

4 Assessment

4.1 Industry Curriculum Frameworks – The 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 – competency-based assessment:
 - applies to all courses within frameworks
 - provides industry recognition.
2. Assessment for the Universities Admissions Index (UAI):
 - for 240-hour courses only
 - optional written HSC examination.

4.2 Assessment for AQF Certification

Assessment for AQF Certification:

- 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 is encouraged.

4.2.1 Guiding principles for assessment materials

This section is reproduced from the Assessment Guidelines of the Rural Production Training Package (RTE03)¹ incorporating the AQTF Standards for RTOs². The advice is replicated in the Conservation and Land Management (RTD02) and Amenity Horticulture (RTF03) Training Packages.

These Assessment Guidelines provide the endorsed framework for assessment of the Units of Competency in the Rural Production Training Package. They are designed to ensure that assessment activities are consistent with the Australian Recognition Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations and that the assessment processes and outcomes are valid, reliable, flexible, and fair.

The Competency Standards in the Rural Production Training Package are benchmarks for assessment and are the basis of the nationally recognised Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), qualifications, and Statements of Attainment issued by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

¹ ANTA Rural Production Training Package (RTE03) Volume One, Part C, Assessment Guidelines, pp 185–225. The Assessment Guidelines of the Rural Production Training Package may also be accessed via the National Training Information Service website www.ntis.gov.au

² ANTA, 2001, *Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for RTOs*, pp 11–21, Melbourne.

Assessment within the National Training Framework is defined as the process of collecting evidence and making judgements about whether competency has been achieved. The purpose of assessment is to confirm whether an individual can perform to the standards expected in the workplace, as expressed in the Competency Standards in the Training Package.

When conducting assessments, assessors must ensure that they are familiar with the full text of the Unit(s) of Competency being assessed. In particular, they must ensure that the assessment arrangements:

- cover all elements of the Unit of Competency being assessed
- address the four dimensions of competency: task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills
- are consistent with the Evidence Guide for each relevant Unit of Competency, as this specifies the context of assessment, the critical aspects of competency, the required underpinning knowledge and skills, and the identification of Key Competencies and their performance level. In some cases there will be reference to having access to real workplace conditions and infrastructure.

Australian Recognition Framework Assessment Requirements for RTOs

Assessment for national recognition purposes must meet the requirements of the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF). Assessment must be conducted by an RTO formally registered under Australian Recognition Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations with the specific Competency Standards or Training Package within its scope of registration. The RTO must meet the requirements of the relevant assessment standards in the Australian Recognition Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations as set out below.

The RTO's assessments for national recognition, regardless of whether this is through a training and assessment pathway or an assessment-only pathway must [AQTF Standard 8.1]:

- comply with the Assessment Guidelines included in nationally endorsed Training Packages
- lead to the issuing of a Statement of Attainment or qualification under the AQF when a person is assessed as competent against nationally endorsed Unit(s) of Competency
- be underpinned by an assessment process that complies with the principles of validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility
- provide for applicants to be informed of the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process
- focus on the application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace and cover all aspects of workplace performance, including task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills
- involve the evaluation of sufficient evidence to enable professional judgements to be made about whether competency has been attained
- provide for feedback to the applicant about the outcomes of the assessment process and guidance on future options
- provide for reassessment on appeal, and
- be equitable for all groups or persons, taking account of cultural and linguistic needs.

Reasonable adjustments are to be made to ensure equity in assessment for people with disabilities. This means that wherever possible, 'reasonable' adjustments are to be made to meet the individual needs of a person with a disability. Adjustments are considered 'reasonable' if they do not impose an unjustifiable hardship on a training provider or employer.

When assessing people with disabilities, assessors are encouraged to apply good practice assessment methods with sensitivity and flexibility.

The RTO's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process must be accessible to all applicants upon enrolment and must [AQTF Standard 8.2]:

- be structured to minimise the time and cost to applicants
- provide adequate information and support to enable applicants to gather reliable evidence to support their claim for recognition of competencies currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred.

The RTO must ensure that, in developing, adapting or delivering training and assessment products and services [AQTF Standard 9.3]:

- methods used to identify learning needs, and methods for designing training and assessment materials are documented
- language, literacy and numeracy requirements are consistent with the essential requirements for workplace performance specified in the relevant Units of Competency and that they develop the learning capacity of the individual
- the requirements of the Training Package are met
- core and elective units, as appropriate, are identified, and
- customisation meets the requirements specified in the Training Package.

The RTO must document its plans for delivery and assessment of each Training Package qualification and accredited course within its scope of registration. These plans must ensure that [AQTF Standard 9.3]:

- the delivery modes and training materials meet the needs of a diverse range of clients
- assessment plans, including proposed validation processes, are developed in consultation with enterprises/industry, and that they are documented at the point of registration and on application for extension of scope
- where assessment or training is conducted in the workplace, the RTO negotiates the delivery and assessment plan with the employer and learners, works with the employer to integrate on-the-job and off-the-job training and assessment, and schedules workplace visits to monitor/review the training and assessment
- where a New Apprenticeship Training Contract is in place or being negotiated, individual Training plans encompassing both off-the-job training and structured on-the-job training are developed, documented, implemented and monitored for each apprentice or trainee.

The RTO must validate its assessment plans by [AQTF Standard 9.2]:

- reviewing, comparing and evaluating the assessment processes, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same standards, at least annually, and
- documenting any action taken to improve the quality and consistency of assessment.

