

ASSESSMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

Procedures

In general terms assessment during training will involve

- oral responses to questions
- observation of performance in the workplace or in computer laboratories
- portfolio of evidence
- written response to questions, assignments and case studies
- students will be given advance warning of the time and form of any assessment and will not be expected to sit an assessment they have not prepared for
- students will be given an opportunity for at least one reassessment for any competencies not achieved on the first attempt

Flexible assessment procedures are in place. Workplace demands are taken into account when negotiating due dates for assignments.

All assessment activities will be based on the competency standards outlined in the National Training Package.

Your proposed dates of assessment are outlined in your Training Plan.

There are two grades you can receive as a result of the assessment activity, they are:

- Competent; or
- Not Yet Competent.

Should you be issued a grade of “Not Yet Competent”, your assessor will identify your training needs. Where appropriate, training will be provided to address any skills gaps identified in the assessment process.

Appeals and Reassessment procedures aim to be both fair and impartial. If you feel you are able to demonstrate reasonable grounds for reassessment, you should direct your request in writing to msacinstitute@ssct.com.au (attention the Business & Training Manager) for consideration.

Please also refer to our Complaints & Appeals Procedure.

Assessment Policy

What is competency?

Competency involves the specification of skills and knowledge and their application to a particular standard of performance required in the workplace. Aspects of work performance included in this concept involve:

- Performance at an acceptable level of technical skill;
- Organising one's tasks;
- Responding and reacting appropriately when things go wrong; and
- Transferring skills and knowledge to new situations and contexts.

Standards are statements of the required workplace levels of performance.

Assessment

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on the extent and nature of performance and other requirements, as described in a set of standards, or learning outcomes, resulting in a judgement of whether or not competency has been demonstrated. Effective and objective assessment is key to the successful implementation of competency standards in the workplace and in education. This is the judgement of performance and knowledge against the relevant industry competency standards. Assessment is carried out by the comparison of a candidate's evidence of skills and knowledge, against the requirements of the Standards.

Underlying principles of assessment

For an effective assessment system in a competency environment, some basic principles must apply:

Validity

The assessments actually assess what they claim to assess and what they have been designed to assess.

Validity of assessment is achieved when:

- Assessors are fully aware of what is to be assessed, as indicated by the standards of competence, including clearly defined performance criteria
- Appropriate evidence is collected from activities that can be clearly related to the units of competency.

Authenticity

The evidence collected is authentic that is, it is actually derived from valid sources and is directly attributable to the individual.

Reliability

Reliable assessment uses methods and procedures that ensure that the competency standards are interpreted and applied consistently from person to person and from context to context. The following are important to ensure that assessment produces consistent outcomes:

- Clear, unambiguous, well documented assessment procedures and competency standards;
- Clear, consistent and specific assessment criteria;
- Effectively trained, briefed and monitored assessors;
- Adequate assessors across industries and a hierarchy of assessment which ensures a quality outcome; and
- Assessment is carried out within a system flexible enough to cope with multiple and diverse forms of evidence.

Consistency

The assessment system must ensure that evidence collected and provided for judgement is consistent across the range, without undue reliance on any small number of select workplace contexts or projects.

Currency

Under an effective system, assessment evaluates whether or not the individual's skills and knowledge are current and can be applied in today's workplace. As a general rule, competencies that have not been demonstrated within the past 3 years are not usually accepted as "current". However, an assessor, under some circumstances may make exceptions to the specified period.

There may be specific situations where individual skills have not been directly applied for a longer period, but these skills are in fact still current for the individual. In cases such as this, evidence from earlier periods may be admissible, and assessed for currency, within an appropriately flexible assessment system.

Sufficiency

Evidence of competency should be sufficient to cover all the elements, performance criteria and required range of variables in the standards against which assessment is to be carried out.

A tendency of many candidates is to provide more (or less) evidence than is actually required to prove competency against the standards. An effective assessment system ensures that candidates are clearly advised regarding the amount and form of evidence, which is sufficient to prove competency. This should avoid the situation where masses of evidence are provided, requiring assessors to spend more time than necessary per candidate, or too little evidence, making it difficult to judge competence.

Flexibility

Every portfolio or set of candidate evidence is unique. Each candidate will identify and develop his or her own specific set of evidence to prove competency against the standards. This set will be based on the workplace experience of the candidate and will comprise diverse types and forms of relevant and appropriate evidence.

Assessors must be capable of taking a flexible approach to the assessment of evidence. Clearly, this approach must always take time and cost into account both to ensure the best use of assessor time and from the viewpoint of the candidate and his or her employer. An assessment system must evaluate the scope of knowledge and skills covered by the criteria both performance (skill) and underpinning knowledge & understanding.

