

# Training Accreditation Council

## Design and Development of an Assessment System

### Pre-session Reading

**The Design and Development of an Assessment System** is the first in a series of three workshops provided by the Training Accreditation Council. The topics in each of the workshops build to create a full picture of assessment in the VET sector. A recording of workshops two and three are available at the following links.

- [Designing and Using Assessment Tools](#)
- [Making an Assessment Decision](#)

### References and Resources

This handout outlines the concepts that will underpin the discussions and activities in Workshop One. Reviewing these notes and the Fact Sheets will enable you to participate fully in the webinar session. The workshop is supported by the following documents available from the [TAC website](#).

- [The Standards for RTOs 2015](#)
- [The TAC Users' Guide for the Standards](#)
- [TAC Assessment Fact Sheet](#)
- [TAC Assessment Validation Fact Sheet](#)
- [TAC Records Management Fact Sheet](#)
- [TAC RTO Complaints and Appeals Fact Sheet](#)
- [TAC Industry Engagement Fact Sheet](#)
- [TAC Vocational Competence and Industry Currency Fact Sheet](#)
- [TAC Assuring the Quality of RTO Processes, Practices and Products Fact Sheet](#)
- [TAC Identifying and Meeting Learner Needs Fact Sheet](#)
- [TAC Amount of Training Fact Sheet](#)
- [TAC Third Party Arrangements Fact Sheet](#)

### What is a System?

A system is a regularly interacting or independent group of items forming a unified whole. Every system is delineated by its spatial and temporal boundaries, surrounded and influenced by its environment, described by its structure and purpose and expressed in its functioning.

This workshop is focussed on an assessment system. During the workshop you will be identifying its interacting parts, examining the physical and time constraints and the environmental influences that determine the rules you must follow and the choices you can make. By the end of the workshop you will be in a position to describe its structure, purpose and function.

The assessment system developed and implemented by your RTO will be a blend of non-negotiable mandatory requirements, and of options selected by the RTO depending upon the needs of clients and industry, and the resources available to the RTO. This pre-reading will examine the mandatory or non-negotiable influences on your assessment system.

## Mandatory requirements for assessment

The following three things are not negotiable ... you must follow the requirements of Training Packages or VET accredited courses (1.8a), you must adhere to an evidence-based competency-based assessment process, and you must comply with all the requirements of the *Standards for RTOs*:

- Competency-based assessment
- Units of competency
- Standards for RTOs

### 1. Competency-based assessment

The idea of competency sets VET apart from general education and higher education and is at the heart of VET training delivery and assessment.

Competencies do not exist in isolation; each competency is a cog in the machine. It acts as part of a system to achieve industry outcomes, it interacts with other competencies of the individual and of others, it is adaptable and transferable to serve other functions even in other industries.

The natural habitat of competencies is the workplace not the RTO. The RTO is a kind of “competency zoo” where competencies are carefully managed and nurtured, but you always need to remember that their real role is working with other competencies in the workplace. This needs to be reflected in what you teach and how you assess. The standards for RTOs define competency as:

Competency means the **consistent application** of **knowledge** and **skill** to the standard of performance required in the **workplace**. It embodies the ability to **transfer** and apply skills and knowledge to **new situations** and environments.

*Standards for RTOs, Glossary p8*

There are several key words in the definition that are important to consider:

- Consistent ... this means no variation in performance;
- Application ... this means not just potential or ability, but actual performance;
- Knowledge ... of industry, of processes, of protocols;
- Skill ... to perform the competency and demonstrate outcomes;
- Workplace standard ... this means relevant to actual workplaces; and
- Transfer and apply in new situations... means long-term and broad application.

Your assessments and your assessment system must reflect all these qualities, namely your assessment system must assess consistent application, assess knowledge, assess skills, and assess transfer, and do so in workplace-like conditions.

## 2. Units of Competency

The structure of the units of competency found in Training Packages and VET accredited courses reflects these qualities.

- Pre-requisite units (if any)
- Elements of competency and their performance criteria
- Foundation skills (if any)
- *Performance evidence*
- *Knowledge evidence*
- *Assessment conditions*

The tables on the following pages describe each component of the unit of competency and its assessment requirements. These tables reflect the format used in streamlined Training Packages. There may be some of you that are working with Training Packages that have not transitioned to this newer format as yet. If this is the case, the transition to this format should occur with the next revision of your training package.

The unit of competency and the assessment requirements tells us what we must assess, how we must assess, how often we must assess, in what conditions and contexts we must assess. Note that that there are two types of attribute to be assessed ... knowledge and skills. Our assessment system will therefore have two kinds of assessment; Some form of question and answer to assess knowledge, and observation to assess skills ("show and tell"). These are not interchangeable.