[AQTF Standard 9.4]

The RTO must have access to the staff, facilities, equipment, training and assessment materials necessary to provide the training and/or assessment within its scope of registration, and to accommodate client numbers and client needs (including off-campus and online delivery and assessment requirements).

RTOs may operate in partnership with other organisations but, in doing this, are still responsible for the quality of their services and service outcomes.

[AQTF Standard 10.1]

In order to deliver and/or assess Units of Competency or qualifications and issue nationally recognised qualifications under the AQF, RTOs must have those Units of Competency and/or qualifications within their scope of registration.

Recognition of Prior Learning and Current Competency

The competencies in the Rural Production Training Package may be attained in a number of ways [AQTF Standard 8.2]:

- formal or informal training and education
- work experience
- general life experience, and/or
- any combination of the above.

All assessment pathways must provide for the recognition of competencies previously attained. Competencies achieved and currently held by individuals can be formally assessed against the Units of Competency and qualifications in the Rural Production Training Package, and should be recognised regardless of how, when or where they were achieved.

In assessing the competency of individual candidates, assessors must ensure that assessment processes take into account the skills and knowledge that candidates already possess. This can be done by conducting a pre-assessment where the candidate provides evidence of prior learning. In order for prior learning to be recognised, the assessor must be confident that the evidence indicates that the candidate is currently competent against the endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards. 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 determining whether a candidate has presented sufficient 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 Competency Standards)
- reliable (shows that the candidate consistently meets the Competency Standards)
- current (reflects the candidate's current capacity to perform the aspect of the work covered by the standards)
- 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).

Assessor requirements

All Assessors who are engaged in assessing against the Rural Production Training Package must be either:

- employed by a RTO, or
- acting under the registration of a RTO (eg an Assessor working in an enterprise which has a partnership arrangement with a private or public RTO).

The Rural Production Training Package provides a range of options for meeting these Assessor requirements. The options allow assessments to be undertaken by individual Assessors, partnerships involving Assessors and technical experts, and Assessors working in team situations in a variety of workplace and institutional contexts. The following table outlines the different ways that the requirement to use qualified Assessors may be met.

OPTIONS	ASSESSORS, TECHNICAL EXPERTS AND WORKPLACE SUPERVISORS
<p>Single Assessor</p> <p>(An individual Assessor conducts the assessment)</p>	<p>The Assessor is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold formal recognition of competence in the relevant standards in the Training Packages for Assessment and Workplace Training • be deemed competent, and where possible, hold formal recognition of competence in the specific competency standards from the Rural Production Training Package, at least to the level being assessed. <p>In addition, it is recommended that the Assessor is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 the Rural Production Training Package in a range of contexts • demonstrate the necessary interpersonal and communication skills required in the assessment process.
<p>Partnership arrangement</p> <p>(An Assessor works with a technical expert to conduct the assessment)</p>	<p>The Assessor is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold formal recognition of competence in the relevant standards in the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training. <p>In addition, it is recommended that the Assessor is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate the necessary interpersonal and communication skills required in the assessment process. • demonstrate current knowledge and skill in assessing against the Rural Production Training Package in a range of contexts. <p>The technical expert is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be deemed competent, and where possible, hold formal recognition of competence in the specific competency standards in Rural Production, at least to the level being assessed. <p>In addition, it is recommended that the Technical expert is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate current knowledge of the industry, industry practices, and the job or role against which performance is being assessed • communicate and liaise with Assessor throughout assessment process.
<p>Assessor and workplace supervisor</p> <p>(Assessor works with a workplace supervisor in collecting evidence for valid assessment)</p>	<p>The Assessor is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold formal recognition of competence in the relevant standards in the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training. • make the assessment decision. <p>In addition, it is recommended that the Assessor is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate the necessary interpersonal and communication skills required in the assessment process • demonstrate current knowledge and skill in assessing against the Rural Production Training Package in a range of contexts • communicate and liaise where appropriate with the workplace supervisor throughout the assessment process. <p>The workplace supervisor is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be deemed competent, and where possible, hold formal recognition of competence in the specific competency standards from the Rural Production Training Package, at least to the level being assessed.

	<p>In addition, it is recommended that the workplace supervisor is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate current knowledge of the industry, industry practices, and the job or role against which performance is being assessed • communicate and liaise where appropriate with the Assessor throughout the assessment process • use agreed practices to gather and record evidence for the Assessor to make a valid judgement on competency.
<p>Assessment team/panel (A team working together to conduct the assessment)</p>	<p>A team which comprises assessment and industry experience and expertise that works together in the collection of evidence and making judgements about competency. The members of the team must include at least one person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holds formal recognition of competence in the relevant standards in the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training • is deemed competent, and where possible, hold formal recognition of competence in the specific competency standards from the Rural Production Training Package, at least to the level being assessed. <p>In addition, it is recommended that members of the team/panel combined and involved in the assessment are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 the Rural Production Training Package in a range of contexts • demonstrate the necessary interpersonal and communication skills required in the assessment process and liaise with other team/panel members throughout the assessment process.

4.2.2 Integration of key competencies in Training Packages

The following is drawn from ANTA’s Training Package Development Handbook – Integration of Key Competencies.

The Key Competencies are a set of generic capabilities prepared by the Mayer Committee in *Putting Education to Work: The Key Competencies Report* (Mayer 1992).

The Key Competencies were described in the Mayer report as being fundamental to the transfer and application of learning to and within workplaces.

