

Name: Assessment Policy and Procedures

Endorsed by: Continuous Improvement Committee

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PURPOSE

To ensure that Benchmark College's assessment policy and procedure meets the requirements of all relevant endorsed Training Packages and outcomes specified in accredited courses. This policy outlines Benchmark College's assessment practices and ensures that they are consistent with guidelines and policies issued through State and National Training Authorities and assessment criterion contained within the relevant National Training Packages.

SCOPE

The Assessment Policy and Procedure is applied to all qualifications and units of competence listed under Benchmark College's Scope of Registration and is relevant to all staff involved in the design, implementation, documentation and recording of assessment tasks and evidence.

This policy and procedure specifically covers;

- Accredited training provided by Benchmark College or its contractors.
- Skills Recognition assessments conducted by Benchmark College.

It provides guidelines for Benchmark College and its assessors to;

- Meet regulatory compliance including the Standards as specified by the National VET Regulator.
- Provide a standardised and systematic process to managing Benchmark College assessment processes.
- Meet student services standards and the principles of access & equity.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Competency Mapping Template
- Access & Equity Policy & Procedures
- Validation Policy and Procedures
- Validation and Moderation Tool
- Student Handbook and Course Guides
- Training and Assessment Strategy Policy and Procedures
- Training Package Transition Policy and Procedures
- Recognition Policy & Procedures
- Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures
- Assessment Tools and Recognition Kits
- Verification Consent & Credit Transfer form
- Student Handbook
- Quality Training & Assessment Policy
- VET Trainer and Assessor profile

RELEVANT STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

This Assessment Policy & Procedure document addresses assessment aspects of Standards 1 and 2 of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 and the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

- Smart and Skilled Contract Terms and Conditions (current)
- Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines (current)

DEFINITIONS

Assessment	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 VET accredited course ¹ . Assessment methodology may include but is not limited to question and answer tasks, observational assessment, analysis of case studies, workplace assessment, research and project tasks.
Assessment Tool	Assessment components which include: the context and conditions for the assessment, the tasks to be administered to the learner, an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the learner and the evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (i.e. the assessment decision making rules). It also includes the administration, recording and reporting requirements.
Assessment System	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 ² .
Quality Assessment	Quality assessment is the collection and evaluation of evidence to ensure that a student's competency is assessed according to the 'rules of evidence'.
UoC	Unit of Competence

¹ Commonwealth of Australia *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 - Glossary*

² *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 - Glossary*

POLICY

1 Assessment System

At Benchmark College we recognise that assessment is a core service offered to our students (learners) and is at the centre of our operation as a Registered Training Organisation. Benchmark College implements an assessment system (including recognition of learning) that ensures that the skills and knowledge of learners are assessed using the following determinants:

- That the assessment system complies with the assessment requirements of the relevant training package or VET accredited course
- Assessment practices are relevant to the needs of industry and informed by industry engagement.
- That evidence gathered meets the Rules of Evidence.
- That assessment is conducted in accordance with the Principles of Assessment.

2 Quality Assessment

Assessment involves collecting and interpreting evidence in order to make a decision to determine competency. *Quality assessment* is the collection and evaluation of evidence to ensure that a student's competency is assessed according to the 'rules of evidence' and using the following guidelines;

- That evidence is gathered that meets the rules of evidence.
- That assessment is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment.
- That evidence is evaluated in terms of the four dimensions of competency - task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills.
- That assessment decisions are based on the competency requirements, addressing the applicable Unit of Competence, including knowledge and performance evidence and in accordance with assessment conditions.
- That the target industry or enterprise requirements are contextualised and integrated within the assessment itself.

2.1 Rules of evidence³

In collecting evidence, Benchmark College applies the rules of evidence to inform the learning and assessment strategy. Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

- **Sufficiency.** The assessor is assured that the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence enables a judgement to be made of a learner's competency.
- **Validity.** The assessor is assured that the learner has the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements.
- **Authenticity.** The assessor is assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work.
- **Currency.** The assessor is assured that the assessment evidence demonstrates current competency. This requires the assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past.

³ Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, Standard 1, Clause 1.8

2.2 Principles of assessment⁴

In the delivery of assessment services, Benchmark College applies the Principles of Assessment:

- **Validity.** Any assessment decision made by Benchmark College is justified, based on the evidence of performance of the individual learner.

Validity requires:

- assessment against the unit/s of competency and the associated assessment requirements covers the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance;
 - assessment of knowledge and skills is integrated with their practical application;
 - assessment to be based on evidence that demonstrates that a learner could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations; and
 - judgement of competence is based on evidence of learner performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency and associated assessment requirements.
- **Reliability.** Evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.
 - **Flexibility.** Assessment is flexible to the individual learner by:
 - reflecting the learner's needs;
 - assessing competencies held by the learner no matter how or where they have been acquired; and
 - drawing from a range of assessment methods and using those that are appropriate to the context, the unit of competency and associated assessment requirements, and the individual.
 - **Fairness.** The individual learner's needs are considered in the assessment process.
 - Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied by Benchmark College to take into account the individual learner's needs.
 - Benchmark College informs the learner about the assessment process, and provides the learner with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be reassessed if necessary.

2.3 Competency based assessment

Competency based assessment is a system of collecting evidence about a person's performance to a pre-set standard and forms the framework for quality assessment. The emphasis is placed on what a person can do (outcome), rather than comparing a person's achievement to others. There is no concept of pass or fail, only competent (C) or not yet competent (NYC). The training is focused and allows for greater participation of the client in the assessment process.

Competency based assessment can occur at different prescheduled intervals throughout the assessment process.

- *Diagnostic* also known as pre-assessment provides information about prior knowledge and skills. This baseline information may diagnose a problem or training requirement.
- *Formative* assessment assists and supports training by monitoring and advising clients of their performance and rate of progress against the training outcomes. This provides feedback to the

⁴ Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, Standard 1, Clause 1.8

client, supervisor and trainer on what development activities are needed to achieve the required competencies.

- *Summative* is cumulative evaluation of achievement of the Training outcome. Often conducted in the workplace, summative assessment confirms achievement of the competency requirements which will result in the Statement of Attainment or Qualification.

2.4 Industry consultation

Benchmark College is well placed to leverage off current industry associations to incorporate industry requirements into the assessment process. Consultation with enterprises or industry will provide information about assessment requirements relevant to workplaces. Regulatory requirements that relate to specific units of competence will be incorporated to ensure our students are well prepared for their workplace duties.

2.5 The Assessor

The primary role of the assessor is to objectively assess and judge a Student's knowledge and evidence of competence against a set of standards. In essence, an assessor must:

- Ensure the safety of the personnel involved in the assessment activity is maintained at all times
- Interpret and understand the performance criteria and evidence guides
- Select appropriate assessment methods
- Select and/or develop appropriate assessment materials
- Ensure that evidence meets the UoC requirements
- Ensure that the evidence is valid, authentic, consistent, current and sufficient
- Make fair and objective judgements

2.5.1 Competence of assessors

In accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, assessors are required to have⁵:

- vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed
- current industry skills directly relevant to the assessment being provided
- current knowledge and skills in vocational training and learning that informs their assessment
- the training and assessment qualification (TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment) or a diploma or higher-level qualification in adult education
- assessors undertake professional development in the fields of the knowledge and practice of vocational assessment including competency based assessment.
- where Benchmark College, in assessment, engages an individual who is not a trainer or assessor, the individual works under the supervision of a trainer and does not determine assessment outcomes.

From 31 March 2019 Trainers and Assessors who hold the TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, must also hold:

- Either one of the following:
 - TAELLN411 Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills
 - TAELLN401A Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills
- Plus one of the following:
 - TAEASS502 Design and develop assessment tools
 - TAEASS502A Design and develop assessment tools
 - TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools.

⁵ Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, Standard 1, Clauses 1.13 – 1.25

Industry experts may also be involved in the assessment judgement, working alongside the trainer and/or assessor to conduct the assessment.

