

Assessment information

Industry Curriculum Frameworks – Purposes of Assessment

Assessment for Higher School Certificate VET courses within industry curriculum frameworks has two distinct purposes:

1. assessment for Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) VET qualifications. This is competency-based assessment which:
 - applies to all courses within frameworks
 - provides industry recognition.
2. assessment for the Universities Admissions Index (UAI):
 - for 240-hour courses only
 - written HSC examination.¹

Assessment for AQF Qualifications

Assessment for AQF VET qualification:

- is competency-based
- must be reliable, flexible, fair and valid. Judgements are made on the basis of evidence, which may be in a variety of forms
- must be conducted by qualified assessors and be consistent with Training Package Assessment Guidelines
- assesses students as competent or not yet competent.

An integrated or holistic approach to competency-based assessment should be adopted.

Guiding principles for assessment

The following information (pp 1–4) is reproduced from the Assessment Guidelines of the *Business Services Training Package (BSB07)*² incorporating the *AQTF Standards for RTOs*.³

Australian Quality Training Framework assessment requirements

Assessment leading to nationally recognised AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment in the vocational education and training (VET) sector must meet the requirements of the AQTF as expressed in the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.

The AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* can be downloaded from <www.training.com.au>. The following points summarise the assessment requirements.

Registration of training organisations

Assessment must be conducted by, or on behalf of, an RTO formally registered by a State or Territory Registering/Course Accrediting Body in accordance with the AQTF 2007. The RTO must have the specific units of competency and/or AQF qualifications on its scope of registration..

¹ Refer to *Business Services Curriculum Framework (2008)* Section 11.4 and 11.5 in Part A of the syllabus.

² DEST, 2007, *Business Services Training Package (BSB07)*, Volume 1.

³ ANTA, 2005, *Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for RTOs*, Melbourne.
Please note AQTF 2007 is the current version, effective from 1 July 2007.

Quality training and assessment

Each RTO must provide quality training and assessment across all of its operations. See AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*, Standard 1.

Assessor competency requirements

Each person involved in training and assessment must be competent for the functions they perform. See the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*, Standard 1 for assessor (and trainer) competency requirements.

Assessment requirements

The RTO's assessments, including RPL, must meet the requirements of the relevant endorsed Training Package. See the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*, Standard 1.

Assessment strategies

Each RTO must have strategies for training and assessment that meet the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course and are developed in consultation with industry stakeholders. See the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*, Standard 1.

National recognition

Each RTO must recognise the AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by any other RTO. See the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*, Condition of Registration 7: Recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs.

Access and equity and client outcomes

Each RTO must adhere to the principles of access and equity and maximise outcomes for its clients. See the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*, Standard 2.

Monitoring assessments

Training and/or assessment provided on behalf of the RTO must be monitored to ensure that it is in accordance with all aspects of the Essential Standards for Registration. See the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*, Standard 3.

Recording Assessment Outcomes

Each RTO must manage records to ensure their accuracy and integrity. See the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*, Standard 3.

Issuing AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment

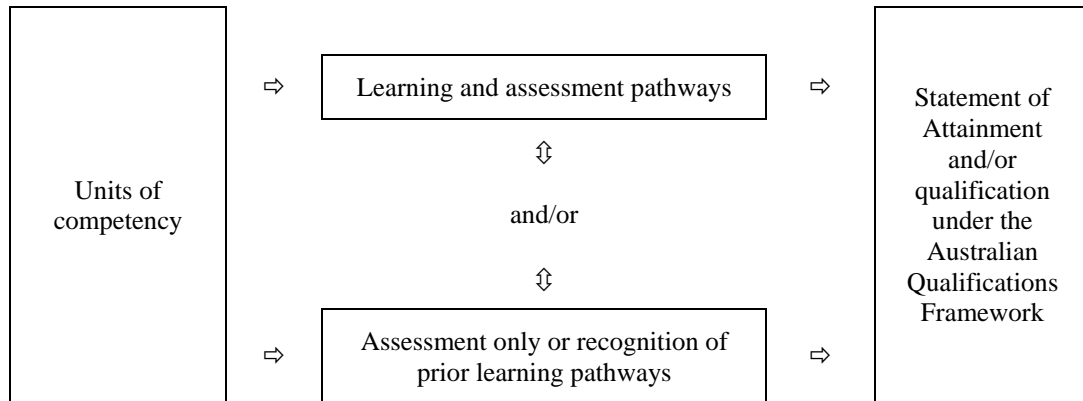
Each RTO must issue AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment that meet the requirements of the current AQF Implementation Handbook and the endorsed Training Packages within the scope of its registration. An AQF qualification is issued once the full requirements for a qualification, as specified in the nationally endorsed Training Package are met. A Statement of Attainment is issued when an individual has completed one or more units of competency from nationally recognised qualification(s)/courses(s). See the AQTF 2007 and the 2007 edition of the AQF Implementation Handbook—available on the AQFAB website <www.aqf.edu.au>.

Pathways

The competencies in this Training Package may be attained in a number of ways including through:

- formal or informal education and training
- experiences in the workplace
- general life experience
- any combination of the above.

Assessment under this Training Package leading to an AQF qualification or Statement of Attainment may follow a learning and assessment pathway, an assessment-only or recognition pathway, or a combination of the two as illustrated in the following diagram.