Since their development the Key Competencies have been identified in all national industry competency standards to ensure they are part of the learning and assessment process in vocational education and training. They have also been widely taken up in school curriculum.

Consistent with this the National Training Quality Council considers that all Training Packages ‘require the effective integration of key competencies’ (ANTA 1998, p 11).

The seven Key Competencies identified in the Mayer (1992) report are:

Collecting, analysing and organising information

The capacity to locate information, sift and sort information in order to select what is required and to present it in a useful way, and evaluate both the information itself and the sources and methods used to collect it.

Communicating ideas and information

The capacity to communicate effectively with others using the range of spoken, written, graphic and other nonverbal means of expression.

Planning and organising activities

The capacity to plan and organise one’s own work activities, including making good use of time and resources, sorting out priorities and monitoring one’s own performance.

Working with others and in teams

The capacity to interact effectively with other people both on a one-to-one basis and in groups, including understanding and responding to the needs of a client and working effectively as a member of a team to achieve a shared goal.

Using mathematical ideas and techniques

The capacity to use mathematical ideas, such as number and space, and techniques such as estimation and approximation, for practical purposes.

Solving problems

The capacity to apply problem solving strategies in purposeful ways both in situations where the problem and the solution are clearly evident and in situations requiring creative thinking and a creative approach to achieve an outcome.

Using technology

The capacity to apply technology, combining the physical and sensory skills needed to operate equipment with the understanding of scientific and technological principles needed to explore and adapt systems.

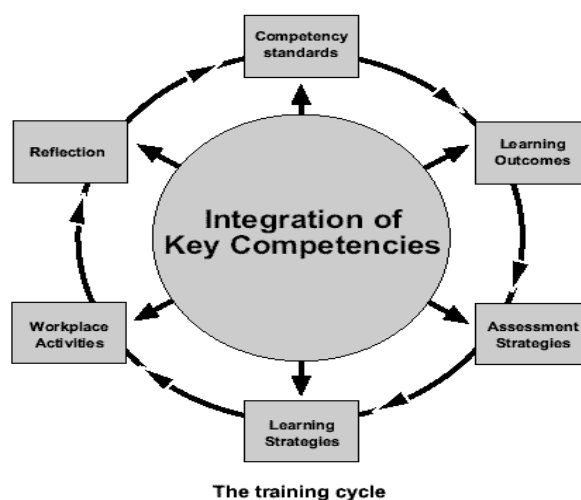
The Key Competencies are defined as the set of competencies which enable people to transfer and apply knowledge and skills developed in classrooms and other learning situations to the workplace.

Implications for vocational education and training

The Key Competencies need to be explicitly developed and applied in vocational education and training delivery and assessment in order to ensure the flexibility and adaptability of staff to respond effectively to current and future direction and challenges within Australian workplaces.

This means that the Key Competencies cannot be considered as supplementary to vocational competency but integral to it. They are part of good learning and essential to good practice. It is therefore, critical that Training Package developers, support materials developers, teachers and trainers deliberately incorporate the Key Competencies into the design, customisation, delivery and assessment of vocational education and training programs.

The traditional training focus has been on technical skills. However, these skills must be developed in ways which enable them to be transferable across different applications and work contexts. This requires a conscious and deliberate effort to incorporate the Key Competencies explicitly into every stage of the training cycle, represented in the following figure, through units of competency and Training Package development, delivery, learning, assessment and reflection for those working within the VET environment.



There is a clear need to move from an approach centred on the classroom to a contextualised problem solving approach in which the learner is central to the process and the learning reflects the realities, processes and procedures of the workplace.

Such an approach is characterised by:

- focus on the development of thinking skills in relation to vocational competency
- assessment integrated with training
- collaborative learning reflecting work-based teams
- competencies learned and assessed in the context of real problems within actual or closely simulated workplace environments
- learner-centres with teachers/trainers/work supervisors as facilitators and mentors
- the explicit development of the Key Competencies to enhance competency in reasoning and making sound and defensible judgements.

The move to a problem solving approach means recognising the learner and his/her learning and vocational contexts as central to the learning process. Achieving competency should not be viewed as a progression through learning and assessment activities. Instead, it is seen as an individual interacting in a structured way with knowledge, skill and vocational contexts in order to better understand and work with them.

4.2.3 Principles for designing and conducting assessments

This section is reproduced from the Assessment Guidelines of the Rural Production Training Package (RTE03).³ The advice is replicated in the Conservation and Land Management (RTD02) and Amenity Horticulture (RTF03) Training Packages.

Assessment resources provide a means of collecting the evidence that assessors use in making judgements about whether candidates have achieved competency. In some cases, assessors may use prepared assessment materials, such as those specifically developed to support the Rural Production Training Package. Alternatively they may develop their own assessment materials to meet the needs of their clients.

If using prepared assessment materials, assessors should ensure that the materials 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.

When developing their own assessment materials, assessors must ensure that:

- the materials are benchmarked against the selected Unit(s) of Competency in the Rural Production Training Package;
- the materials are validated to ensure that assessors can gather sufficient valid and reliable information to make assessment decisions against the Competency Standards;
- the materials and processes meet the AQTF Assessment Requirements for RTOs in section 4.2.1 of this document.

³ ANTA Rural Production Training Package (RTE03) Volume One, Part C, Assessment Guidelines, pp 185–225. The Assessment Guidelines of the Rural Production Training Package may also be accessed via the National Training Information Service website www.ntis.gov.au.