Benchmark College has appropriate systems in place to ensure that all staff members are appropriately qualified to meet our requirement under the Standards. Further information can be found in Benchmark College's Quality Training and Assessment Policy.

2.5.2 Assessment on behalf of Benchmark College

Benchmark College is ultimately responsible for ensuring quality assessment within the organisation and scope of registration, regardless of any third-party arrangements where assessment is delivered on Benchmark's behalf⁶.

2.6 Assessment information

Assessment information is the information provided to both learners and assessors to guide their conduct of the assessment and the completion of assessment activities. This information is used to draw out a response from a learner.

Examples of assessment information include:

- Instructions to set the framework for the activity such as who, what, where, when and how.
- The expected outcomes refer to the 'what' and it is critical that from reading the assessment information, the required (expected) outcome is straight forward and in line with the learner's preparation during learning or through other competency development pathways.
- Scenario information includes information that sets the context for a simulated assessment activity. This may be a simple case study or a deep scenario which requires analysis and interpretation. It is important to note that the higher the AQF qualification level, the greater the requirement to analyse and apply cognitive skills to produce workplace outcomes. Scenario information used to support assessment at a Diploma level, for example, should be relatively deep and complex to allow the learner to exercise their analytical skills and produce viable workplace products and outcomes.
- Industry information includes items such as codes of practice, policies and procedures, legislation and regulations. Whilst this may not be provided in hard copy to every learner, they should be provided contacts, web sites or hyperlinks to access this information. Electronic copies of industry information are also acceptable.

At Benchmark College our assessment activities are to be supported by clear assessment information that will ensure a reliable assessment across our operation. Ultimately, the quality of assessment outcomes produced by a learner will be directly affected by the quality of the information provided at the commencement of the activity. Benchmark College staff prepare suitable assessment information for all assessment activities. These assessment activities are consistently validated according to Benchmark College's *Validation Policy and Procedure*.

2.7 Assessment Tools

Assessment tools are the media (electronic or hard copy) used to gather evidence about a student's competence. All developed assessment tools support the assessment of applicable units of competence in accordance with the requirements of industry Training Packages and fit with the requirements of the target industry and enterprise. Some units of competence are associated with licensing requirements and whilst this is not always stipulated in the unit of competence, assessors will inform students of the additional requirements this imposes during assessment.

⁶ Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, Standard 2

Assessment strategies and tools are developed in consultation with industry, including various validation processes.

The following are examples of assessment tools which may be incorporated into an assessment strategy to meet the Training Package and industry requirements, the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment:

- Direct observation checklist
- Project outlines and explanation sheets
- Written questionnaires
- Portfolios, for example collections of work samples by the student
- Workplace samples/products
- Simulation exercises or role-plays
- Workplace templates
- Verbal questionnaires
- Product with supporting documentation or journal/log book
- Industry/workplace evidence reports

This list of assessment tools identifies only a small number of assessment tools which are in use in the VET sector today. These are, however, the more common tools and support holistic assessment methods favoured by Benchmark College.

2.8 Assessment Context

Benchmark College recognises the importance of establishing the right context for students during their assessment. Assessment context refers to both the physical and non-physical environment, in which skills and knowledge are assessed. This may be a workplace or simulated workplace environment, such as an office setting or a manufacturing workshop. The non-physical environment refers to things such as workplace policy and procedure, workplace culture and so on. Many units of competence may be applied in any workplace such as skills and knowledge relating to workplace safety or leadership.

It is our responsibility to ensure that students are provided with the right context to undertake their assessment activities. To achieve this, we will apply the following strategies:

- Incorporation of the student's own workplace policies and procedures into the assessment scenario or activity.
- Conduct of the assessment in the student's workplace performing real workplace tasks.
- Integration of relevant industry codes of practice and other industry information into the assessment activity.
- Incorporation of industry job descriptions for students to align with during realistic simulated workplace scenarios and case studies.
- Incorporation of regulatory information relating to licensing which applies to some qualifications.
- Tailoring the program outcomes to meet the organisational training needs of the enterprise without compromising the Training Package requirements.
- Creating assessment activities which require the student to conduct specific research relating to industry situations and occurrences.
- Provide a realistic simulated workplace within Benchmark College facilities.