Each of these assessment pathways leads to full recognition of competencies held – the critical issue is that the candidate is competent, not how the competency was acquired.

Assessment, by any pathway, must comply with the assessment requirements set out in the Assessment Guidelines of the Training Package and the AQTF 2007.

Learning and assessment pathways

Usually, learning and assessment are integrated, with assessment evidence being collected and feedback provided to the candidate at any time throughout the learning and assessment process.

Learning and assessment pathways may include structured programs in a variety of contexts using a range of strategies to meet different learner needs. Structured learning and assessment programs could be group-based, work-based, project-based, self-paced and action learning based; conducted by distance or e-learning; and/or involve practice and experience in the workplace.

Learning and assessment pathways to suit Australian apprenticeships have a mix of formal structured training and structured workplace experience with formative assessment activities through which candidates can acquire and demonstrate skills and knowledge from the relevant units of competency.

Assessment-only or recognition of prior learning pathway

Competencies already held by individuals can be formally assessed against the units of competency in this Training Package, and should be recognised regardless of how, when or where they were achieved.

In an assessment-only or recognition of prior learning (RPL) pathway, the candidate provides current, quality evidence of their competency against the relevant unit of competency. This process may be directed by the candidate and verified by the assessor, such as in the compilation of portfolios; or directed by the assessor, such as through observation of workplace performance and skills application, and oral and/or written assessment. Where the outcomes of this process indicate that the candidate is competent, structured training is not required. The RPL requirements of the AQTF 2007 must be met.

As with all assessment, the assessor must be confident that the evidence indicates that the candidate is currently competent against the endorsed unit of competency. This evidence may take a variety of forms and might include certification, references from past employers, testimonials from clients, and work samples. The onus is on candidates to provide sufficient evidence to satisfy assessors that they currently hold the relevant competencies. In judging evidence, the assessor must ensure that the evidence of prior learning is:

- authentic (the candidate's own work)
- valid (directly related to the current version of the relevant endorsed unit of competency)
- reliable (shows that the candidate consistently meets the endorsed unit of competency)
- current (reflects the candidate's current capacity to perform the aspect of the work covered by the endorsed unit of competency)

- sufficient (covers the full range of elements in the relevant unit of competency and addresses the four dimensions of competency, namely task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills, and job/role environment skills).

The assessment only or recognition of prior learning pathway is likely to be most appropriate in the following scenarios:

- candidates enrolling in qualifications who want recognition for prior learning or current competencies
- existing workers
- individuals with overseas qualifications
- recent migrants with established work histories
- people returning to the workplace
- people with disabilities or injuries requiring a change in career.

Combination of pathways

Where candidates for assessment have gained competencies through work and life experience and gaps in their competence are identified, or where they require training in new areas, a combination of pathways may be appropriate.

In such situations, the candidate may undertake an initial assessment to determine their current competency. Once current competency is identified, a structured learning and assessment program ensures that the candidate acquires the required additional competencies identified as gaps.

Assessor requirements

This section identifies the mandatory competencies for assessors, and clarifies how others may contribute to the assessment process where one person alone does not hold all the required competencies.

Assessor competencies

The AQTF 2007 specifies mandatory competency requirements for assessors. For information, Element 1.4 from the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* follows:

- 1.4 Training and assessment are conducted by trainers and assessors who:
- a) have the necessary training and assessment competencies as determined by the National Quality Council or its successors
 - b) have the relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered or assessed
 - c) continue developing their vocational and training and assessment competencies to support continuous improvements in delivery of the RTO's services.

The following information (p 5) is reproduced from the Assessment Guidelines of the *Tourism, Hospitality and Events Training Package (SIT07)*.⁴

The following options show how the requirement to use qualified assessors may be met.

Alternative ways of meeting the requirement to use qualified assessors

OPTIONS	Assessors, technical experts and workplace supervisors (includes mandated requirements and recommended attributes)
<p>Single assessor An individual assessor conducts the assessment</p>	<p>An assessor is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold formal recognition of competence in the relevant units in the TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package • be deemed competent and, where possible, hold formal recognition in the specific units of competency from this Training Package, at least to the level being assessed • demonstrate current knowledge of the industry, industry practices, and the job or role against which performance is being assessed • demonstrate current knowledge and skill in assessing against this Training Package in a range of contexts.
<p>Partnership arrangement An assessor works with a technical expert to conduct the assessment</p>	<p>An assessor is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold formal recognition of competence in the relevant units in the TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package • demonstrate current knowledge and skill in assessing against this Training Package in a range of contexts. <p>A technical expert shall be a person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is deemed competent and, where possible, holds formal recognition of competence in the specific units of competency from this Training Package, at least to the level being assessed • demonstrates current knowledge of the industry, industry practices, and the job or role against which performance is being assessed • communicates and liaises with the assessor throughout the assessment process.
<p>Assessment team/panel A team working together to conduct the assessment</p>	<p>Members of an assessment team or panel that comprises assessment and industry experience and expertise, work together in the collection of evidence and make judgements about competency. The members of the team must collectively meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold formal recognition of competence in the relevant units in the TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package • be deemed competent and, where possible, holds formal recognition of competence in the specific units of competency from this Training Package, at least to the level being assessed • demonstrate current knowledge of the industry, industry practices, and the job or role against which performance is being assessed. This would be demonstrated through evidence of actual workplace experience within the last two years and one or more of the items below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attendance at professional development or training and education activities focusing on good practice in the relevant industry competencies - participation in professional or industry networks • demonstrate current knowledge and skill in assessing against this Training Package in a range of contexts.