There is no set format or process for the design, production or development of Assessment Tools. However, the following seven-step process that is based on the competency standard, 'BSZ507A Develop assessment tools', provides a general approach to the design and development of such materials.

Step 1. Select the competency standard(s) to be assessed

Identify the competency standards that are to be assessed. Assessment Tools may focus on either a single competency standard or a cluster of related competency standards.

Step 2. Analyse the competency standard

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

- *Descriptor* – this outlines the aspect of work to be assessed.
- *Elements and Performance Criteria* – these describe the nature of the task to be assessed and the standard of performance that is expected of the candidate.
- *Range of Variables* – these describe the contexts under which the task should be able to be performed.
- *Evidence Guide* – this provides information on the underpinning knowledge and skills required to perform the task.

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

- *Task Skills* – these involve performing the task to the required standard as described in the competency standard.
- *Task Management Skills* – these involve managing a number of different tasks within the job.
- *Contingency Management Skills* – these involve responding to problems, breakdowns and changes in routine.
- *Job/Role Environment Skills* – these involve fulfilling the responsibilities and expectations of the workplace.

Step 3. 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 competency standard. 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 competency standards. This may include knowledge of specific information, knowledge of specific laws, regulations and codes of practice, and knowledge of principles, processes and procedures.

Evidence should be collected through a variety of methods. These include:

- *Observation* – observation of workplace activities, demonstration of specific tasks, observation of activities under simulated workplace conditions, and/or observation of role-play.
- *Questioning* – oral questioning, written tests and/or interviews.
- *Supplementary Evidence* – supervisor reports, employer references, documentation about past or prior achievements and/or portfolios.

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

Step 4. Plan the assessment activities

Prepare a brief written description of the assessment activities that will be used to collect the required evidence. This assessment plan should be discussed with the candidate prior to assessment taking place. This plan may include observation of a workplace activity, assessment of a product or workplace process, a role-play simulation, questioning, 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 activity to be undertaken. The assessment plan should detail the:

- type of evidence gathering (eg observation, questioning, supplementary evidence)
- tasks which the candidate is required to do
- location of the assessment activity (ie on- or off-job)
- time allocated to the activity
- who will be involved in the assessment process
- any assessment considerations in regard to ‘reasonable adjustment’ for candidates with special needs.

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
- are practical in regard to safety issues and resources required
- 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 Material Safety Data Sheets
- 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.

Step 5. Prepare the assessment resources

Resources need to be developed to:

- prepare the candidate
- carry out the assessment process
- record outcomes of the assessment for the candidate, Assessor, trainer and the employer.

The resources for the assessment process are to be developed in accordance with the assessment plan. The assessment resources should:

- address the relevant competency standards
- require the candidate to demonstrate the four components of competency
- identify the evidence requirements and evidence collection methods

- include instructions for candidates and those involved in administering the assessment activity
- incorporate allowable reasonable adjustments to the assessment procedure.

Step 6. Validate the assessment resources

The Assessment Tools should be piloted with a small sample of Assessors. Information gathered through this process should be analysed and checked for ease of use, validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility to establish any amendments that may be required. The Assessment Tools are redrafted incorporating suggested amendments as appropriate.

Step 7. Prepare the final version of the Assessment Tools and recording resources

The Assessment Tools 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 assessments

The following outline describes the industry-preferred process for conducting assessments against the competency standards in the Rural Production Training Package. This process applies to all assessments conducted for the purposes of national recognition in both institutional and workplace contexts.

Step 1. Establish the assessment context

The Assessor:

- establishes the context and purpose of the assessment
- identifies the relevant competency standards, assessment guidelines and qualifications in the Rural Production Training Package
- identifies any Support Materials that have been developed to facilitate the assessment process
- analyses the competency standards and identifies the evidence requirements
- identifies alternative evidence collection methods.

Step 2. Prepare the candidate

The Assessor meets with the candidate to:

- 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 which the candidate should undertake, and answer questions
- assess the needs of the candidate and negotiate reasonable adjustment for assessing people with disabilities, people from diverse backgrounds and gender differences
- seek feedback regarding the candidate's understanding of the competency standards, 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
- develop an assessment plan.

Step 3. Plan and prepare the evidence-gathering process

The Assessor must:

- establish a plan for gathering sufficient and quality evidence about the candidate's performance in order to make the assessment decision
- source or develop assessment materials to assist 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

The Assessor must:

- establish and oversee the evidence-gathering process to ensure its validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility
- collect appropriate evidence and match compatibility to the Elements, Performance Criteria, Range of Variables and Evidence Guide in the relevant competency standards
- evaluate evidence in terms of the four dimensions of competency – task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills, and job/role environment skills
- incorporate specified allowable adjustments to the assessment procedure, where appropriate
- 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
- make a judgement about the candidate's competence based on the evidence and the relevant competency standard(s).

Step 5. Provide feedback on the assessment

The Assessor must provide advice to the candidate about the outcomes of the assessment process. This includes providing the candidate 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 appeals processes.

Step 6. Record and report the result

The Assessor must:

- 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 issuance of qualifications and/or Statements of Attainment⁺ according to the policies and procedures of the RTO.

⁺ *The industry context of the assessment should be indicated on the Statement of Attainment eg Landscaping*

Step 7. Review the assessment process

On completion of the assessment process, the Assessor must:

- review the assessment process
- report on the positive and negative features of the assessment to those responsible for the assessment procedures
- make suggestions (if necessary) on improving the assessment procedures to appropriate personnel in the RTO.

