

## 1 Overview

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines on EQUALS International (Aust) Pty Ltd (EQUALS) approach to assessment and associated activities (including validation and moderation) and provides further information on EQUALS' processes.

The policy acknowledges the [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#) and the [Australian Quality Framework](#) (AQF). EQUALS ensures that practices are fair and equitable.

### Scope

This policy applies to EQUALS Educators and Assessors, and other stakeholders including students and industry collaborators.

## 2 Policy statement

### 2.1 Compliance with Assessment Guidelines in Training Packages

EQUALS ensures compliance with Assessment Guidelines in Training Packages through activities including but not limited to:

- EQUALS Course Advisory Committees - Consultation and Review of Assessment guidelines/tools
- Consultation with Industry Skills Councils (or their successors) regarding Training Package Assessment Guidelines and internal assessment processes
- Ongoing internal review and external audit of assessment processes to ensure consistency with Package Assessment Guidelines
- Industry engagement ([Industry Engagement and Outcomes Register](#)) and Validation in line with regulatory requirements (managed through [Validation and Moderation Register](#)).
- For the purposes Validation each training product must be validated at least once every five years, with at least 50% of products validated within the first three years of each five-year cycle, taking into account the relative risks of all of the training products on EQUALS' scope of registration, including those risks identified by the [VET Regulator](#). Also refer section 2.8.

### 2.2 Dimensions of Competency

To be truly competent it is not enough to perform a task in isolation. Competence means being able to operate in a real work context. To be a competent individual you have to be able to:

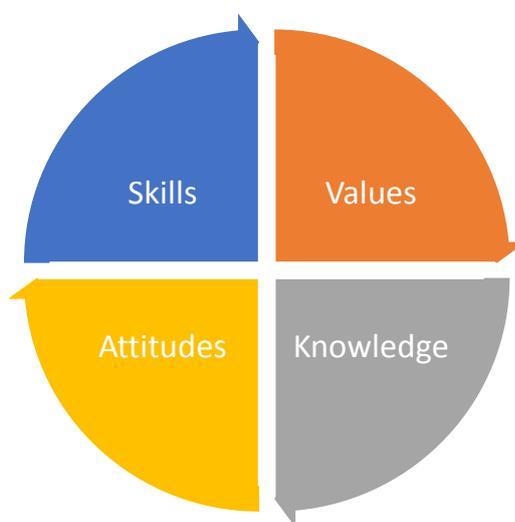
- Practically demonstrate your competency (**Task skills**). Task skills are usually described in the performance criteria.
- Interpret industry and company expectations and rules etc (**Job/role environment skills**). Job/role environment skills are mostly covered in the key competencies and underpinning skills and knowledge.
- Make judgements and decisions (**Task management skills**). Task management skills are found in the performance criteria, underpinning skills and knowledge.
- Demonstrate versatility and the ability to apply your skills in a range of situations (**Transfer skills**). Transfer skills are covered in the underpinning skills and knowledge and/or the range of variables.
- Take appropriate action to avoid loss etc. (**Contingency management skills**). Contingency skills are usually found in the critical aspects of evidence, performance criteria and the underpinning skills and knowledge.

Assessment tools are also designed to focus on these five dimensions of competency, in turn leading to a holistic and comprehensive assessment.

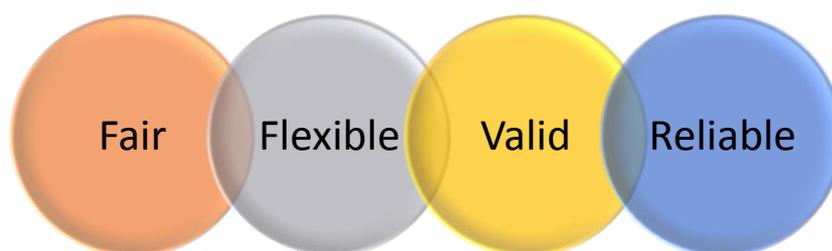
### 2.2.1 What is competence?

Assessment is about identifying whether the individual has got the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values to perform a particular task or job, that is, to identify if they are competent.

