5.3.4 VET Assessment Design Policy and Procedure

Purpose

This policy and procedure establishes the principles and practices for developing, approving, and reviewing assessments across all nationally recognised training products delivered by Acknowledge Education Pty Ltd (AE).

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- Compliance with Outcome Standards for RTOs 2025, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), and relevant regulatory requirements.
- Consistent, high-quality assessment design and delivery.
- Assessment tools that produce valid, reliable, sufficient, authentic, and current evidence of competency.
- Assessment practices that are industry-relevant, fair, and clearly documented.
- That learning and assessment strategies support student success.

This policy aims to provide staff with clear procedures to guide systematic development, validation, and continuous improvement of assessments.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All training products listed on AE's scope of registration, including accredited courses and qualifications under training packages

All staff involved in:

- Course and unit development.
- Assessment tool design and development.
- Validation and moderation of assessments.
- Quality assurance and compliance monitoring.
- Contractors and external consultants involved in delivering or designing assessment for AE.

Policy Statement

AE is committed to designing, delivering, and reviewing assessments that:

- Align fully with training package or accredited course requirements
- Align fully with qualification and unit of competency requirements, including:
    - Elements of competency
    - Performance criteria
    - Assessment conditions and requirements
    - Knowledge and performance evidence
    - Foundation skills
- Are designed at the appropriate AQF level, ensuring complexity aligns with Bloom's Taxonomy relevant to the qualification.
- Reflect current industry practice, incorporating feedback from industry consultation.
- Are structured to:
    - Provide sufficient supervised and unsupervised learning hours
    - Progress learners incrementally toward competency
    - Enable learners to demonstrate skills in workplace-relevant contexts
- Ensure that assessments are fair, flexible, valid, and reliable in compliance with the Principles of Assessment.
- Are documented and retained in compliance with the RTO's record-keeping obligations and regulatory requirements.

Policy Considerations

The following principles guide all assessment development and review activities at AE:

- Training must precede assessment; students should be provided the opportunity to learn and practice skills prior to being assessed.
- Supervised and non-supervised hours are identified and justified in the TAS and mapped to units of competency.
- Each course program must include a mapped sequence of learning and assessment activities over time, ensuring logical progression and appropriate pacing.
- Assessments must be developed and documented using a consistent template, ensuring standardisation across qualifications.
- Assessor-to-student ratios must be documented where practical activities are involved and be sufficient to ensure quality assessment judgements.
- Resources, facilities, and equipment must be mapped to each unit's assessment requirements to ensure assessments are feasible and compliant with assessment conditions.

Development of Assessment Methodology

The following high-level steps must be followed when developing or updating the approach to overall assessment methodology for any training product. The assessment methodology for the training product is documented in the Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS).

Confirm Packaging Rules and Requirements

Review the latest version of the training package, accredited course and units of competency documentation.

Identify:

- Core and elective units
- Prerequisites
- Licensing requirements
- Assessment conditions for each unit

Conduct Industry Engagement

Consult relevant industry stakeholders to:

- Validate the relevance of units and assessment methods
- Confirm current workplace practices
- Record outcomes using the Industry Consultation Record Form.

Determine Assessment Hours

Establish a realistic volume of learning, ensuring:

- Alignment to AQF expectations
- Inclusion of supervised and unsupervised hours
- Accurate representation of the time required for assessment activities

Identify Assessment Methods

Select assessment methods appropriate to:

- The training product
- Learner cohort
- Industry context
- Assessment methods may include:
    - Written knowledge assessments
    - Oral questioning
    - Short answer/multiple choice questions
    - Practical demonstrations
    - Projects
    - Role plays

- Case studies
- Third-party reports
- Portfolio evidence
- Presentations

Map Assessment Tasks

Map each assessment task to:

- Performance criteria
- Elements
- Knowledge evidence
- Performance evidence
- Assessment conditions

Document this mapping clearly within the Training and Assessment Strategy and unit of competency mapping tool.

Align with Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence

Ensure all assessment tools and instructions comply with:

Principles of Assessment:

- Fairness
- Flexibility
- Validity
- Reliability

Rules of Evidence:

- Validity
- Sufficiency
- Authenticity
- Currency

Develop Assessment Documentation

Create assessment tools using the approved templates.

Include:

- Clear student instructions
- Assessment context and conditions
- Marking guides and decision-making rules
- Recording tools for assessor feedback and outcomes

Customisation for Diverse Learner Cohorts

All assessment tools must be reviewed for suitability against the needs of diverse cohorts, including:

- International students
- Students requiring LLND support
- School-based or mature-age learners

Adjustments must be documented and reflect flexibility under the Principles of Assessment. Where reasonable adjustments are required, clear options and instructions must be embedded into the tool or assessor guidelines.

Assessment Review and Approval Procedures

Validation Activities

A detailed guide to assessment validation can be found within AE's *Assessment Validation Policies and Procedures (VET).*

At a high level, validation must:

- Occur systematically and according to the AE's validation plan
- Be conducted by qualified individuals independent of the assessment's original development or delivery

Validation includes:

- Reviewing the design of assessment tools for compliance
- Sampling completed assessments to ensure consistent and valid outcomes
- Documenting findings and actions taken

Findings from validation activities must directly inform updates to the associated assessment tools.

Changes made as a result of a validation must:

- Be documented in a version-controlled log
- Be approved by the Head of Department
- Be submitted to the VET Quality and Compliance Committee for review
- Include a record of staff retraining if the updated tool introduces new assessment expectations
- Entered into the continuous improvement register

Monitoring Training Package Changes

The Dean and Head of Department are required to regularly monitor sectoral information to ensure courses and assessments are updated as required.

Regularly monitor:

- Training.gov.au
- ASQA notices
- Industry and professional body updates

Identify:

- New releases
- Superseded qualifications or units of competency
- Changes to assessment conditions

TAS' and unit assessments are to be updated accordingly as per updates in training package qualifications and units of competency.

Quality Assurance

- After development, all assessment tools are to be reviewed by the Head of Department, and then submitted to the Dean for final approval prior to use.

Third-Party Delivery Oversight

Where training or assessment is delivered by a third party, AE must:

- Validate all third-party assessment tools before use
- Require third-party assessors to adhere to AE's assessment templates and procedures
- Conduct regular moderation across AE and third-party sites to ensure consistency

Third-party compliance is monitored through AE's annual internal audit process and reported to the VETQCC.

VET Quality and Compliance Committee Review

The VET Quality and Compliance Committee is responsible for:

- Reviewing validation outcomes
- Overseeing corrective actions arising from audits or compliance reviews
- Providing advice on overall assessment methodology to support the strategic directions of Acknowledge Education.

Approval and Version Control

Assessment tools and TAS documents must:

- Be approved by the authorised officer
- Have documented version control including:
    - Version number
    - Date of approval
    - Authorising officer
    - Next review date

Archived versions must be retained in line with AE's record keeping processes.

Assessor Guidelines for Marking

Purpose

These guidelines support assessors in conducting consistent, fair, and compliant assessment marking in alignment with:

- Outcome Standards for RTOs 2025, particularly Standards 1.3 and 1.4
- The Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence
- ASQA's best practice recommendations for assessment

They are designed to ensure that assessors:

- Make objective, evidence-based decisions
- Maintain comprehensive records of how judgements were reached
- Provide clear, constructive feedback to learners
- Uphold the integrity of AE's assessment practices

Guidelines

<u>Use Approved Assessment Tools</u>

Assessors are to use only current, approved versions of assessment tools.

Before marking, review:

- Assessment task instructions
- Marking guides or model answers
- Unit mapping documents
- Confirm alignment of the task with the unit's performance criteria, knowledge evidence, and assessment conditions
- Participate in any scheduled moderation discussions.

<u>Apply the Principles of Assessment</u>

- Fairness: Consider any reasonable adjustments required for individual learners.
- Flexibility: Assess the learner's evidence in a way that recognises different contexts and experiences.
- Validity: Ensure evidence relates directly to the unit's required skills and knowledge.
- Reliability: Apply the same criteria consistently to all learners.

<u>Record Judgement Decisions</u>

Document, using any required forms or checklists:

- Whether the learner is competent or not yet competent for each task
- Specific evidence that led to the judgement

Comments for feedback must:

- Be factual and objective
- Reference relevant parts of the learner's evidence
- Avoid subjective language or personal opinions

Example of acceptable comment:

- "Learner demonstrated correct procedure for calibrating equipment as per task instructions and matched performance criteria PC 2.3."

Example of unacceptable comment:

- "Learner did well but could have tried harder."

(Adapted from Newbery Consulting's guidance on recording evidence.)

Ensure Evidence Meets Rules of Evidence

- Validity: Check the evidence actually relates to the unit requirements.
- Sufficiency: Ensure there's enough evidence to cover the full scope of the unit.
- Authenticity: Be confident the work is the learner's own (e.g. oral questioning, observation, declarations).
- Currency: Verify evidence reflects the learner's current competency.

Maintain Objectivity and Consistency

Refer to:

- Marking guide criteria
- Assessment benchmark answers
- Avoid assessing based on personal preferences or style
- Consult with other assessors where:
    - Uncertainty exists about an assessment outcome
    - A borderline C/NYC result is made by the original assessor
- Engage in moderation sessions to align marking standards across the RTO.

Provide Constructive Feedback

Provide written or verbal feedback that:

- Clearly explains the assessment outcome
- Highlights specific strengths
- Identifies gaps or areas for improvement
- Gives clear instructions for any re-assessment required

Feedback must:

- Be professional and respectful
- Avoid ambiguous terms (e.g. "good job") without explanation

For "Not Yet Competent" results, outline:

- Which criteria were not met
- How the learner can address gaps

Protect Assessment Records

Keep assessment records secure and confidential.

Ensure all:

- Assessment decision records
- Feedback forms

- Supporting evidence
- Validation findings

are stored according to AE's Student Record Management Policy.

Continuous Improvement

Participate in:

- Validation and moderation activities
- Professional development related to assessment practices
- Suggest improvements to assessment tools where issues are identified during marking or assessment sessions.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS)	A high-level plan outlining how training and assessment for a specific training product will be delivered and assessed to ensure compliance with the training package or accredited course requirements.
Performance Criteria	Statements specifying the required level of performance and outcomes that demonstrate competency for an element of a unit of competency.
Units of Competency	Components of a qualification defining the specific skills and knowledge required in the workplace.
Elements	The essential outcomes within a unit of competency, describing the tasks that must be performed.
Training Package	A set of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications used to recognize and assess people's skills in a specific industry, including units of competency, assessment requirements, and qualifications.
Accredited Course	A nationally recognized program of study not contained in a training package, accredited by the regulator.
Assessment	Assessment conducted at the end of learning to determine whether a learner has achieved competency.
Rules of Evidence	The regulatory requirements specifying that evidence collected for assessment must be valid, sufficient, authentic, and current.
Principles of Assessment	The regulatory requirements that assessment must be fair, flexible, valid, and reliable.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	An assessment process evaluating an individual's existing skills and knowledge gained through prior study, work, or life experience, against the requirements of a unit or qualification.

Relevant legislation and Standards

- ASQA Fact Sheet – Conducting Validation
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Credential Policy 2025
- Outcome Standards for RTOs 2025, including Standards 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5
- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011

Related policies

- Assessment Validation Policy and Procedure (VET)
- Continuous Improvement Policy
- Student Record Management Policy
- Training and Assessment Strategy Policy

Policy Information

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Change Log

Date	Version	Version by	Notes
16/07/2025	1.0	Head of Risk and Compliance	New policy