⁴ DEEWR, 2007, *Tourism, Hospitality and Events Training Package (SIT07)*, Volume 1.

Principles for designing and conducting assessments

The following information (p 6–7) is reproduced from the Assessment Guidelines of the *Business Services Training Package (BSB07)*.⁵

Designing assessment tools

This section provides an overview on the use and development of assessment tools.

Use of assessment tools

Assessment tools provide a means of collecting the evidence that assessors use in making judgements about whether candidates have achieved competency.

There is no set format or process for the design, production or development of assessment tools. Assessors may use prepared assessment tools, such as those specifically developed to support this Training Package, or they may develop their own.

Using prepared assessment tools

If using prepared assessment tools, assessors should ensure these are benchmarked, or mapped, against the current version of the relevant unit of competency. This can be done by checking that the materials are listed on the National Training Information Service (www.ntis.gov.au). Materials on the list have been noted by the National Training Quality Council as meeting their quality criteria for Training Package support materials.

Developing assessment tools

When developing their own assessment tools, assessors must ensure that the tools:

- are benchmarked against the relevant unit or units of competency;
- are reviewed as part of the validation of assessment strategies required under the AQTF 2007; and
- meet the assessment requirements expressed in the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.

A key reference for assessors developing assessment tools is TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package and the unit of competency TAAASS403A *Develop assessment tools*.

Conducting assessment

This section details the mandatory assessment requirements and provides information on equity in assessment including reasonable adjustment.

Mandatory assessment requirements

Assessments must meet the criteria set out in the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*.

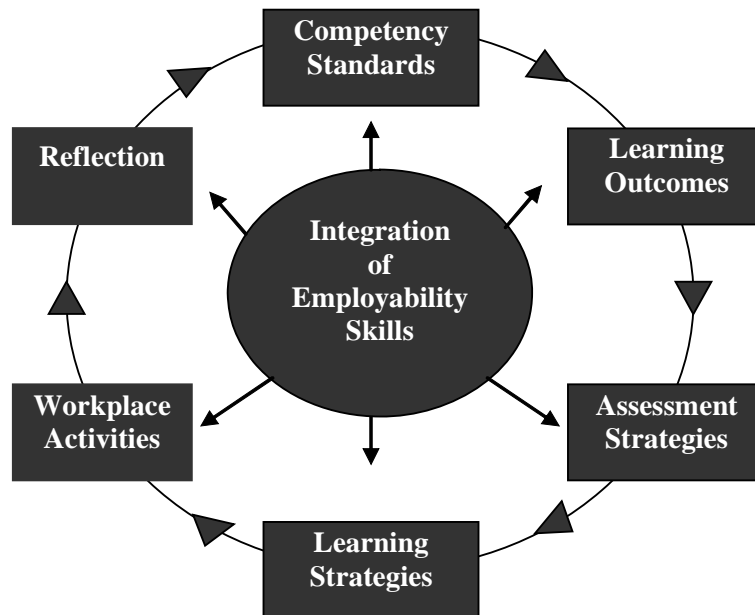
For information, the mandatory assessment requirements from Standard 1 from the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* are as follows:

- 1.5 Assessment, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):
- a) meets the requirements of the relevant Training Package or accredited course
 - b) is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence
 - c) meets workplace and, where relevant, regulatory requirements.

⁵ DEST, 2007, *Business Services Training Package (BSB07)*, Volume 1.

Assessment of employability skills

Employability skills are integral to workplace competency and, as such, must be considered in the design, customisation, delivery and assessment of vocational education and training programs in an integrated and holistic way, as represented diagrammatically below.



Employability Skills are embedded and explicit within each unit of competency. Training providers must use Employability Skills information in order to design valid and reliable training and assessment strategies. This analysis could include:

- reviewing units of competency to locate relevant Employability Skills and determine how they are applied within the unit
- analysing the Employability Skills Summary for the qualification in which the unit or units are packaged to help clarify relevant industry and workplace contexts and the application of Employability Skills at that qualification outcome
- designing training and assessment to address Employability Skills requirements.

For more information on Employability Skills in IBSA Training Packages go to the IBSA website at www.ibsa.org.au.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has further information regarding employability skills including a resource which was developed by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) to assist trainers and assessors ‘unpack’ the employability skills requirements contained in units of competency and turn them into learning and assessment strategies that lead to the attainment of Training Package qualifications.

This information and the resource, *Employability Skills: From Framework to Practice – An Introductory Guide for Trainers and Assessors*, is available for download: www.dest.gov.au (Home > Training & skills > Policy, issues & reviews > Key issues > Employability Skills > Incorporating Employability Skills into Training Packages)

The following information is found in the assessment guidelines of another endorsed Training Packages but is also applicable for assessment in Hospitality. This information (pp 8–11) has been taken from the Assessment Guidelines of the *Information and Communications Technology Training Package (ICA05)*.⁶

Checklist for developing assessment materials

The following checklist is offered as guidance for developing assessment materials:

- ***Select the unit/s of competency to be assessed***

Identify the unit of competency in this Training Package that is to be assessed. The assessment resource may focus on a single unit of competency or a cluster or group of related units of competency.