Step 8. Participate in the reassessment and appeals process

The Assessor must:

- provide feedback and counselling to the candidate, if required, regarding the assessment outcome or process
- provide the candidate with information on the reassessment and appeals process
- report any assessment decision that is disputed by the candidate to the appropriate personnel in the RTO
- participate in the reassessment or appeal according to the policies and procedures of the RTO.

Licences and permits

The assessment of a number of competency standards will require Assessors to be aware of, and in some cases possess licences and permits to not only effectively carry-out the assessment, but to protect themselves professionally.

Licences and permits are generally based on State and Territory legislation and therefore vary from State to State. In some instances, licences and permits are issued by local government bodies or even professional associations. Areas where licensing and permits may apply are:

- operating vehicles on public roads
- operating forklifts and other specialised vehicles
- using chainsaws and other machinery
- storing and applying certain chemicals
- using and storing explosives
- possession and use of firearms
- clearing vegetation
- building structures.

Environmental issues

Underpinning the assessment process is the notion that workplace performance should lead to viable and sustainable enterprises or organisations. This covers profitability, sustainability and observance of good industry practices. These themes have been incorporated into the revised competency standards and are therefore an essential component of the assessment process.

Many work practices in Rural Production can have either positive or negative environmental impacts of which the Assessor should be aware, and should incorporate in judgments when assessing evidence.

For example, negative work practices can include:

- over-watering
- over-working soil
- overusing chemicals
- failing to carry out the safe disposal of chemicals, oils, greases and packaging materials.

Positive work practices can include:

- installing and using effective water re-use systems and effluent disposal systems
- fencing off areas of similar land use capabilities
- planting trees in re-charge areas.

Those being assessed at the higher levels are responsible for the development of processes, strategies, procedures and controls. Those at lower levels have the responsibilities to act on, observe and report on processes, strategies, procedures and controls.

Questioning strategies can be used during assessment to ascertain whether an applicant is working towards enterprise viability and sustainability and is minimising environmental impacts. Open-ended questions like those below can assist in making this judgement:

- What are the main environmental issues surrounding your workplace?
- How and why do these problems occur?
- What current work practices can impact on the environment in a negative way?
- How do you minimise environmental impacts in your workplace?
- What current work practices have been adopted to limit the impact on the environment?
- How are staff informed about what constitutes good environmental practice?

Finally, evidence presented for assessment should indicate the application of good environmental practice in operational tasks, and in planning and management. Where this is not obvious, Assessors should require further evidence to be submitted that illustrates adherence to environmental principles and practices.

4.2.4 List of assessment resources

A list of resources and organisations is provided in the Resource List to assist assessors in planning, designing, conducting and reviewing of assessments against the Conservation and Land Management, Amenity Horticulture and Rural Production Training Packages.

4.2.5 Programming assessment

An integrated approach to assessment, in which a number of elements or units of competency are assessed together, is encouraged. 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. For this reason, the programmed modules shown in section 2 include assessment strategies.

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.

4.3 Recording Assessment

It is advisable that a competency record be maintained containing information about both units and elements of competency. The Primary Industries Competency Record developed by the Board of Studies as part of the syllabus documentation may be used for this purpose. Alternatively, 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.

A sample record sheet for an individual unit of competency from the Board of Studies competency record is shown below.

The competency record also contains the following proformas:

- forms for recording student, school, RTO and work placement employer details
- a summary list of units of competency for each available (or partly available) AQF qualification
- a verification statement.

4.3.1 Competency Record – sample unit of competency record sheet

RTC2209A Install, maintain and repair fencing

Element of Competency	Competent (Assessor Signature)
1 Prepare for fencing work	
2 Carry out fence installation, repair and maintenance	
3 Complete fencing work	

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

RTC2209 Install, maintain and repair fencing

Signature _____ Date _____

4.4 Sample Assessment Items

4.4.1 Observe and report on weather

Unit of competency and element being assessed:

RTE2503A Observe and report on weather
Element 1. Check weather and climate information
Element 3. Monitor weather and climate

Task:

Locate a range of sources (at least four) of weather information available to primary producers to collect climatic information for a specified enterprise.

Discuss the value of these sources from a management viewpoint. Provide advantages and disadvantages for the range of sources selected.

Collect and record data (including temperature, rainfall and air pressure) for a four-week period for your local area. This should be in diary form – handwritten with date, time and details relating to the three measurements requested.

Using the data collected, report on climatic conditions over the four-week period identified.

4.4.2 Environmental issues

Unit of competency and elements being assessed:

- RTC2702A Observe environmental work practices
- Element 1. Follow environmental workplace practices
 - Element 2. Contribute to improved environmental work practices

Task:

Prepare a research report:

- outlining the environmental issues facing *one* of the industry sectors in either rural production, horticulture *or* conservation and land management
- discussing the work practices that can be adopted in the chosen industry sector to reduce environmental impacts
- highlighting the relevant legislation that supports environmentally friendly work practices.

Include a bibliography/reference list to indicate that a range of sources of information on environmental issues and impacts have been utilised.

4.4.3 Respond to a simulated fencing accident

Unit of competency and elements being assessed:

RTC2704A Provide basic first aid

Element 1. Assess the situation

Element 2. Apply basic first aid techniques

Notice of assessment: Assessment task advice to be provided 2 weeks prior to assessment event

Duration of assessment: 10 minutes

Preamble

This task covers the process of recognising and responding to an emergency and providing essential first aid – including basic life-support measures.