The requirements of the unit serve to both direct what we look for as evidence of competency and what we need to have seen to judge that a person is competent.

### Unit of Competency Components

<b>Unit code</b>	A unique code will be assigned to a unit.
<b>Unit title</b>	A title that concisely describes the unit outcome.
<b>Application</b>	A brief description of the unit content, how the unit is applied and any licensing, legislative regulatory or certification requirements that apply to the unit.
<b>Pre-requisite unit (OPTIONAL)</b>	A list of any unit/s in which the learner must be deemed competent prior to the determination of competency in this unit.
<b>Elements</b>	Describe the essential outcomes of the unit by breaking down the unit into actions or outcomes.
<b>Performance criteria</b>	Relate directly to the corresponding element. Performance criteria break the corresponding element down into tasks, roles and skills and applied knowledge that reflect the required standard of performance in the workplace, education or community environment.
<b>Foundation skills</b>	The Foundation skills are a combination of elements of the Australian Core skills Framework and the Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework that are essential to the performance of the unit.
	Australian Core Skills Framework – describes an individual's performance in the five core skills of learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy.

Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework – describes a set of non-technical skills, knowledge and understandings that underpin successful participation in work

Only skills applicable to the unit outcomes are identified in the table.

Skill	Description
Reading skills	
Writing skills	
Oral communication	
Numeracy skills	
Learning skills	
Problem-solving skills	
Initiative and enterprise skills	
Teamwork skills	
Planning and organising skills	
Self-management skills	
Technology skills	
Unit mapping information	Specifies the code and title of any equivalent unit of competency e.g. a previous version of the unit.

### Assessment Requirements Components

Title	Specifies the code and unit title that the assessment requirements relate to.
Performance evidence	Specifies process and product evidence and the frequency/volume of evidence that needs to be collected by an assessor to determine competence.
Knowledge evidence	<p>Elements and performance criteria are not to be reiterated in this field.</p> <p>Specifies knowledge a learner must have to perform the work tasks described in the unit of competency.</p>
Assessment conditions	<p>Specifies conditions, methods, contexts and resources required for assessment. Advice may also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mandated assessment methods</li> <li>identified co-requisite relationships</li> <li>mandated assessment tools and their implementation requirements.</li> </ul>

## How do we know if someone is competent?

1. We look for **evidence** that reflects their knowledge and skills.
2. Evidence of **knowledge** can be found in the answers to questions.
3. Evidence of **skills** can be seen in the performance of tasks.

VET is an evidence-based enterprise, so your assessment system must be one that enables you to gather credible evidence and make quality evidence-based judgements. You will need to gather evidence of relevant knowledge, and evidence of actual relevant performance.

There are two fundamental steps:

1. gathering evidence; and
2. making a judgement.

Your assessment system is going to provide the machinery for this process, linking these components and ensuring that all the persons involved in gathering evidence and in making judgements are suitably qualified and experienced to perform these tasks.

## What do the Standards say about our assessment system?

The requirements for quality assessment, and for the persons engaged in the process, are set out in the Standards. As you can see, almost all the clauses in Standard 1 have something to say relevant to assessment:

- Unit requirements (1.4, 1.8a)
- Rules of evidence (1.8b)
- Principles of assessment (1.8b)
- Candidate needs (1.1, 1.7)
- RTO resources (1.2, 1.3)
- Assessors (1.3, 1.13-1.20)
- Industry relevance (1.5, 1.6)
- Assessment validation (1.8b, 1.9-1.11)
- RPL (1.8, 1.12)

In particular, clause 1.8 commands that the RTO implement an assessment system to ensure quality assessment outcomes, then specifies what the assessment system must achieve. The reality is that many of the clauses in our regulation are focused on the quality of the assessment system. The result is that RTOs need to fully understand the regulation and the intent of each of the clauses.

Other Standards also inform on assessment such as:

- Quality assurance (2.1, 2.2)
- Third-party assessment (2.3, 2.4)
- Certification (3.1)
- Information (4, 5.1, 5.2)
- Appeals (6.2-6.5)
- Glossary - Assessment, assessment systems, assessors, competency and unit of competency, RPL, validation

## Additional Guidance

### Fact Sheets

This is a substantial task and TAC has developed Fact Sheets to support RTOs understanding of many of these requirements. The current versions of the fact sheets can be downloaded from the [TAC website](#).



### The TAC Users' Guide

The [TAC Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs](#) discusses key aspects of each clause and provides a guide to compliance for the clauses.