Competence is a difficult thing to assess because you can't "see" it. It is inferred by the candidate's behaviour in a range of ways over a period of time in a variety of conditions.



### 2.3 Assessment Principles



#### 2.3.1 **Validity** requires that:

- assessment against the Units of Competency covers the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance
- assessment of skills and knowledge are integrated with practical application

- assessment is designed to collect sufficient evidence (that is, evidence gathered on a number of occasions and in a range of contexts using different assessment methods). The specific evidence requirements of each Unit of Competency provide advice on sufficiency
- the judgement of competence is based on evidence of student performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency and associated assessment requirements

The validity of assessment is enhanced when assessors:

- ensure assessment processes, methods and tools reflect unit requirements, including Industry Standards, the Dimensions of Competency, the AQF level of the qualification, and Language, Literacy and Numeracy requirements
- assess under workplace conditions
- gather evidence of transferability to new situations
- use multiple approaches to assessment

### 2.3.2 Another assessor would also make the same decision (**Reliable**)

The **reliability** of assessment is enhanced when assessors:

- are highly skilled and monitor and review one another's assessment processes, methods and tools
- provide complete assessment tools including clear instructions (in student language) for students and for other assessors, and sample responses
- trial assessment tools before use and review assessment tools following use
- collect evidence via different assessment methods
- collect evidence across different locations and times

### 2.3.3 The assessment is either on or off-the-job and at a mutually convenient time and situation (**Flexible**)

- The **flexibility** of assessment is enhanced when assessors:
- maximise opportunities for effective feedback
- design assessment to adapt readily to individual students and workplaces
- draw on a range of assessment methods appropriate to the context and student characteristics

### 2.3.4 The method of collecting evidence didn't make it more difficult than the level of the competency standard (**Fair**)

The **fairness** of assessment is enhanced when assessors:

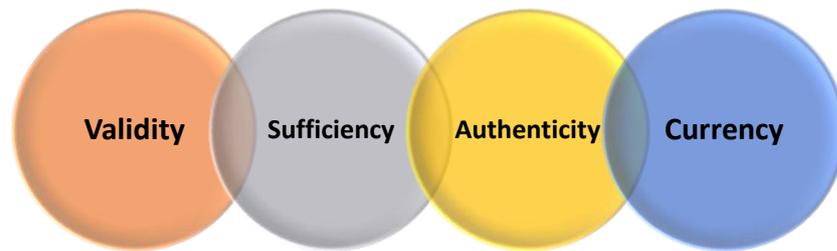
- ensure assessment is clearly based on the requirements of the Unit/s of Competency
- provide students with clear, accurate and relevant information about the assessment process including assessment purpose, benchmarks, assessment tools, materials, methods, evidence requirements and review/appeals processes
- provide for recognition and self-assessment of readiness for assessment
- take into account the characteristics of students and apply reasonable adjustment where appropriate
- document the assessment process and provide feedback to students.
- The principles of flexibility and fairness apply to modifications of the assessment process to meet individual student need.

The amount of modification possible is limited to '**reasonable adjustment**'. When determining 'reasonableness' assessors must ensure they maintain the integrity of the unit so it does not impact on the validity of assessment.

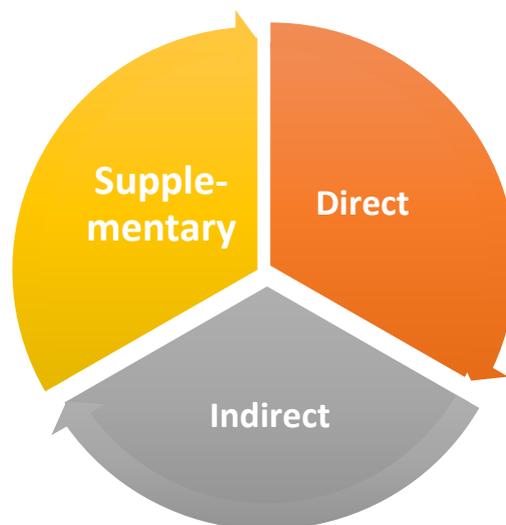
Assessments are regularly evaluated by another (second) qualified assessor and relevant assessments seek the endorsement of the workplace coach/trainer to assist verification.