The person is not expected to deal with complex casualties or incidents. They are expected to provide the initial response when first aid is required. They will generally be working under supervision.

It requires the ability to respond to emergencies in accordance with practised actions and demonstrate basic first aid casualty management principles.

Providing basic first aid requires knowledge of the use of safe working practices, the emergency network and first aid casualty management principles.

Assessment:

You will be assessed on:

1. A basic understanding of risk assessment.
2. An awareness of potential physical hazards.
3. Assessing the situation and deciding on action required including:
 - established first aid principles
 - DRABC
 - generalised principles of first aid management
 - assessing location and nature of the work environment and emergency situation
 - minimising movement of the casualty
 - assessment of injuries
 - seeking assistance appropriate to situation
 - locating and using available first aid equipment or other suitable alternative resources
 - providing first aid
 - reassure casualty in a caring and calm manner
 - make casualty as comfortable as possible using available resources
 - monitor patient's cardiovascular condition indicated by vital signs such as body temperature, pulse rate and breathing rates
 - monitor unresolved dangers of the area where the injury occurred.

Context:

You will be presented with a simulated casualty who has been ‘injured’ while installing, maintaining or repairing a fence.

A first aid kit will be available, a phone will be nearby and there will be a ‘bystander’ (another student) who you can direct to assist.

Task:

You will provide appropriate first aid to a simulated accident. You may be questioned about your responses and actions as you undertake the task.

4.4.4 Native and introduced fauna

Unit of competency being assessed:

RTD2803A	Observe and report plants and/or animals
Element 1.	Plan and organise observations
Element 2.	Collect information and record
Element 3.	Report data

Task:

This assessment task requires you to make observations of native and introduced fauna in your district.

Birds are the easiest group of animals to observe because they are more visible and easily identifiable from a variety of bird identification books.

For this assessment task you will need the following equipment:

- binoculars
- bird identification book
- district map
- data recording sheets.

1. Select a one-kilometre-long transect through a piece of bush, park or urban landscape.
2. For seven consecutive mornings at sunrise, walk this transect and record the number of species of birds observed.

This will require you to identify the bird by its markings and also by its call.

Note: This is only an observation exercise and under no circumstances should the bird's natural behaviour be interfered with nor should its habitat be disturbed.

3. For each species identified, mark the location on the map where the bird was spotted and, on a separate sheet, make notes of the species.

Some birds will be difficult to identify and these should be recorded as 'not identified' but should have a brief description such as size, shape and colour.

4. Produce a brief report that contains the following components:
 - map for each species identified showing the location where the bird(s) were spotted
 - table indicating the number of birds spotted for each species on each survey date
 - written observations on the habitat favoured by each species and the type of habitat found in the survey region.

Assessment checklist:

Competent ✓ Not yet competent x

Unit/Element	Performance criteria	Student a	Student b	Student c	Student d	Student e	Student f	Student g	Student h	Student i	Student j	Student k	Student l	Student m	Student n	Student o
1. Plan and organise observations.	1.1 Defined process for observation is prepared and agreed by supervisor.															
	1.2 Equipment for observation is obtained according to enterprise procedures.															
	1.3 Requirements under legislation, protection agreements and enterprise procedures for species are noted.															
2. Collect information and record.	2.1 Plants and animals and/or their presence are identified orally or from field guides to enterprise guidelines.															
	2.2 Plants and animals and/or samples are collected as required under enterprise guidelines.															
	2.3 Protection and quarantine requirements under legislation, protection agreements and enterprise procedures for species are observed.															
	2.4 observation activities minimise degradation and disturbance and comply with legislation and OH&S requirements.															
3. Report data.	3.1 Information on observed plants and animals are recorded and organised according to enterprise guidelines.															

Unit/Element	Performance criteria	Student a	Student b	Student c	Student d	Student e	Student f	Student g	Student h	Student i	Student j	Student k	Student l	Student m	Student n	Student o
	3.2 Information is communicated to supervisors according to enterprise guidelines.															
	3.3 Records are compatible with enterprise recording and database arrangements.															
	3.4 Occurrence of an organism is plotted and described using maps and grid references.															

4.4.5 Farm safety check

Unit of competency and elements being assessed:

RTC2701A Follow OHS procedures

Element 1. Follow workplace procedures for hazard identification and risk control

Element 3. Participate in arrangements for maintaining health and safety of all people in the workplace

Date due: One week after return from work placement.

Task:

- Prior to work placement, download the '15 minute Farm Safety Check' from the NSW WorkCover website:
www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/Publications/OHS/SafetyGuides/15minutefarmsafetycheck.htm
- Use this document to identify any hazards and associated risks that may cause injury or death in the workplace.
[If your workplace is not a farm, you may have to modify the checklist to suit the work environment.]
- Prepare a report summarising the steps needed to control or eliminate the hazards and associated risks identified.
[For those who identify a large number of hazards and their associated risks, limit your report to ten (10).]
- Submit the completed checklist with your report.

Assessment checklist:

Competent ✓ Not yet competent x

Unit/Element	Performance criteria	Student a	Student b	Student c	Student d	Student e	Student f	Student g	Student h	Student i	Student j	Student k	Student l	Student m	Student n	Student o
RTC2701A Follow OHS procedures	1 Follow workplace procedures for hazard identification and risk control															
	3 Participate in arrangements for maintaining health and safety of all people in the workplace															

4.4.6 Risk assessment

Unit of competency being assessed:

- RTC2706A Apply chemicals under supervision
- Element 1. Follow instructions to check and maintain application and personal protective equipment
 - Element 2. Use application and personal protective equipment
 - Element 3. Apply chemicals
- RTC2401A Treat Weeds
- Element 1. Prepare to treat weeds

Task:

Research and report on the following areas:

1. List and briefly explain common weed control strategies.
2. Select a common weed and research basic information on the growth habits of the selected weed.
3. For your selected weed:
 - a. identify the strategies that would be most effective in controlling the weed. (Thought should be given to strategies that do not involve chemicals. A minimum of two and maximum of four strategies should be identified)
 - b. analyse the benefits and limitations of each strategy.
4. For the strategies you have identified in part 3
 - a. identify potential hazards associated with each strategy
 - b. assess the associated risks, including OHS, related to the planned weed control program
 - c. suggest ways to eliminate or control these risks.
5. Develop a weed control program (for the weed you have selected) that minimises the risk to humans, agricultural products and the environment whilst still being effective.

Assessment checklist:

Competent ✓ Not yet competent x

Unit / Element	Performance criteria	Student a	Student b	Student c	Student d	Student e	Student f	Student g	Student h	Student i	Student j	Student k	Student l	Student m	Student n	Student o
RTC2401A Treat weeds 1. Prepare to treat weeds	1.1 Weeds which impact on commercial crops, gardens and turf, and natural areas are recognised by common name															
	1.5 OHS hazards are identified, risks assessed and reported to the supervisor															
RTC2706A Apply chemicals under supervision 1. Follow instructions to check and maintain application and personal protective equipment	1.4 OHS hazards are identified and reported to the supervisor															
RTC2706A Apply chemicals under supervision 3. Apply chemicals	3.1 Hazards are identified and associated risks recognised															
	3.3 Safe working practices relevant to the situation are followed															

4.4.7 Manage a chemical spill

Unit of competency and element being assessed:

RTC2706A Apply chemicals under supervision
Element 2. Use application and personal protective equipment

Task: *Role-play*

Scenario: A named chemical product has been spilt in the chemical store and you have been nominated to lead the clean-up.

You have the following information available for your reference:

- MSDS
- chemical label
- enterprise (or industry) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
- contact numbers for emergency services
- PPE
- supervisor's phone number (and 2-way radio contact).

Outline and demonstrate the procedure you would follow in this situation.

Assessment guideline:

	Competent	Not yet competent
Correct safety equipment is worn		
Chemical spillage is isolated from stock, vehicles and people as determined by industry or enterprise standards		
Chemical spillage/leakage is contained		
Chemical formulation is identified		
Correct decontamination method is followed		
Chemical is cleaned up and disposed of in approved manner		

4.4.8 Operate tractors

Unit of competency being assessed: RTC2309A Operate tractors

Tractor type: _____

What ? You will be assessed on the following:

<p>Step 1 <i>(verbal assessment)</i></p>	<p>Identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safety features of this tractor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – decal warning signs – guards and shields – seat belts – WorkCover requirements when operating a tractor • causes of tractor roll over and run over. 																						
<p>Step 2 <i>(practical assessment)</i></p>	<p>Locate the following tractor parts:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">oil filter</td> <td style="width: 50%;">turning brakes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>dipsticks</td> <td>park brake</td> </tr> <tr> <td>fuel filter</td> <td>diff lock</td> </tr> <tr> <td>fuel tap</td> <td>hydraulics</td> </tr> <tr> <td>fuel pump</td> <td>draft control</td> </tr> <tr> <td>fuel injectors</td> <td>foot throttle</td> </tr> <tr> <td>radiator</td> <td>hand throttle</td> </tr> <tr> <td>air filter</td> <td>range gear</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3-point linkage</td> <td>main gear</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PTO</td> <td>glow plug</td> </tr> <tr> <td>clutch</td> <td>stop/start button</td> </tr> </table>	oil filter	turning brakes	dipsticks	park brake	fuel filter	diff lock	fuel tap	hydraulics	fuel pump	draft control	fuel injectors	foot throttle	radiator	hand throttle	air filter	range gear	3-point linkage	main gear	PTO	glow plug	clutch	stop/start button
oil filter	turning brakes																						
dipsticks	park brake																						
fuel filter	diff lock																						
fuel tap	hydraulics																						
fuel pump	draft control																						
fuel injectors	foot throttle																						
radiator	hand throttle																						
air filter	range gear																						
3-point linkage	main gear																						
PTO	glow plug																						
clutch	stop/start button																						
<p>Step 3 <i>(verbal assessment)</i></p>	<p>Explain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the function and operation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – brakes – diff lock – draft – cold starting – gear selection – linkage attachment <p>Describe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the operation of a diesel motor differs to petrol. 																						
<p>Step 4 <i>(practical assessment)</i></p>	<p>Demonstrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the correct way to mount and dismount • start the engine • stop the engine. 																						
<p>Step 5 <i>(practical assessment)</i></p>	<p>Demonstrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forward • reverse • attach a carry all • drive the tractor through a set course. 																						

When? This Task will be conducted on ___ / ___ / ___ at _____ am / pm at _____
_____ (location).

How? The above skills and knowledge will be assessed through verbal questioning and observation.

4.4.9 Assessment advice form – repairs to farm fences

Student: _____

Fencing skills	Date attempted				Signed
Identify fencing equipment					
Select appropriate tools for task					
Maintain fencing equipment					
Store and transport of tools					
Safety issues when fencing (OHS and animal welfare)					
Describe safe work practices for the task					
Demonstrate use of HAYES strainers					
Practise placement and removal of strainers					
Compare numerous applications for use					
Demonstrate how to tie the following knots and explain the application for each	Tie off strainer				
	Figure 8				
	Double Loop				
	Donald				
	Pin & Loop				
Repair break in an existing fence line	10 gauge plain				
	8 gauge plain				
	HT Barb				
Match wire type and size to use					
Disposal of off-cuts and scrap materials					

4.4.10 Observation guide RTC2209A Install, maintain and repair fencing

Assessor _____

Venue _____

Student _____

Allowable Adjustments _____

Expected performance	Critical aspects	Actual performance	Observed Y/N	Question	Question response
<p>Assess fence needing repair</p> <p>Consider tools and materials needed to repair this fence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - design and construction - wire types - materials inventory - WorkCover requirements when fencing - Trouble-shooting – avoid likely problems that may occur 	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>		<p>Indicate type of fence design. Compare to conventional types.</p> <p>What is the difference between HT and soft wires?</p> <p>Construct a list.</p> <p>What are the WorkCover requirements when fencing?</p> <p>What are some hazards associated with fencing?</p> <p>What controls can be used to minimise these risks?</p> <p>What particular problems are likely to occur with this job?</p>	<p>Student to indicate</p> <p>Student to indicate</p> <p>Present list of tools and materials required to supervisor/ farm foreman</p> <p>Everyone on the workplace has a responsibility to prevent accidents. Accidents are costly</p> <p>Physical, ergonomic and environmental</p> <p>Ensure observers are kept away, appropriate tools and equipment is inspected and faults reported</p> <p>Short lengths to tie off. Heavy wire gauges difficult to cut and bend. Damage to hinge joint. Uneven ground. Poor condition of existing wires</p>
<p>Recognise and locate various tools needed for fence repair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fencing pliers - wire side cutters - hayes strainers - donald strainers - barrel strainers - wire key - crowbar - posthole shovel - HT plain wire - HT barb wire - soft wire - tie wire - hinge joint 	<p>Locate from farm workshop</p> <p>Locate from farm store</p>		<p>Locate tools required for the job</p> <p>Locate materials required for the job</p>	<p>All collected and named</p> <p>All collected and named</p>

Expected performance	Critical aspects	Actual performance	Observed Y/N	Question	Question response
What safety equipment is needed? Discuss OHS issues	– face shield/goggles – leather gloves – broad hat – skin protection Recognise dangers of HT wire	Yes/No Scale 1 – 5		Why is this safety equipment needed? What are the specific hazards associated with HT wire	Eye protection particularly important. Consequences of eye damage or loss of sight. Other injuries may result in blood poisoning or diseases such as tetanus Very brittle with age. Difficult to work (spring)
	Describe wire types and their applications	– HT and soft wires – wire sizes and gauges – wire properties – fabricated fence – advantages – disadvantages	Yes/No Scale 1 – 5 Scale 1 – 5		Demonstrates different applications
Demonstrate how to repair a broken fence	– Use of tools and correct choice of materials	Scale 1 – 5		Describe these skills	Appropriate use of fencing tools Correct choice of wires and materials

(Scale 1 = poor 5 = very good)

Assessor's comment: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Student's comment: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

4.4.11 Observation guide RTE2117A Pen sheep

Assessor _____

Venue _____

Student _____

Allowable Adjustments _____

Expected performance	Critical aspects	Actual performance	Observed Y/N	Question	Question response
Sheep to be drafted are suitability identified	- identify Merino from White Suffolk sheep	Yes/No		What are the differences?	Student to indicate
	- identify wethers from ewes	Yes/No		What are the differences?	Student to indicate
Gates and races are prepared for drafting	- swing gate(s) in correct direction	Yes/No		What gates need changing to achieve the desired aims?	Student explains reasons and fixes gates to desired location
	- open and close the correct gate(s)	Yes/No		Demonstrates these skills	
Dogs are controlled and directed	- explain how to correctly control a dog	Scale 1 – 5		How would you go about controlling a dog?	Student explains how to work dog in yards to achieve the desired outcome
Drafting gates are operated in an efficient manner	- correct positioning on the draft	Yes/No		Demonstrate these skills	Demonstrates these skills
	- effective movement of sheep through the draft	Yes/No		Demonstrate these skills	Demonstrates these skills
	- efficient use of drafting gates	Yes/No		Demonstrate these skills	Demonstrates these skills
Damage to sheep, dogs and operators is avoided using safe work practices according to OHS legislation	- explanation of the safe work practices for operators	Scale 1 – 5		Describe safe work practices for operators	Explains safe work practices for operators
	- explanation of the safe work practices for dogs	Scale 1 – 5		Describe safe work practices for dogs	Explains safe work practices for dogs
	- explanation of the safe work practices for sheep	Scale 1 – 5		Describe safe work practices for sheep	Explains safe work practices for sheep

(Scale 1 = poor 5 = very good)

Assessor's comment: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Student's comment: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

4.5 The HSC Examination

The HSC examination:

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

4.5.1 Internal examinations

Teachers and trainers need to be aware that students enrolled in Primary Industries (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 an 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.