3 Recognition

3.1 Recognition of prior learning

Benchmark College provides all students the opportunity to seek recognition of their prior learning. Recognition is viewed simply as another method of assessment and therefore is conducted in accordance with this policy. Further information is available from Benchmark College's '*Recognition Policy and Procedure*'.

3.2 Credit transfer

Benchmark College will recognise and award credit for students presenting with current competence. Where a student is seeking credit for a unit of competence that is on our scope of registration and the student can provide satisfactory evidence that the unit has been previously awarded to the student, and upon verification, credit will be awarded. Further information is available from Benchmark College's *'Recognition Policy and Procedure'*.

4 Assessment validation

Assessment validation is the process where assessors compare and evaluate their assessment methods, assessment procedures and assessment decisions. Benchmark College will facilitate regular assessment validation opportunities to maintain a quality assessment and to continuously improve assessment strategies. Further information is available from Benchmark College's *'Validation Policy and Procedure'*.

5 Assessment Preparation

Prior to the conducting of an assessment, students are informed of the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process itself. This includes informing the student about the number and types of assessments, the assessment method(s) and alternative assessment methods which are available, to provide fairness and flexibility to students with special needs. Information will also be included at the start of each unit or course as to the assessment processes, number of assessments, types of assessment and the individual weighting of each assessment, if applicable.

All assessments are subject to a risk assessment process. Where applicable, Safe Work Method Statements or other controls to mitigate risk to any health and safety hazards which may affect the students or assessor may be implemented.

6 Re-assessment

It is inevitable that some students will not meet the requirements of the assessment evidence and will be judged as not-yet-competent. At Benchmark College, our approach to these situations is to work with the student in order to address deficiencies and to build their skills and knowledge in preparation for additional assessment. This will be undertaken within the scheduled training plan or may be completed under alternative arrangements agreed between the student and the assessor.

In some rare circumstances, students may find it difficult to develop the necessary skills and knowledge within the constraints of the scheduled training plan. When this occurs, arrangements may be agreed to that allows the student to undertake additional learning in their own time and return for additional assessment at a time suitable for Benchmark College. This may be during a period of reduced training activity or at a time when planned assessments are occurring and it is convenient to facilitate the additional assessment of the student. As a general guide, assessors are to make alternative arrangements to provide opportunities for assessment within the constraints of available time and resources. In all circumstances, the assessment is to be a planned activity that is conducted in accordance with the assessment procedures in the following section.

In some cases, after alternative arrangements have been exhausted, it will be suitable to find a student as not-yet-competent and record this result with their statement of attainment.

6.1 Assessment Attempts

Student's tuition fees include two assessment attempts. This means if a student is found Not Yet Satisfactory (NYS) for an assessment task, a student can re-submit this assessment task a second time without charge. Further assessment attempts will incur a fee for each assessment re-submission. Refer to the Benchmark College Fees and Charges Policy for more information.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

The following procedure is applied for conducting assessments:

Step 1: Prepare for assessment.

The assessor:

- Establishes the context and purpose of the evidence to be collected.
- Identifies and analyses the unit(s) of competency, Training Package and the Benchmark College assessment strategy to identify the evidence requirements.
- Reviews the assessment tools and confirm their currency and adequacy in meeting the rules of evidence.
- Informs and encourages student(s) to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Credit Transfer (CT) where relevant.

Step 2: Prepare the Student

The assessor meets with the student and:

- Explains the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process.
- Explains the unit/s of competency to be assessed and the evidence to be collected.
- Outlines the assessment procedure and the preparation the student should undertake and answer any questions the student may have.
- Assesses the needs of the student and, where applicable, negotiate reasonable adjustment for assessing people with disabilities without compromising the competency outcomes.
- Seeks feedback regarding the student's understanding of the unit/s of competency, evidence requirements and assessment process.
- Determines if the student is ready for assessment and, in consultation with the student, decide on the time and place of the assessment.

Access and Equity Guarantees

In accordance with the Access and Equity Policy, Benchmark College operates without bias, discrimination or harassment, and expect the same from all participants in our courses. More information can be found in the Student Handbook and Benchmark College's Access and Equity Policy and Procedure.

Step 3: Plans and prepares the evidence-gathering process.

The assessor:

- Establishes a plan for gathering sufficient quality evidence about the student's consistent performance in order to make the assessment decision.
- Ensures evidence collection methods meet qualification and UoC requirements.
- Sources or develops assessment materials to assist the evidence-gathering process.
- Maps evidence collection methods to UoC and qualification requirements.
- Organises equipment or resources required to support the evidence-gathering process.
- Coordinates and brief other personnel involved in the evidence-gathering process.
- Ensures assessment is conducted within program timeframes.

Step 4: Collect the evidence and make the assessment decision.

The assessor:

- Establishes and oversees the evidence-gathering process to ensure its validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility.
- Collects appropriate evidence against the elements, performance criteria, performance and knowledge evidence in the relevant units of competency.
- Ensures assessment is conducted according to the Assessment Conditions for the relevant unit/s of competency
- Evaluates evidence in terms of the four dimensions of competency - task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills.
- Incorporates allowable adjustments to the assessment procedure without compromising the integrity of the competencies.
- Evaluates the evidence in terms of validity, consistency, currency, authenticity and sufficiency.
- Consults and works with other staff, assessment panel members or technical experts involved in the assessment process.
- Records details of evidence collected; and makes a judgement about the student's competence based on the evidence and the relevant unit(s) of competency.

Step 5: Provide feedback on the assessment

The assessor provides advice to the students about the outcomes of the assessment process. This includes providing the student with:

- Clear and constructive feedback on the assessment decision.
- Information on ways of overcoming any identified gaps in competency revealed by the assessment.
- The opportunity to discuss the assessment process and outcome.
- Information on reassessment and the appeals process if applicable.

Step 6: Record and report the result

Benchmark College has responsibility for recording assessment outcomes and for maintaining and securing assessment records in a permanent and accessible system. Assessment records are processed in accordance with Records Retention; Privacy; and Issuing of Qualifications Policies.

To record and report the result the assessor:

- Records the assessment outcome according to the policies and procedures of Benchmark College.
- Maintains records of the assessment procedure, evidence collected and the outcome according to the policies and procedures of Benchmark College.
- Maintains the confidentiality of the assessment outcome.
- Where a NYC result is recorded offer students the opportunity to be reassessed. See Step 8.
- Ensures the appropriate evidence is passed on to administration to organise the issuance of statements of attainment or qualifications according to the policies and procedures of Benchmark College.

Step 7: Review the assessment process

On completion of the assessment process, the assessor:

- Reviews the assessment process.
- Reports on the positive and negative features of the assessment to those responsible for the assessment procedures.
- If necessary, suggests to appropriate Benchmark College personnel ways of improving the assessment procedures through raising a Continuous Improvement Report or by providing input to the next scheduled assessment validation.

Step 8: Participate in the reassessment and appeals process

Despite the best efforts of Benchmark College to provide quality services and outcomes to its students, a complaint may occasionally arise that require formal resolution. The *'Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedures'* provides students the opportunity to formally appeal an assessment decision, with a process to ensure a fair and equitable appeal outcome.

The assessor:

- Provides feedback and counselling to the student, if required, regarding the assessment outcome or process, including guidance on further options.
- Provides the student with information on the reassessment and appeals process.
- Reports any assessment decision that is disputed by the student to the Training Manager
- Participates in the reassessment or appeal according to the policies and procedures of Benchmark College.

The Training Manager/CEO:

- Reviews the assessment decision.
- Facilitates a sample size for the moderation of student's assessments.
- Provides feedback to the student on the outcome of the assessment moderation.