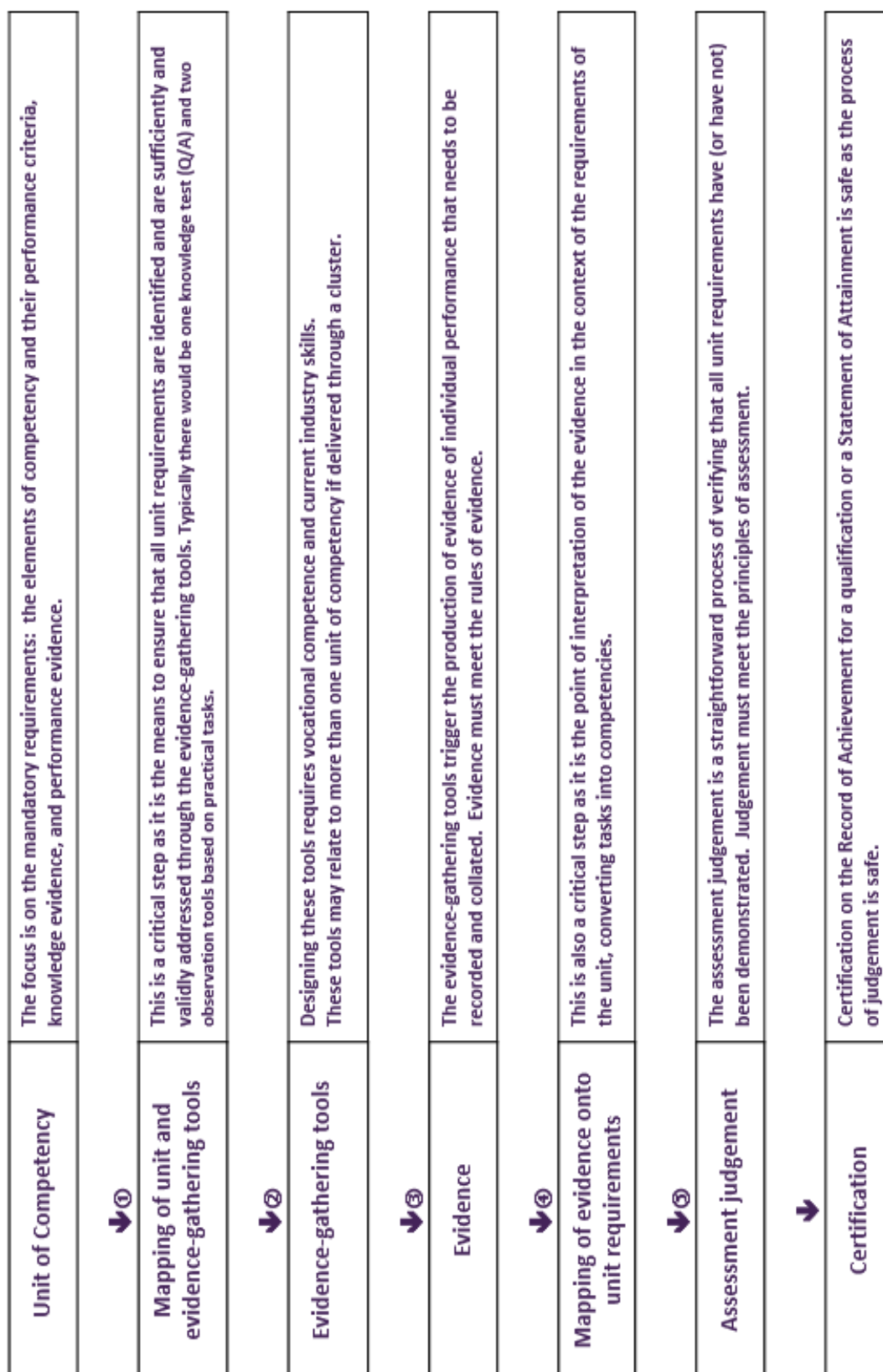
### Assessment in the VET Sector

The Department of Training and Workforce Development have published a detailed guide to the conduct of assessment for the VET Sector called, [Assessment in the VET Sector](#). The publication provides in depth information about assessment practice as well as links to key supporting legislation. The document also contains examples from a range of RTOs.

**The following appendences will be referred to during the workshop**

## Appendix 1

# From Unit to Certificate



## Appendix 2

# Some ideas for a framework for an RTO Assessment Policy and Procedures

The following is a list of headings and sub-headings that you might consider including in your Assessment System Policy and Procedures.

- ☐ **Objectives of the assessment system**
- ☐ **Applicability of the policy**
  - ☐ RTO delivery scope and delivery sites
  - ☐ Contracted or auspiced partner organisations
  - ☐ Training-based assessment and RPL-based assessment
- ☐ **Definitions**
  - ☐ Standards for RTOs 2015
  - ☐ RTO in-house terminology
- ☐ **Standards for assessment**
  - ☐ Principles of Assessment
  - ☐ Rules of Evidence
- ☐ **Assessors**
  - ☐ Required credentials
  - ☐ Roles and responsibilities
- ☐ **Understanding unit requirements**
  - ☐ Listing mandatory unit requirements
  - ☐ Determining the level of sophistication
  - ☐ Legislative and regulatory requirements
  - ☐ Validating unit requirements
- ☐ **Understanding and responding to industry expectations**
  - ☐ Engagement with local and national industry
    - ☐ Identifying and incorporating industry practices
    - ☐ Industry review of RTO practices
- ☐ **Understanding and responding to candidate needs**
  - ☐ LLN
  - ☐ Disability and reasonable adjustment
  - ☐ Support for RPL candidates
  - ☐ Remote candidates
  - ☐ Workplace/employment opportunities and limitations



- ☐ **Identifying and utilising RTO resources**
  - ☐ In-house evidence-gatherers
  - ☐ Supervised personnel
  - ☐ 3<sup>rd</sup> party observers
  - ☐ In-house assessment venues
  - ☐ Workplace assessment venues
  - ☐ Equipment and materials for assessment
  - ☐ RPL
  - ☐ Delivery at a distance
  
- ☐ **Development of assessment tools**
  - ☐ Selection of published assessment tools
  - ☐ Drafting of in-house assessment tools
  - ☐ Mapping of assessment tools
  - ☐ Review and revision of assessment tools
  
- ☐ **Information for evidence-gatherers**
  - ☐ Duties
  - ☐ Resources
  - ☐ Delivery
  - ☐ Documentation
  - ☐ Monitoring
  
- ☐ **Information for candidates**
  - ☐ Assessment plans
  - ☐ Assessment activity information
  
- ☐ **Managing evidence gathering**
  - ☐ Identification of the candidate
  - ☐ Implementing in-house evidence-gathering
  - ☐ Implementing 3<sup>rd</sup> party evidence-gathering
    - ☐ Selecting 3<sup>rd</sup> party observers
    - ☐ Briefing 3<sup>rd</sup> party observers
    - ☐ Monitoring 3<sup>rd</sup> party observers
  - ☐ Timeliness of feedback to candidates
  - ☐ Reporting evidence to assessor
  
- ☐ **Development of assessment judgement tools**
  - ☐ Ensuring judgement is based only on competency requirements
  - ☐ Timeliness of reporting outcomes to candidates
  - ☐ Repeat assessments and/or re-assessments
  
- ☐ **Documenting assessment outcomes**
  - ☐ Documenting evidence outcomes
  - ☐ Documenting judgement outcomes
  - ☐ Retaining assessment records
- ☐ Confidentiality of records and outcomes

- ☐ **Assessment appeals**
  - ☐ Process
  - ☐ Outcomes
  
- ☐ **Ethical issues**
  - ☐ Candidate misconduct and penalties
    - ☐ Plagiarism, cheating, masquerade
  - ☐ Assessor transgressions and penalties
  - ☐ 3<sup>rd</sup> party observer transgressions and penalties
  - ☐ Contracted or auspiced partner organisations non-compliance and penalties
  - ☐ Conflicts of interest
  
- ☐ **Documenting components of the assessment system**
  - ☐ Unit delivery and assessment plans
  - ☐ Qualification training and assessment strategies
  - ☐ Assessment mappings (and relevant units)
  - ☐ Evidence-gathering tools and processes
  - ☐ Judgement tools and processes
  
- ☐ **Assessment Validation**
  - ☐ Pre-delivery validation
  - ☐ Post-delivery validation
  - ☐ Validation of the assessment system
  - ☐ Quality assurance indicators
  - ☐ Action and improvement of the assessment system
  
- ☐ **Responsibilities**
  - ☐ RTO
  - ☐ Assessors
  - ☐ Supervised personnel
  - ☐ 3<sup>rd</sup> party observers
  - ☐ Industry experts
  - ☐ Candidates
  - ☐ Contracted or auspiced partner organisations
  
- ☐ **Review of assessment policy and procedures**
  
- ☐ **References and resources**
  - ☐ TAC Fact Sheets
  - ☐ TAC User Guide
  - ☐ DTWD texts