Fairness and Equity

An assessment system and its processes must not disadvantage any person or organisation. All eligible candidates must be guaranteed access to assessment, which does not discriminate on any basis. Assessment guidelines must include an approach for working with candidates who have special needs.

To achieve these principles, the assessment system must exhibit the following characteristics:

- The standards, assessment processes and all associated information are straight forward and understandable;

- The characteristics of potential candidates are identified, to enable all potential assessment issues to be identified and catered for;
- The chosen processes and materials within the system of assessment do not disadvantage candidates;
- An appropriate and effective review and dispute resolution mechanism is in place to investigate, examine and redress any issue of unfairness or disadvantage identified, involving access, assessment, certification or any other related issue; and
- Where potential disadvantages are identified, the system is amended to avoid or counter them, or appropriate steps taken to overcome them including reassessment if required.

Assessors

The role of an assessor is to objectively assess and judge a candidate's evidence against a set of standards. In order to do this effectively, an assessor must have a sound knowledge of, and be skilled in, the relevant industry area. In addition, the assessor must have acknowledged competency in assessment itself and hold an appropriate Workplace Assessor qualification or equivalent.

An assessor must:

- Interpret and understand the criteria;
- Ensure that evidence meets the standards;
- Ensure that evidence is valid, authentic, reliable, consistent, current and sufficient; and
- Use expertise to make fair and objective judgements.

The training and ongoing professional development of assessors must include such areas as:

- Roles, responsibilities and ethics;
- Procedural and administrative duties;
- Performance and knowledge evidence gathering and presentation;
- Interpretation and usage of standards;
- Selecting and using appropriate methods of assessment; and
- Requirements regarding processing and recording of results, progress and feedback.

It is crucial that assessors always understand and practise fair, objective, unbiased and flexible assessment processes.

Forms of Evidence

In general, basic forms of skills evidence include:

- Direct performance evidence current or from an acceptable past period from:
 - extracted examples within the workplace;
 - natural observation in the workplace; and
 - simulations, including competency and skills tests, projects, assignments
- Supplementary evidence, from:

- oral and written questioning;
- personal reports; and
- Witness testimony.

Appropriate and valid forms of assessment utilised for both skills and knowledge may include:

- Evaluation of direct products of work;
- Natural observation;
- Skill tests, simulations and projects;
- Evaluation of underpinning knowledge and understanding;
- Questioning and discussion; and
- Evidence from prior achievement and activity.

Candidates with Special Needs

One fundamental principle of an assessment system is that each candidate must have access to fair and open assessment. Candidates with special needs should be offered the same opportunities as any other candidate.

As special needs extend to more than identify physical or learning difficulties, an assessor will also need to consider the best approach when dealing with candidates with needs such as low literacy, lack of confidence or non English speaking background.

An assessor must take special needs into consideration from the planning stage onwards and adopt particular assessment methods as appropriate. Depending on any specification given in the standards, the assessor may be able to accept alternative evidence from a candidate with special needs.

If there is uncertainty, the assessor should call on other assessors or a verifier for assistance and guidance, as required. In such a case, the situation must be fully documented, with appropriate feedback being provided to the candidate at all stages.

Feedback

Where students are assessed as not competent they will be provided with additional feedback on their assessment outcome to assist in achieving the required performance standard on reassessment.

Reassessment

Students who are dissatisfied with their assessment outcome may apply for reassessment. Appeals and Reassessment procedures aim to be both fair and impartial. If you feel you are able to demonstrate reasonable grounds for reassessment, you should direct your request in writing to msacinstitute@ssct.com.au (attention the Business & Training Manager) for consideration.

Students should also refer to the Appeals & Complaints Resolution Procedure in place (provided at enrolment). To obtain a copy, please send a request to msacinstitute@ssct.com.au or contact the RTO Administrator.

Cheating & Plagiarism

The MSAC Institute of Training encourages a cooperative learning environment. However all assessment projects and activities contained in your Trainee Manual, is to be completed on an individual basis and any work which is not your own should be appropriately referenced.

Allegations of cheating, plagiarism, collusion or interference with another student's academic work or performance will be referred to the Business & Training Manager.

If you are found guilty of cheating or plagiarism the following courses of action may occur:

- (a) impose a penalty in relation to the unit being assessed or
- (b) award a "fail" grade and disqualify you from continuing with that unit of study.

All of the above courses of action would require you to attend an interview with the Business & Training Manager and your employer. Should the conduct be repeated your enrolment may be terminated.

Students should also refer to the Appeals & Complaints Resolution Procedure in place (provided at enrolment). To obtain a copy, please send a request to msacinstitute@ssct.com.au or contact the RTO Administrator.