### 2.4 Evidence

In addition to observing the Principles of Assessment, assessment must be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Evidence (as outlined in the [Standards for RTO's 2015](#)). The rules of evidence are:



2.4.1 Collecting evidence is a critical part of the assessment strategy. EQUALS Assessors will collect and record a range of evidence types including the following:



Examples of Direct Evidence:

- Observation of workplace performance
- Demonstration of Practical Skills
- Role Plays or Simulations

Examples of Indirect Evidence:

- Evaluation of the finished product or Outcome of the Performance
- Video-taped evidence
- Presentations
- Assignments/Projects/Written Assignments

- Historical Evidence
- Supervisor's Appraisal

Examples of Supplementary Evidence:

- Oral Questioning and interviews
- Portfolio or Log Book

### 2.5 Assessment Pathways

Training Packages incorporate a number of assessment pathways that lead to the recognition of competencies and the issuing of a Qualification or Statement of Attainment.

Assessment under Training Packages leading to an AQF qualification or Statement of Attainment may follow a training and assessment pathway, an assessment only pathway, or a combination of the two. All assessments, by any pathway, must comply with the regulated assessment requirements. Each of these assessment pathways leads to full recognition under the AQF – the critical concern is that the candidate is competent, not how the competency was acquired. Each of the above pathways is detailed below.

### 2.6 Training and Assessment pathways

For most candidates, assessment and training are integrated, with assessment evidence being collected progressively and feedback being provided to the candidate. The candidate may undertake a structured course of training and assessment while on the job, while off the job, or in a combination of on-the-job and off-the-job environments. This pathway is particularly suited to Traineeships and Apprenticeships, as trainees can be provided with a mix of formal training, structured workplace experience, and formative assessment activities. Through this combination of training and assessment the candidate can acquire and demonstrate the practical skills and knowledge identified in the relevant competency standards.

### 2.7 Assessment Only Pathway

In some circumstances an assessment only (skills recognition/recognition of prior learning) pathway will be warranted. The candidate provides current, quality evidence against the relevant Units of Competency, and the outcomes of the assessment process indicate that the candidate is competent and that structured training is not required. This pathway can operate in both on-the-job and off-the-job environments. It is likely to be most appropriate for students enrolling for qualifications who want recognition for prior learning or current competencies, for existing workers, for individuals with overseas qualifications, for recent migrants with established work histories, for people returning to the workplace, and for people with disabilities or injuries requiring a change in career. Candidates wishing to take this pathway present evidence that they possess the skills and knowledge identified in the relevant Competency Standards, and then an assessor judges whether the candidate is competent. Summative approaches to assessment may be directed by the candidate (such as in the compilation of portfolios), or by the assessor (such as observation of workplace performance, requiring demonstrations of skills, and carrying out oral and written testing).

### 2.8 Combination of 'Training and Assessment' and 'Assessment Only' Pathways

Where candidates have gained competencies through work and life experience and gaps in their competency are identified, or where they require training in new areas, a combination of approaches may be appropriate. In such situations, the candidate may undertake an initial assessment to determine their current competence using an 'assessment only pathway'. Once current competence is identified, a

structured training and assessment course may be established to ensure that the candidate acquires the required additional competencies. These would be achieved through a 'training and assessment pathway'. It is important to note that each of these assessment pathways leads to full recognition under the Australian Qualifications Framework. 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.

*Note for Candidates: Please ask your Assessor for Industry specific Assessment Pathway Information (where relevant).*

### 2.9 Access and Equity

EQUALS has an ongoing commitment to maximise access, participation and outcomes for all participants completing a course or qualification, or receiving any service from our organisation.

It is not only the fundamental right of every student and assessment candidate to receive full access and equity within the vocational education and training system but must also be considered as the responsibility of EQUALS participation and outcomes irrespective of:

- Adult English Language Status
- Literacy and Numeracy Status
- Gender Status
- Disability Status
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Status
- Multicultural Status

This policy is based on the Access and Equity Policy for the Vocational Education and Training System and on the principles underpinning EQUALS philosophy and values/principles.

### 2.10 Validation and Moderation

Systematic validation of EQUALS' assessment practices and judgements is undertaken by one or more persons who are not directly involved in the particular instance of delivery and assessment of the training product being validated, and who collectively have:

#### 2.10.1 on or prior to 31 March 2019:

- vocational competencies and current industry skills relevant to the assessment being validated
- current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning; and
- the training and assessment credential specified in Item 1, or Item 2, or Item 4, or Item 5 of Schedule 1 of the [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#).

#### 2.10.2 on or after 1 April 2019:

- vocational competencies and current industry skills relevant to the assessment being validated
- current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning; and
- the training and assessment credential specified in Item 2 or Item 5 of Schedule 1 of the [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#)

Industry experts may be involved in validation to ensure there is the combination of expertise set out in 2.8.1 or 2.8.2 above.

### 3 Procedures

- 3.1 Ensure the establishment of non-discriminatory participant selection procedures, which encourage fair access for members of under-represented groups;
- 3.2 Ensure access and equity issues are considered during curriculum/course development;
- 3.3 Provide access to staff development to assist educators who deliver courses to under-represented groups;
- 3.4 Ensure that the assessment procedures take account of individual needs by customising assessment tools and activities around the needs of the individual, and making reasonable adjustments to the assessment process.

### 4 Step by Step

The following table describes EQUALS' preferred process for conducting assessments against the Competency Standards in training packages. This process applies to assessments conducted for the purposes of national recognition in both institutional and workplace contexts. This information is intended to be a guide and not an exhaustive series of steps. It is also subject to change where required by regulatory obligations, student and/or employer requirements.

This checklist assists in the provision of information for applicants to be thoroughly informed of the context, purpose and process of their assessment.

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| <b>Step 1<br/>Establish the<br/>assessment</b> | <p>The assessor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish the context and purpose of the assessment;</li> <li>• identify the relevant Competency Standards, assessment guidelines and qualification framework in this Training Package;</li> <li>• identify, where relevant, any regulatory authority assessment requirements (e.g. ANMC Principles for the Assessment of National Competency Standards for Registered and Enrolled Nurses)</li> <li>• identifies any noted support materials that have been developed to facilitate the assessment process;</li> <li>• analyses the competency standards and identifies the evidence requirements;</li> <li>• identifies potential evidence collection methods.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Step 2<br/>Prepare the<br/>candidate</b>    | <p>The assessor meets with the candidate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process;</li> <li>• explain the competency standards to be assessed and the evidence to be collected;</li> <li>• advise on self-assessment, including processes and criteria;</li> <li>• outline the assessment procedure, the preparation the candidate should undertake, and answer any questions;</li> <li>• assess the needs of the candidate and, where applicable, negotiate reasonable adjustment for assessing people with disabilities without compromising the integrity of the competencies;</li> <li>• seek feedback regarding the candidate's understanding of the Competency Standards, evidence requirements and assessment process;</li> <li>• determine if the candidate is ready for assessment and, in consultation with the candidate, decide on the time and place of the assessment;</li> </ul> |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop an assessment plan.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Step 3<br/>Plan and prepare the evidence gathering process</b>       | <p>The assessor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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);</li> <li>source or develop assessment materials to assist in the evidence gathering process;</li> <li>organise equipment or resources required to support the evidence gathering process;</li> <li>coordinate and brief other personnel involved in the evidence gathering process.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Step 4<br/>Collect the evidence and make the assessment decision</b> | <p>The assessor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establish and oversee the evidence gathering process to ensure its validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility;</li> <li>collect appropriate evidence and assess this against the elements, Performance Criteria, Range Statement and Evidence Guide in the relevant Units of Competency;</li> <li>evaluate evidence in terms of the four dimensions of competency - task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills, and job/role environment skills Incorporate allowable adjustments to the assessment procedure without compromising the integrity of the competencies;</li> <li>evaluate the evidence in terms of validity, consistency, currency, equity, authenticity and sufficiency;</li> <li>consult and work with other staff, assessment panel members or technical experts involved in the assessment process;</li> <li>record details of evidence collected;</li> <li>make a judgment about the candidate's competency based on the evidence and the relevant Unit(s) of Competency.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Step 5<br/>Provide feedback on the assessment</b>                    | <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"> <li>clear and constructive feedback on the assessment decision;</li> <li>information on ways of overcoming any identified gaps in competency revealed by the assessment;</li> <li>the opportunity to discuss the assessment process and outcome;</li> <li>information on reassessment and the appeals process.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Step 6<br/>Record and report the result</b>                          | <p>The assessor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>record the assessment outcome according to the EQUALS policies and procedures;</li> <li>maintain records of the assessment procedure, evidence collected and the outcome according to EQUALS policies and procedures;</li> <li>maintain the confidentiality of the assessment outcome;</li> <li>organise the issuing of qualifications and/or Statements of Attainment according to EQUALS policies and procedures.</li> </ul>   |

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| <p><b>Step 7</b><br/><b>Review the assessment process</b></p>                        | <p>On completion of the assessment process, the assessor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review the assessment process;</li> <li>• report on the positive and negative features of the assessment to those responsible for the assessment procedures;</li> <li>• if necessary, suggest to appropriate EQUALS staff who can assist in improving the assessment procedures, i.e. Course Advisory Committee, Academic Manager.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Step 8</b><br/><b>Participate in the re-assessment and appeals process</b></p> | <p>The assessor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide feedback and counsel the candidate, if required, regarding the assessment outcome or process, including guidance on further options;</li> <li>• encourage the candidate to provide feedback on the assessment process and outcome;</li> <li>• provide the candidate with information on the reassessment and appeals process;</li> <li>• report any disputed assessment decision to the appropriate EQUALS staff;</li> <li>• participate in the reassessment or appeal according to EQUALS policies and procedures.</li> </ul> |

## 5 RPL, Appeals and Re-Assessment

5.1 Students are offered RPL at the time of enrolment.

5.2 In accordance with Standard 10 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, if the student is not satisfied with the response, they have twenty (20) working days to appeal the decision. The [Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure \(Academic and Non-Academic\)](#) outlines the appeal mechanism available to students who are not satisfied with determinations made by EQUALS regarding their assessment. Availability of the internal appeal processes does not remove the right of the student to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws.

## 6 Compliance, monitoring and review

- Aligns with relevant legislation, government policy and EQUALS values.
- Is implemented and monitored to reflect the changing policy environment and emerging issues identified.
- Is reviewed to evaluate its continuing effectiveness in achieving its purpose and remaining relevant.

## 7 Definitions

Terms not defined in this document may be in the [EQUALS Glossary](#)  
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/home?lx=GCzY7kacE2GweBYJA3450Q>

### 8 Approval and Amendment History

| Version | Approved by | Approval Date | Details  |
|---------|-------------|---------------|--|
|         | COO         | 19/05/2018    | Refer archived policy.   |
| 3.0     | COO         | 21/02/2019    | Updated overview and terminology, minor changes throughout, inclusion of responsibilities, definitions, and comprehensive document map and clearer alignment to the appropriate responsible person/body. Change of policy number from 3-41.V.2.0 to current. |

### 9 Document Map

|  |   |  |                                |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Approval Authority:</b>                 | Chief Operating Officer   | <b>Advisory Committee for Approval Authority</b> | Executive Management Committee |
| <b>Authorised By:</b>                      | Chief Operating Officer   |  |                                |
| <b>Effective from:</b>                     | 25/02/2019  |  |                                |
| <b>Next Review Date:</b>                   | 25/02/2022  |  |                                |
| <b>File Location:</b>                      | The current version of this policy can be accessed from the <a href="#">Policy Register</a> (internal users only)   |  |                                |
| <b>Relevant Legislation:</b>               | <a href="#">National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018</a><br><a href="#">Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)</a><br><a href="#">Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015</a><br><a href="#">Governance &amp; Quality Assurance Framework</a> |  |                                |
| <b>Related Documents and/or Registers:</b> | Internal users only:<br><a href="#">Statement on Assessment Assessment Framework</a>  |  |                                |
| <b>Policy Subdivision</b>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate or