

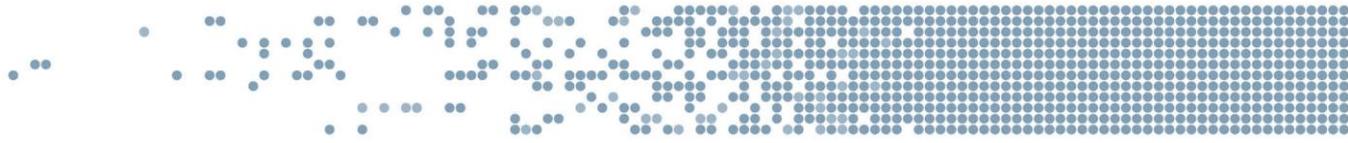


GUIDE

Guide to developing assessment tools

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Introduction

This guide is designed to assist registered training organisations (RTOs) and their assessors to develop practical assessment tools that:

- meet the requirements of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* and
- deliver skilled graduates who are job ready from day one.

It is important for RTOs to understand the capacity of the tools they use and adapt these tools to meet their requirements. This will help ensure confidence in the quality of assessment. It will also ensure that your assessment is valid, reliable, flexible and fair.

You can also refer to the information in this guide if you are reviewing and contextualising commercially developed assessment tools.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* and the Users' Guide to the Standards.

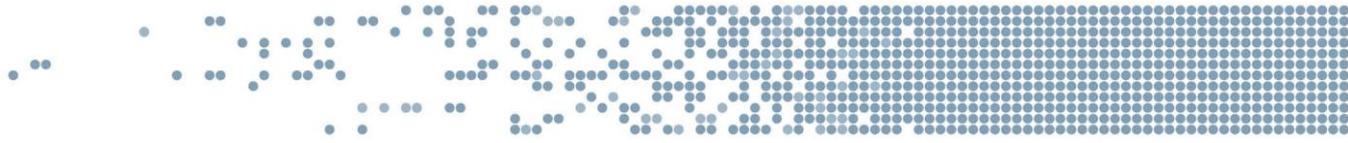
This guide has been produced by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) with consideration to previous work developed by the National Quality Council and the Government of Western Australia, Department of Training and Workforce Development: *Designing assessment tools for quality outcomes in VET*, 4th Edition 2013.

What is meant by assessment?

According to the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*:

- **Assessment** means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace, as specified in a training package or a vocational education and training (VET) accredited course.
- **An assessment system** is a coordinated set of documented policies and procedures (including assessment materials and tools) that ensure assessments are consistent and are based on the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence.

An **assessment tool** includes the following components—context and conditions of assessment, tasks to be administered to the student, an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the candidate and evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (i.e. the assessment decision-making rules). This term also takes in the administration, recording and reporting requirements, and may address a cluster of competencies as applicable for holistic assessment.



Developing assessment tools

When developing assessment tools there are three main steps.

1. **Planning**—What are the assessment requirements of the training package / accredited course? What does feedback from industry identify? What assessment methods are most appropriate for your learners?
2. **Design and development**—How does each component of an assessment tool come together?
3. **Quality Checks**—How to review a tool prior to implementation?

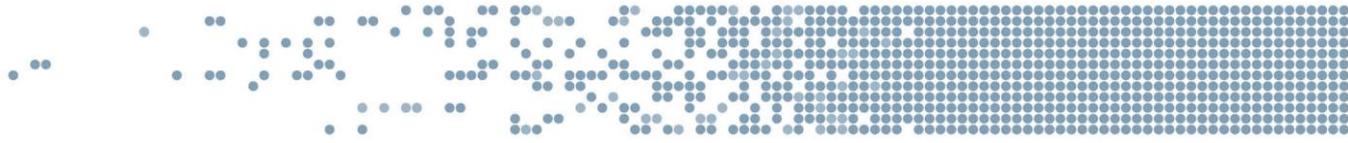
Step 1—Planning

The assessment process is the final stage in confirming a learner has the skills and knowledge to perform an identified task. In planning for assessment your RTO needs to consider how a learner will:

- demonstrate the task
- know what they need to do to complete the task and why, and
- demonstrate they have the ability to perform the tasks in different contexts and environments.

First, consider the components of the training package or accredited course and identify all of the requirements a learner needs to show to demonstrate competency. You must address all requirements of the training package or accredited course; this may mean that multiple and varied assessment methods are required.

Component	Description
Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The essential actions or outcomes which are demonstrable and assessable.
Performance criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The required performance in relevant tasks, roles and skills to demonstrate achievement of the element.
Performance evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifies the skills to be demonstrated relevant to the product and process. • The frequency or volume of the product or process.
Knowledge evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifies what the individual must know in order to safely and effectively perform the work task described in the unit of competency. • The type and depth of knowledge required to meet the demands of the unit of competency.
Assessment conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stipulates any mandatory conditions for assessment. • Specifies the conditions under which evidence for assessment must be gathered, including any details of required equipment and materials; contingencies; specifications; physical conditions; relationships with team members and supervisor; relationship with client/customer; and timeframe. • Specific assessor requirements, including any details related to qualifications, experience and industry currency.

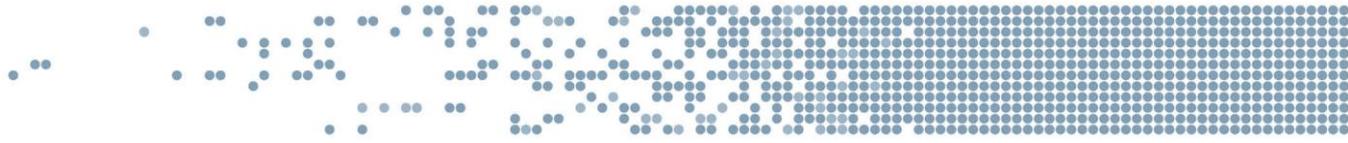


You will need to demonstrate that industry representatives (including employers) have contributed to the development of your assessment practices and resources (Clause 1.5 – 1.6). Engagement with industry at the planning stage will assist in identifying the most appropriate assessment methods an RTO should use. The more consultation you undertake with a variety of industry stakeholders, the easier it will be to design and develop your assessment tools.

Industry consultation is critical as it assists in ensuring the assessment tool aligns to current industry methods, technologies, products and performance expectations.

When determining the assessment methods, consider:

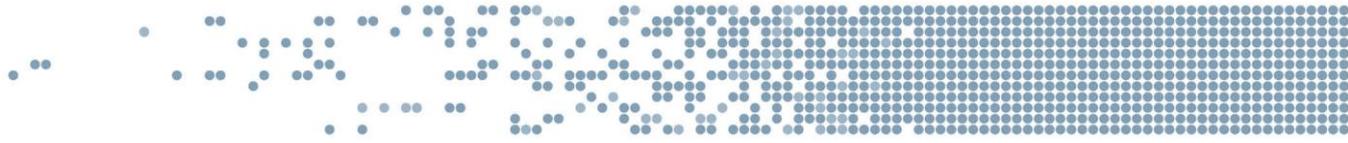
- **Who is your learner cohort?** The most appropriate assessment methods depend on the learners you're intending to work with. When conducting an assessment, consider every learner's individual needs. While you may not know all of a learner's specific needs, when planning and developing the assessment tools, consider the general needs of the cohort. For example, it may be more appropriate to consider a portfolio of evidence for learners who are actively employed and are up-skilling existing competencies.
- **Who will collect the evidence?** For example, a workplace supervisor would be responsible for collecting all third party evidence, and the learner would be responsible for collecting a portfolio of evidence. Considering who will collect the evidence guides what instructions are required to accompany the assessment task. Remember, no matter who collects the evidence for assessment, the assessor always determines competence.
- **Where will the assessment be conducted?** In many instances, the requirements of the training package or accredited course determine the assessment conditions. Some units of competency require assessment to occur in the workplace. Other units recognise that, for reasons of safety, space, or access to equipment and resources, assessment can take place in simulated conditions which represent workplace conditions as closely as possible. Once you understand the requirements of the unit or module and have feedback from industry on the assessment process, you can consider the methods of assessment you use to gather evidence.



Types of assessment methods

Using a range of assessment methods helps produce valid decisions and recognises that learners demonstrate competence in a variety of ways. A range of assessment methods are outlined in the table below.

Method	Description
Direct observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assessed in real time in the workplace.Assessed in a simulated off-the-job situation that reflects the workplace.
Product based methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Structured assessment activities such as reports, displays, work samples, role plays, and presentations.
Portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A purposeful collection of work samples of annotated and validated pieces of evidence, compiled by the learner.Evidence could include written documents, photographs, videos or logbooks.
Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Generally more applicable to the assessment of knowledge evidence.Assessment could be by written or oral questioning, conducting interviews and questionnaires.
Third-party evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">For more information on using third party evidence, refer to ASQA's <i>Fact Sheet—Using third-party evidence to assess competence</i>.



Step 2—Design and Development

An assessment tool comprises a number of components which ensure assessment is conducted in a manner that is fair, flexible, valid and reliable. These components include:

1. Context and conditions of assessment
2. Task to be administered to the student
3. An outline of evidence to be gathered from the candidate
4. Evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance
5. Administration, recording and reporting requirements

1. Context and conditions of assessment:

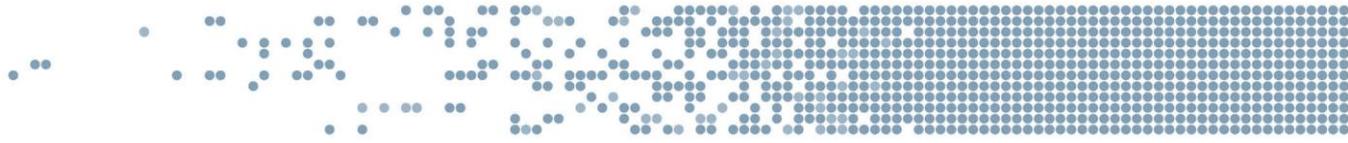
The context and conditions of assessment clarify the target group and purpose of the tool and is recorded in instructions for the assessor, the learner and any contributing third party. The instructions should be appropriate for the reader. The instructions can be included with the assessment instrument or attached as a separate document.

The context and conditions of assessment considers those characteristics of the learner cohort that may impact on performance. For example, an assessment tool could be developed to cater for particular language, literacy and numeracy requirements; a learner's workplace experience; or other learner needs that require reasonable adjustment. The context of the assessment may also take into account assessments already completed, and the competencies demonstrated in these assessments.

By looking at context you can consider the conditions under which evidence for assessment must be gathered. Training package requirements and industry consultation may identify conditions to be considered when conducting assessment such as:

- equipment or material requirements
- contingencies
- specifications
- physical conditions
- relationships with team members and supervisors
- relationships with clients/customers
- timeframes for completion.

Any conditions should be clarified in the instructions to ensure consistency in the application of the assessment.



Example—ensuring your assessment tool includes required assessment conditions

The unit *CHCECE005 Provide care for babies and toddlers* has the following assessment conditions:

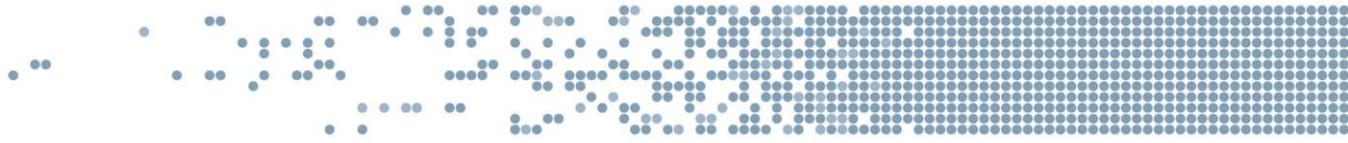
- Skills must be demonstrated in a regulated education and care service (a **physical condition**).
- In addition, simulations and scenarios must be used where the full range of contexts and situations cannot be provided in the workplace or may occur only rarely. These are situations relating to emergency or unplanned procedures where assessment in these circumstances would be unsafe or is impractical (**contingencies**).
- Simulated assessment environments must simulate the real-life working environment where these skills and knowledge would be performed, with all the relevant equipment and resources of that working environment. (**equipment requirements, relationship requirements, and timeframes**).
- Assessment must ensure use of:
 - National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care
 - the relevant approved learning framework under the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (**specifications**).
- Assessment must involve:
 - interactions with actual babies and toddlers under the age of 24 months under the supervision of an early childhood educator (**equipment requirements, physical conditions, relationships**).
- Assessors must satisfy the NVR/AQTF mandatory competency requirements for assessors (**specifications**).

Assessment tools you develop for this unit must reflect these assessment conditions. All skills must be demonstrated in a regulated education and care service, where the learner will demonstrate those skills either in a real-time working environment or in a simulated off-the-job situation that reflects the workplace. Regardless of whether the assessment is conducted in real time or in simulation, the tasks must reflect framework requirements and the resources for assessment must include actual babies and toddlers (not a simulated doll). Your assessment tool must ensure that the person making the determination of competence is an assessor who meets the requirements of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*.

2. Tasks to be administered to the student

The instructions you provide to the student should outline the task(s) through which a learner can demonstrate competency. These instructions will prompt the learner to say, do, write or create something.

The learner clearly needs to understand the tasks. If the learner reviews the tasks and needs to clarify the instructions or ask further questions, then the information provided is not valid or reliable. Well-designed assessment instructions minimise the variation between assessors.



Example—providing instructions to a learner about demonstrating evidence

The unit *CHCECE005 Provide care for babies and toddlers* requires some of the following performance evidence:

- There must be demonstrated evidence that the candidate has completed the following tasks:
 - provided care to at least three different babies and toddlers of varying ages using safe and hygienic practices, including:
 - assessing and responding appropriately to babies' needs, including hunger, distress, tiredness and pain
 - setting up a safe environment conducive to rest
 - changing nappies
 - heating breast milk and formula, preparing bottles and preparing and heating food
 - cleaning equipment and utensils, and
 - feeding babies.

To provide instruction to the learner about demonstrating the Performance Evidence, the task information should clarify if assessment is conducted in real-time or in simulation (with an actual baby or toddler), where the assessment will occur, when the assessment will occur, who will conduct the assessment, and what the learner will be assessed against.

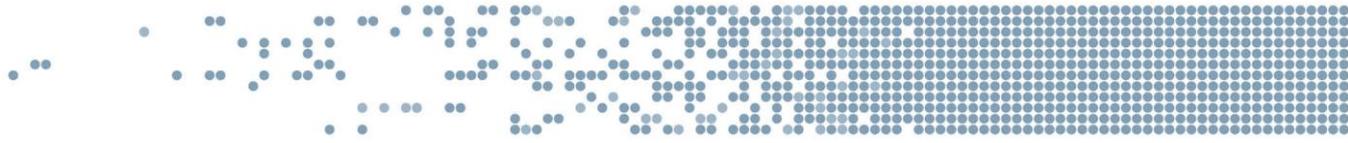
3. An outline of the evidence to be gathered from the candidate

As well as informing the learner of what they will do in the assessment, you will need to explain to them what evidence they need to provide in response to the tasks.

If a learner is required to submit evidence, the instructions must include guidance on:

- what to include as evidence
- how to submit the evidence, and
- how to present the evidence.

If a learner is observed by an assessor, the outline of the evidence should clarify what the assessor will look for during the observation. An 'observation checklist' could be appropriate in this instance. You should also communicate to the learner if the observation is being recorded by audio or video.



Example—instructions to learner on assessment

For the unit *CHCECE005 Provide care for babies and toddlers*, an RTO must ensure that all skills are demonstrated. Instructions to the learner must clarify: how they will demonstrate each skill, and who they will demonstrate these skills to.

Where a skill is not observed by the assessor, you should provide instructions to guide the learner on how they can collect the evidence (e.g. by the provision of work samples) and how then to submit the evidence to the assessor for determination.

4. Evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance

The evidence criteria are also referred to as the ‘assessment decision-making rules’. These are the rules used to make judgements about whether competency has been achieved.

Evidence criteria are used by an assessor to ensure consistent outcomes when:

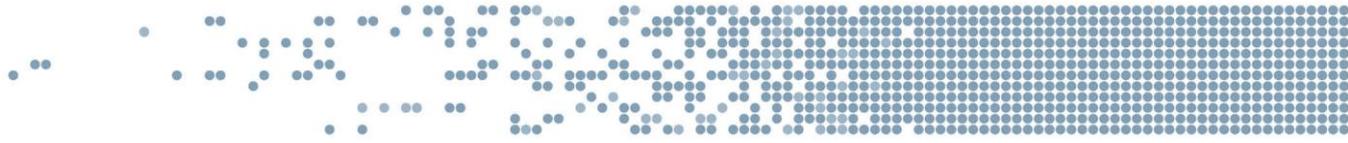
- checking evidence quality (i.e. the rules of evidence)
- judging how well the learner performed according to the standard expected, and
- collating evidence from multiple sources to make an overall judgement.

The evidence criteria ensure the intent of the assessment tool is met and that the learner is able to demonstrate they have valid, sufficient, authentic and current skills and knowledge relevant to the unit. The criteria confirms the evidence provided by a learner:

- directly relates to the competency being assessed
- is enough to allow the assessor to make a valid judgement
- is the learner’s own work, and
- shows currency of the skills and knowledge required.

The evidence criteria should not be open to interpretation. The criteria must provide sufficient clarity for assessment judgements to be consistent across a range of assessors and points in time. If your RTO has only one assessor, you must still develop evidence criteria to ensure consistency in that assessor’s judgements.

Remember that assessment judgements are made only by an assessor who meets those requirements of Clauses 1.13 – 1.16 (and Clauses 1.21 – 1.24 if applicable) of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*. If your RTO uses evidence collected by a third party, an assessor still must make a judgement on that evidence. Decision-making rules are required for an assessor to use in considering all third-party evidence.



Example—performance evidence assessed by direct observation

For the unit *CHCECE005 Provide care for babies and toddlers*, where performance evidence is assessed by direct observation in the work place, your RTO could develop an observation checklist to judge and record candidate observations.

An assessor could then record their observations of the learner's performance directly onto this checklist. Instruct the assessor to record his/her observation on the checklist during or after the observation.

The checklist needs to allow the assessor to record when s/he has not had the opportunity to observe the learner demonstrating the skills and knowledge in real time in the workplace. The tool also needs to include instructions on how to treat items not observed so the assessor can then assess these items in simulation.

The checklist should also allow for an assessor to record the number of instances, the period of observation, and any defining resources used to demonstrate the learner has - provided care to at least different three babies and toddlers of varying ages.

5. Administration, recording and reporting requirements

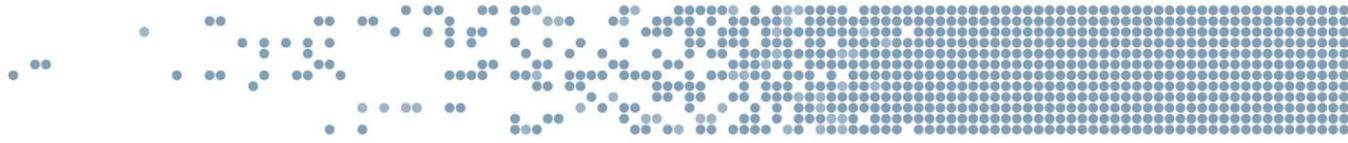
You must securely retain—and produce in full if required at audit—all completed student assessment items for each learner for a period of six months from the date on which the judgement of competence for the learner was made. You must also retain sufficient data to be able to reissue AQF certification documentation for a period of 30 years.

In recording evidence of assessment, assessors and learners need to be informed of the administration, recording and reporting requirements related to that assessment tool.

Where possible retain the actual piece(s) of work completed by the learner. The completed evidence criteria may be sufficient where it is not possible to retain the student's actual work. However, you must ensure that the retained evidence has enough detail to demonstrate the judgement made of the learner's performance against the standard required.

Each assessment tool should require an assessor to provide feedback to the learner, both where competency has been demonstrated and where further evidence is required. Providing feedback shows fairness in the assessment process and allows a learner to understand why a result was awarded.

Every RTO has its own internal processes and procedures to manage administration, recording and reporting requirements. Your assessment tools must be designed to comply with these processes.



Step 3—Quality checks

You should undertake several checks before implementing a new assessment tool.

- Further consultation with industry will confirm if the content of the tool is correct and relevant to the workplace. Industry representatives could critique the tool for its:
 - clarity
 - content accuracy
 - relevance, and
 - appropriateness of language for the learners.
- Reviewing the tool with other trainers and assessors, who may not be industry experts but who have current skills and knowledge in vocational training, learning and assessment—including competency based training and assessment), can check whether:
 - the tools will address all assessment requirements of the training package or accredited course
 - the level of difficulty is appropriate to the unit or module
 - the tools will enable effective collection of evidence, and
 - you have provided clear instructions are which can be easily understood by the learner, third party and assessor.
- Trialling the tool before it is used by learners tests the effectiveness of the tool without affecting a learner. When trialling a tool, select a group of individuals who have similar characteristics to, and levels of ability of, the target learner group. The findings of the trial will help predict whether the tool would:
 - be cost effective to implement
 - be engaging to the learner, and
 - produce valid and reliable evidence.

In summary

For your RTO to meet the Standards you need to have assessment tools that ensure assessment is valid, reliable and flexible. It is important for your RTO to understand the capacity of the tools they use and adapt these tools to meet their requirements. This will help ensure confidence in the quality of assessment.

When developing assessment tools there are three main steps:

1. **Planning**—What are the assessment requirements of the training package / accredited course? What does feedback from industry identify? What assessment methods are most appropriate for your learners?
2. **Design and development**—How does each component of an assessment tool come together?
3. **Quality Checks**—How to review a tool prior to implementation?

Further information

Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015—[clauses 1.8-1.12](#)