- ***Analyse the unit of competency***

The unit of competency describes the work and the required standards of performance. Read the full unit of competency carefully and familiarise yourself with the:

- *Unit Description*
- *Elements and Performance Criteria*
- *Range Statement*
- *Evidence Guide*.

Identify the key skills that the candidate will require to perform the work activity described in the unit of competency. These are:

- *Task Skills* – these involve performing the task to the required standard as described in the unit of competency.
- *Task Management Skills* – these involve managing a number of different tasks within the job.
- *Contingency Management Skills* – these involve fulfilling the responsibilities and expectations of the workplace.

- ***Identify the type and amount of evidence to be collected***

Prepare a list of the evidence that might be collected to show that the candidate is able to perform the work activity described in the unit of competency. There are three broad categories of assessment evidence that may be used in conducting competency assessments. These are:

- *Product* – this refers to an item that is constructed or a service that is delivered.
- *Process* – this refers to the way in which a product is produced or achieved.
- *Knowledge* – this refers to the information that is required to perform the aspect of work described in the unit(s) of competency. This may include knowledge of specific information, knowledge of specific laws, regulations and Codes of Practice and knowledge of principles, processes and procedures.

This evidence may be collected through a variety of methods. These include:

Direct

- observation of workplace activities
- demonstration of specific tasks
- observation of activities under simulated workplace conditions

Indirect

- questioning – oral questioning, written tests, interviews

Supplementary Evidence

- supervisor reports
- employer references
- documentation about past or prior achievements
- portfolios.

The assessor must determine the type and amount of evidence that is required and how this will be collected.

⁶ DEST, 2005, *Information and Communications Technology Training Package (ICA05)*, Volume 1.

- ***Plan the assessment activity***

Prepare a brief written description of the assessment activity that will be used to collect the required evidence. For example, this may be an observation of workplace activity, a simulation, a test or some other form of evidence gathering technique. The description does not have to be detailed but should at least describe, in broad terms, the nature of the activities to be undertaken.

The description should detail the:

- type of evidence gathered under each evidence requirement (direct, indirect, supplementary)
- tasks which the candidate is required to do.

In planning the activity consideration should be given to using evidence gathering methods that:

- are appropriate to the industry context
- are gender and culturally inclusive
- take into account the language, literacy and numeracy skills of both the assessor and the candidate
- minimise the cost of assessment
- involve the collection of a variety of forms of evidence
- may be customised to take into account local conditions, site requirements and enterprise specific practices
- utilise industry and enterprise reference materials, such as standard operating procedures and quality systems
- allow for updating of evidence requirements and work practices in line with changes to legislation, regulations and Codes of Practice
- take account of safety considerations and the assessment environment, especially for New Apprenticeship pathways, which are likely to have first time workers and for assessment of high-risk operations or in high-risk industries.

- ***Prepare the assessment materials***

The assessment materials are developed in accordance with the plan for the assessment activity.

The assessment materials should:

- address the relevant unit(s) of competency
- require the candidate to demonstrate the five key components of competency
- identify the evidence requirements and evidence collection methods
- include the resources needed to conduct the assessment activity/activities
- include instructions for candidates and those involved in administering the assessment activity/activities
- be checked for ease of use, validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility
- incorporate allowable adjustments to the assessment procedure.

- ***Validate the assessment materials***

The assessment materials should be piloted with a small sample of assessors. Information gathered through this process should be analysed to establish any amendments that may be required. The assessment materials are redrafted incorporating suggested amendments as appropriate.

- ***Prepare the final version of the assessment materials***

The assessment materials are published in an appropriate format, either print or electronic, and made available to assessors within the relevant organisation. Arrangements are put in place for the ongoing maintenance and cyclic review of the assessment resource.

Conducting Assessment

Step 1 Establish the assessment context	<p>The assessor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• establishes the context and purpose of the assessment;• identifies the relevant units of competency, assessment guidelines and qualification framework in this Training Package;• identifies any NTQC noted support materials that have been developed to facilitate the assessment process;• analyses the competency standards and identifies the evidence requirements; and• identifies potential evidence collection methods.
Step 2 Prepare the candidate	<p>The assessor meets with the candidate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• explain the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process;• explain the competency standards to be assessed and the evidence to be collected;• advise on self-assessment, including processes and criteria;• outline the assessment procedure, the preparation the candidate should undertake, and answer any questions;• assess the needs of the candidate and, where applicable, negotiate reasonable adjustment for assessing people with disabilities without compromising the integrity of the units of competency;• seek feedback regarding the candidate's understanding of the units of competency, evidence requirements and assessment process;• determine if the candidate is ready for assessment and, in consultation with the candidate, decide on the time and place of the assessment; and• develop an assessment plan.
Step 3 Plan and prepare the evidence gathering process	<p>The assessor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• establish a plan for gathering sufficient quality evidence about the candidate's performance in order to make the assessment decision (and involve industry representatives in the development of plans for the validation of assessment);• source or develop assessment materials to assist in the evidence gathering process;• organise equipment or resources required to support the evidence gathering process;• coordinate and brief other personnel involved in the evidence gathering process.
Step 4 Collect the evidence and make the assessment decision	<p>The assessor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• establish and oversee the evidence gathering process to ensure its validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility;• collect appropriate evidence and assess this against the elements, Performance Criteria, Range Statement and Evidence Guide in the relevant units of competency;• evaluate evidence in terms of the four dimensions of competency – task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills, and job/role environment skill;• incorporate allowable adjustments to the assessment procedure without compromising the integrity of the competencies;• evaluate the evidence in terms of validity, consistency, currency, equity, authenticity and sufficiency;• consult and work with other staff, assessment panel members or technical experts involved in the assessment process;• record details of evidence collected; and• make a judgement about the candidate's competency based on the evidence and the relevant unit(s) of competency.

