLN Test if deemed necessary)
- to determine training gaps of candidate/s (complete RPL process to identify gaps)

### **What is competence?**

Competence indicates sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enable someone to act in a wide variety of situations. When a candidate is deemed competent by an assessor, it means that the candidate has been assessed not only against the task skill but all dimensions of competency, that is, task management, contingency management and job/role environment, thus assuring the assessor that they have the ability to undertake the skills and knowledge assessed in other similar situations

### **What is the context of the assessment?**

The purpose of the assessment is closely linked to its context. Actually, the context includes the purpose. But, the context also includes all those other things that tell us about the reasons for the assessment, and the things that we will need to consider when we are planning our assessment. Some of the more common contexts of assessment that we encounter as trainers include:

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- the environment in which the assessment will be carried out, including real or simulated work and Work Health and Safety (WHS) issues
- opportunities for gathering evidence in a number of situations
- the purpose of assessment
- who carries out the assessment
- relationship between units of competency and the work activities in the candidate's workplace
- relationships between competency standards and learning activities
- auspicing and partnership arrangements
- the period of time during which the assessment takes place
- apportioned costs or fees (if applicable)
- quality assurance mechanisms
- individual unit or integrated approaches to competency assessment

### **Determining the purpose and context**

The first step is to establish a list of all the people who might be affected by the assessment. These are the stakeholders – they have a stake in what we are doing, simply because they are affected in some way by it. Mind you, not every stakeholder needs to be involved. More often than not, key people who can explain the way others are going to be affected, in other words the relevant people, will be identified.

When it comes to consulting the right people, there are two groups:

- (a) those who we absolutely must involve
  - (b) those who we may involve
- (a) Those who must be involved include:
- The candidate/s
  - The assessors who will be conducting the assessment
- (b) Those who may be involved include:
- the client, company or organisation
  - team leaders, managers, supervisors
  - delivery personnel
  - technical/subject experts
  - training and assessment coordinators
  - industry regulators
  - employee and employer representatives
  - members of professional associations
  - Commonwealth department official/Centrelink personnel/caseworker
  - Australian Apprenticeship Centre (AAC) personnel.

What questions should we ask?

The common questions everyone asks are when and where the assessment could occur. Whilst this is important information, there may be some organisational, ethical and legal requirements that may affect the conduct of assessment. These requirements commonly include:

- organisation's quality assurance systems
- business and performance plans
- access and equity policies and procedures
- collaborative/partnership arrangements
- defined resource parameters
- industrial relations systems and processes,
- awards/enterprise agreements
- legal requirements including anti-discrimination, equal employment, job role/responsibilities/conditions
- relevant industry codes of practice
- confidentiality and privacy requirements

WHS considerations include:

- ensuring WHS requirements are adhered to during the assessment process
- identifying and reporting WHS hazards and concerns to relevant personnel

These requirements will be documented in the assessment plan, and intentions confirmed with the relevant people before going any further.

### **What is Reasonable Adjustment?**

'Reasonable adjustment' is a term used in the education, employment and VET sectors to refer to any modification made to the learning environment, certification requirements, training delivery or assessment method used to help students with disability to access and participate in education and training on the same basis as those without disability.

RTOs are obliged by law to make reasonable adjustment to ensure maximum participation of students with disability in teaching, learning and assessment activities. This includes:

- ensuring that course activities are sufficiently flexible;
- providing additional support where necessary; and
- offering a reasonable substitute within the context of the course where a student cannot participate

Reasonable adjustment is defined in section 4 of the Employment and the Disability Discrimination Act as 'an adjustment to be made by a person is a reasonable adjustment unless making the adjustment would impose an unjustifiable hardship on the person'.

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There is no list in the Act of the types of adjustments needed to remove discrimination against people with disability and each case needs to be assessed on its own circumstances and merits. The nature of the reasonable adjustment will vary from case to case and the question of whether the person has made 'all reasonable adjustments' takes into account the circumstances of the parties involved, including what is or is not possible for the person making the adjustments.

The purpose of reasonable adjustment

Reasonable adjustment aims to make it possible for students with disability to participate fully in education and training. It is not to give a student with disability an advantage over other students, to change course standards or outcomes, or to guarantee success.

Reasonable adjustment to teaching, learning and assessment activities needs to be justifiable and uphold the integrity of the qualification.

### **Understanding the organisation's Assessment Policy and procedures including its complaints and appeals policies**

The Assessment Policy

Every student must be provided with access to Axxis Project Training's assessment policy and procedures. This may be through access to an online copy, a hard copy handed to the student, or a hard copy kept in the training room within easy access of all learners.

The Appeals Process

Axxis Project Training's appeals process is outlined in the Student Handbook. Evidence that the student understands their rights in relation to an appeal is documented in Axxis Project Training's Assessment Plan.

Confidentiality

Axxis Project Training's approach to confidentiality and student rights is outlined in the Student handbook and evidence that the student understands their rights and responsibilities in relation to confidentiality is documented in Axxis Project Training's Assessment Plan.

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