Step 5 Provide feedback on the assessment	<p>The assessor must provide advice to the candidate about the outcomes of the assessment process. This includes providing the candidate with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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; and• information on reassessment and the appeals process.
Step 6 Record and report the result	<p>The assessor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• record the assessment outcome according to the policies and procedures of the RTO;• maintain records of the assessment procedure, evidence collected and the outcome according to the policies and procedures of the RTO;• maintain the confidentiality of the assessment outcome;• organise the issuing of qualifications and/or Statements of Attainment according to the policies and procedures of the RTO.
Step 7 Review the assessment process	<p>On completion of the assessment process, the assessor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• review the assessment process;• report on the positive and negative features of the assessment to those responsible for the assessment procedures;• if necessary, suggest to appropriate personnel in the RTO ways of improving the assessment procedures.
Step 8 Participate in the reassessment and appeals process	<p>The assessor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide feedback and counsel the candidate, if required, regarding the assessment outcome or process, including guidance on further options;• provide the candidate with information on the reassessment and appeals process;• report any disputed assessment decision to the appropriate personnel in the RTO; and• participate in the reassessment or appeal according to the policies and procedures of the RTO.

Diversity, Equity and Accessibility

The following information (pp 11–12) is reproduced from the Assessment Guidelines of the *Business Services Training Package (BSB07)*.⁷

Access and Equity

An individual's access to the assessment process should not be adversely affected by restrictions placed on the location or context of assessment beyond the requirements specified in this Training Package: training and assessment must be bias-free.

Under the rules for their development, Training Packages must reflect and cater for the increasing diversity of Australia's VET clients and Australia's current and future workforce. The flexibilities offered by Training Packages should enhance opportunities and potential outcomes for all people so that we can all benefit from a wider national skills base and a shared contribution to Australia's economic development and social and cultural life.

Reasonable Adjustments

It is important that education providers take meaningful, transparent and reasonable steps to consult, consider and implement reasonable adjustments for students with disability.

⁷ DEST, 2007, *Business Services Training Package (BSB07)*, Volume 1.

Under the Disability Standards for Education 2005, education providers must make reasonable adjustments for people with disability to the maximum extent that those adjustments do not cause that provider unjustifiable hardship. While ‘reasonable adjustment’ and ‘unjustifiable hardship’ are different concepts and involve different considerations, they both seek to strike a balance between the interests of education providers and the interests of students with and without disability.

An adjustment is any measure or action that a student requires because of their disability, and which has the effect of assisting the student to access and participate in education and training on the same basis as students without a disability. An adjustment is reasonable if it achieves this purpose while taking into account factors such as the nature of the student’s disability, the views of the student, the potential effect of the adjustment on the student and others who might be affected, and the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

An education provider is also entitled to maintain the academic integrity of a course or program and to consider the requirements or components that are inherent or essential to its nature when assessing whether an adjustment is reasonable. There may be more than one adjustment that is reasonable in a given set of circumstances; education providers are required to make adjustments that are reasonable and that do not cause them unjustifiable hardship. See Part 4, Chapter 2 of the *Training Package Development Handbook* (DEST, September 2007) for more information on reasonable adjustment, including examples of adjustments.

The following information (pp 12–13) is reproduced from Appendix A and B of the *Business Services Training Package (BSB07)*.⁸

Training and Assessment for People with Special Needs

Disability Standards for Education were formed under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and were introduced in August 2005; they clarify the obligations of education and training providers to ensure that students who have a disability are able to access and participate in education without experiencing discrimination.

DEST provides further information in the *Disability Standards for Education 2005 Guidance Notes*, accessible via the DEST website (www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/11D73DAB-5477-42F2-AB39-BE2F5BD9BC04/15407/DisabilityStandards_GuidanceNotes_004_screen.pdf).

Good vocational education and training and assessment is often about making adjustments to what we do to meet the learning support needs of individuals. The information provided in this section is aimed at assisting teachers/trainers to meet the reasonable adjustment needs of people who have a disability.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2003, *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC)* in the section on education and employment:

‘In 2003, one in four people (24%) aged 15–64 years with a profound or severe core activity limitation, who were living in households, had completed Year 12. This compares to half (49%) of those without a disability. People with a profound or severe core activity limitation were less likely to have completed a diploma or higher qualification (14%) than those without a disability (28%).’

Employment related findings, for people aged 15–64 years living in households, from the ABS 2003 SDAC include:

- those with a profound level of core activity limitation had a much lower labour force participation rate (15%) than people without a disability (81%)
- people with a disability who were employed were more likely to work part time (37%) than those who were employed and did not have a disability (29%)
- people employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing (16%) had a relatively high disability rate compared to the overall rate for those employed (11%).’

Clearly there is much work still to be done to ensure people who have a disability are able to participate in vocational education and training and employment as fully as possible.

⁸ DEST, 2007, *Business Services Training Package (BSB07)*, Volume 1.

What is a disability?

A disability presents some impairment to everyday activity. Some people with a disability do not have any impairments resulting from their disability. For example, a person who has a hearing impairment which is compensated for by a hearing aid may function without any adjustments. While some people with a disability may have an impairment because of the environment, not the disability itself. For example, hearing loss can be accentuated in a room with loud, competing noise and poor acoustics.

A disability may affect or relate to a range of human functions including mobility, stamina, lifting ability, memory, vision, hearing, speech, comprehension and mood swings. This may be due to accidents, illness or birth.

According to the ABS 2003 SDAC:

‘one in five people in Australia (3,958,300 or 20.0%) had a reported disability. This rate was much the same for males (19.8%) and females (20.1%). Disability was defined as any limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities. Examples range from hearing loss which requires the use of a hearing aid, to difficulty dressing due to arthritis, to advanced dementia requiring constant help and supervision.’

The ABS 2003 SDAC information also tells us that:

0*15.2% (600 300) of people with a disability reported that the cause of their main health condition was accident or injury, 14% (557 300) that it was disease, illness or heredity, and 11% (423,500) that it was “working conditions, work or over work”.’

Health conditions can also be acquired through sporting accidents, repetitive or over use (through regular or sporting activities), or the daily activities of life.

There are many resources available that provide information on how to adjust training and assessment for someone who has a disability; some of these are listed below.

Adjustments in training and assessment

An open mind, common sense and tailoring to individual circumstances will, as often as not, ensure individuals achieve the standards employers and training providers expect. Reasonable adjustments need only be that – reasonable. It is about identifying what adjustments might reasonably be made and how they may be put into place.

Training and assessment can be made more appropriate and fair for a person who has a disability through attitude, preparation and application.

Attitude

The attitude of others is often the greatest barrier for people who have a disability. While most people who have a disability will only ever require minor adjustments to ensure learning is positive, some will require additional support. There are many support agencies who can provide advice, however teachers/trainers may need to take additional time to ensure their teaching/training meets the learning support needs of the individual concerned.

Positive language creates an atmosphere of mutual respect, which is essential to learning. For example, using language that identifies learners as people rather than language that identifies them by one of their characteristics conveys that the person is more important than the characteristic, such as the difference between a ‘person who has an intellectual disability’ and an ‘intellectually disabled person’. A person who has an intellectual disability could also be identified by a range of equally important characteristics – height, age, sporting interests. However, the term ‘intellectually disabled person’ refers to the disability as the major, and often only, defining characteristic.

Preparation

It is important to identify any functional issues arising from the nature and extent of a person’s disability. This can usually be done by discussing such issues with the individual. In most cases, this consultation will identify reasonable adjustment needs which can be put into place. There are many simple things that teachers/trainers can do to make reasonable adjustments to enable individuals who have a disability to succeed in training and assessment. In some cases, professional support may be required.

Application

Once reasonable adjustments have been implemented it is important to monitor and evaluate what has been done to ensure the best environment for continuous learning because:

- adjustments may only need to be temporary – i.e. mechanisms may only need to be in place during an induction period or due to a temporary disability, in which case evaluation will ensure appropriateness without the need for ongoing monitoring
- adjustments may need reinforcing – when adjustments need to be ongoing, monitoring may reinforce patterns of behaviour in order for them to become ‘natural’
- adjustments may need improving – where adjustments are ongoing or substantial, a commitment to continuous improvement is recommended through monitoring.

In most cases an informal discussion with the person concerned may be all that is necessary. However, should adjustments be substantial, or a learner not be acquiring competence at a reasonable rate, a more formal process may be required. This may include:

- performance indicators – training providers, learners and employers should have agreed indicators of performance which can be measured and monitored
- independent support – a third party independent of the training and/or assessment environment may need to be involved
- experimentation – if existing adjustments are not proving satisfactory, creative solutions may be needed
- continuing review – formal monitoring is encouraged if adjustments are changed or if substantial adjustments are necessary.

For further information on training and assessment for people with specific needs, the DEST website has information about the Disability Coordination Officer Programme, which ‘provides information, co ordination and referral services for people with a disability interested in or enrolled in post school education and training’ (www.dest.gov.au).

Reasonable adjustment

Below are some of the practical things that can be done as part of providing reasonable adjustment to learners with specific support needs to enable them to undertake training and assessment. Clearly, each case will be different and will need to be discussed with the person and in some cases expert help will be needed, at least in the initial stages.

Type of Disability	Reasonable Adjustment
Acquired brain injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • memory aids (posters, notes etc.) • reflective listening skills • stress minimisation • time and patience
Hearing impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • audio loops for people using hearing aids • plain English documents • fire and alarm systems with flashing lights • sign language interpreters • telephone typewriters
Intellectual disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional time • assessment which is appropriate to the skill (i.e. avoiding written assessment for practical tasks) • mentors • plain English documents • practical learning sessions • repetition of learning exercises
Speech impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information summaries • stress minimisation • time and patience • written rather than verbal opportunities

Type of Disability	Reasonable Adjustment
Mobility impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to aids such as for holding documents • adjustable tables • lifting limits • note taking support • oral rather than written presentations • personal computer • wheelchair access
Psychiatric disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification and avoidance of stresses • ongoing rather than formal assessments • reflective listening skills • 'time out' breaks in assessment
Vision impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional writing time for assignments/tests • audio tapes • braille translations • enlarged computer screen images • enlarged text and images • good lighting or reading lamps • guide dog provision • informing the person before moving furniture • voice synthesisers on computers

Information on Training and Assessment for People from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Backgrounds

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have expressed concern about the importance of developing assessment processes along appropriate lines.

There are four main areas of concern:

- diversity
- cultural appropriateness
- community control
- accreditation.

Diversity

The term diversity is used to emphasise the wide range of opinion, aspirations, community circumstances, cultural practices, geographic locations, and social, economic and political conditions that exist throughout Australia and the need to guard against assumptions that all communities are the same.

One approach is to distinguish between remote, rural and urban settings. These settings suggest differences that may be relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, including:

- culture
- language
- history
- social make up
- geography
- social and economic infrastructure
- economy
- political structure.

These factors suggest that training and assessment, in order to be relevant to the needs of any particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation, should address each situation as unique.

Cultural appropriateness

The term culture is used in a broad sense, it refers to:

- values, social beliefs and customs e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law, land and family and kinship systems
- protocols of behaviour and interaction e.g. cultural authority, gender, kinship
- ways of thinking e.g. learning styles
- language, both traditional and Aboriginal English
- lifestyles
- local history
- location e.g. region and place.

A particularly important aspect of cultural appropriateness is that of learning styles. There is evidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, both traditional and contemporary, approach learning differently from the Western intellectual tradition, which is relevant to effective training and assessment.

It is understood that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may:

- learn better in groups than individually
- learn better in the surroundings of their community than in an institutional environment
- prefer oral communications to written forms
- learn on the basis of trial and error in the presence of an experienced person in preference to concept building approaches
- have a highly developed sense of spatial relations by which they learn; hence stories, maps and pictures would be preferable to oral explanations.

To be effective, it is necessary that training and assessment recognises, adopts and practises appropriate delivery and assessment approaches.

Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainers and assessors need information on aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. They need to work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to adopt practices that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander approaches. The community should be asked to identify experts to provide information and to assist with assessment of relevant protocols, for example, where required.

There are a number of ways a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) can establish and maintain culturally appropriate training and assessment practices, including:

- ensuring a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in all aspects of planning, development, delivery and evaluation
- establishing and maintaining a collaborative relationship with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- as a mainstream (non Indigenous) RTO, establishing auspice relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and individuals, including direct and indirect involvement of persons identified as appropriate by the local community
- ensuring ongoing training of non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at all levels of the RTO, delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander personnel.

Community control

The term community control is synonymous with self determination, self management, etc. and underpins most community aspirations. It is of fundamental concern to people who see themselves as having been dispossessed by colonisation.

The essence of control is control of decision making. In order to be able to do this, people need all relevant information, relevant competencies and recognition of their own structures and processes.

Among other things, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seek control over their training. It is necessary, therefore, that they participate in all stages of planning, development, delivery and evaluation, in meaningful ways. One way is for communities to have control of the contract for training initiatives.

It is important that training providers and assessors respect and conform to the practice of community control which underpins this field within the BSB07 Business Services Training Package.

Accreditation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have said for a long time that their involvement in training has not been formally recognised and that many of the skills they utilise in managing their organisations and delivering services to their communities have not been valued.

The first issue may have arisen because much of the training that has been delivered to communities has been customised to particular situations, has not been assessed on an individual basis if at all, and has been delivered by unregistered personnel.

Secondly, until this time, recognition of current competence (RCC) has been under utilised.

Individuals may demonstrate competence in complete units of competency through formal training, informal training or the recognition of current competence/skills, resulting in qualifications/Statements of Attainment being awarded as appropriate.

In the community group setting, an important feature of likely relevance for assessment is that participants may vary with respect to previous education and training experience, and possess diverse skills in literacy and/or numeracy.

However, diverse numeracy and literacy skills are not a barrier to sophisticated thought, and care must be taken not to employ assessment strategies that rely on numeracy and literacy skills where they are not intrinsically required by the unit of competency being assessed.

A flexible approach to assessment will be required by RTOs in order to meet the requirements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and individuals under this domain within the BSB07 Business Services Training Package.

Assessment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

The guiding principles that underpin assessment include:

- assessment should be transparent i.e. clearly seen and understood by the candidate and others
- assessment should empower the candidate on the basis of consent, self assessment and responsibility for the process
- any Board members or prospective Board members should have opportunities to demonstrate their competence/skills
- Board activities may be used as the context for assessment where possible (known as on the job assessment or workplace assessment); there may also be opportunities to include evidence from other relevant situations
- assessment should involve designated community experts working in collaboration with RTO assessors in order to provide appropriate recognition of cultural and community knowledge and skills
- assessments must provide constructive feedback to candidates and support for further competency development
- assessments must provide a Statement of Attainment or qualification listing the units of competency achieved
- records of candidate achievement maintained by the RTO must record the Statement of Attainment listing the units of competency achieved or qualifications achieved as required by the AQTF 2007
- a record of demonstrated competencies will assist in role clarification and performance appraisals in the workplace.

Given the importance of the assessment to the candidate and the Board, the assessor must make every effort to ensure that assessment is conducted with the highest level of professionalism and integrity.

Units of competency with a cultural content, including the following of local protocols, will require knowledge of these cultural matters by the assessor. As these matters are often governed by local rules of access to such knowledge, only those people with the knowledge can genuinely assess these aspects of the competency or provide guidance on their assessment.

Discussion must take place with the community and agreement reached on how these matters are assessed. For non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RTOs, this will usually mean the use of auspice arrangements with appropriate people or knowledge experts, identified by the community.

It should also be noted that for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being assessed, these aspects of competency will almost invariably have been attained through life experience. This must also be taken into account in the assessment procedures relating to cultural matters.

Assessors may exercise limited discretion in response to organisational or individual requirements, but any changes must not alter the meaning of the unit of competency or the elements of competency.

Candidates must be informed of the right to access grievance procedures.

Programming Assessment

An integrated approach to assessment, in which a number of elements or units of competency are assessed together, should be adopted. This accords with the concept of competence as the integration of a wide range of skills, knowledge and attitudes.

This approach also reduces the danger of over-assessment, which can easily occur if units and elements of competency are assessed individually.

In addition, it is preferable that assessment be integrated with training delivery.

Some forms of assessment will be ongoing. Evidence of competence gathered through the observation of student performance in the classroom, in the workplace or in a simulated work environment will provide one means of ongoing assessment. Questioning of students in the course of teaching and learning activities, self-assessment and peer assessment and reports from workplace supervisors will also allow evidence of competence to be gathered on an ongoing basis.

Other evidence may be collected through specific assessment tasks and events such as projects and assignments, portfolios, written and practical tests and presentations, role-plays and simulations.

It is advisable for teachers and assessors to decide in advance on the forms of assessment and evidence-gathering methods to be used for various units or groups of units and devise a planned program of assessment.

Where specific assessment events are to be used these should be scheduled well in advance, keeping in mind the assessment demands placed on students in their other HSC subjects. As with other HSC courses, students should be informed in writing of school (or other RTO) requirements for assessment in each course.

The following information (pp 18–19) is reproduced from Appendix D of the *Business Services Training Package (BSB07)*.⁹

Assessment in a simulated environment

Units of Competency in the Business Services Training Package may be assessed in the workplace or in a simulated environment.

Assessment within a simulated environment may be required because:

- suitable employment and/or work experience is not always available
- some workplaces or work situations do not use or allow the application of the competency required

⁹ DEST, 2007, *Business Services Training Package (BSB07)*, Volume 1.

- conducting assessment within the workplace may be unacceptably disruptive to work requirements of the business
- it is sometimes appropriate to practice skills in live settings prior to the acquisition of competency, particularly in potentially dangerous situations or where valuable equipment may be at risk.

Given that simulation may be used and is often indicated as an option for assessment within the Business Services Training Package the following advice is provided:

In order to be valid and reliable, the simulation must closely represent what actually occurs in the workplace, and should seek to replicate an actual work setting. It is critical that the designer of the simulation is thoroughly familiar with the application of the competency and is experienced in current and relevant workplace practices. In deciding whether a simulation or an assessment environment has been adequately designed, the following questions should be asked:

Are there opportunities to:

- test the full range of equipment?
- use up to date equipment and software?
- reflect time pressures and deadlines?
- show the complexity of dealing with multiple tasks?
- involve prioritising among competing tasks?
- deal with customers, including difficult ones?
- work with others in a team?
- communicate with diverse groups?
- find, discuss and test solutions to problems?
- explore health and safety issues?
- answer practically oriented, applied knowledge questions?
- show the level of written and verbal expression sufficient for, but not exceeding, the work requirements?

Recording Assessment

A competency record may contain information about both units and elements of competency.

A sample record sheet for an individual unit of competency is shown below.

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) may use records designed by themselves or by industry bodies.

Schools and other RTOs will be required to report to the Office of the Board of Studies on units of competency for which students have been assessed as competent.

Competency Record – sample unit of competency record sheet

BSBCMM201A Communicate in the workplace

Element of Competency	Competent (Assessor Signature)
1 Gather, convey and receive information and ideas	
2 Complete workplace documentation and correspondence	
3 Communicate in a way that responds positively to individual differences	

VERIFICATION OF ACHIEVEMENT OF UNIT OF COMPETENCY

I, _____, of _____
(name of assessor) (Registered Training Organisation)

certify that

(name of student)

has demonstrated competence in the unit of competency

BSBCMM201A Communicate in the workplace

Signature _____ Date _____

The HSC Examination

The HSC examination:

- is independent of the competency-based assessment requirements for AQF VET qualifications
- is optional for students of Hospitality (240 indicative hours) and is intended for Universities Admission Index (UAI) purposes only
- is a two-hour written paper.

Internal examinations

Teachers and trainers need to be aware that students enrolled in Hospitality (240 indicative hours) may elect to undertake the optional written HSC examination. These students should have the opportunity to practise appropriate written tasks under examination conditions. As far as possible internal examinations set for this purpose should reflect the specifications and conditions of the HSC examination.

For this reason, it is highly recommended that students undertake at least a trial HSC examination.

Schools must provide an estimated examination mark for all students entered for the optional HSC examination. This mark will be an estimate of likely performance in the Higher School Certificate examination and will be used only in the case of a successful illness/misadventure appeal.

Note that a trial HSC or other written internal examination may also be used as a source of evidence of competency in some units and elements of competency and may therefore contribute to the competency-based assessment program.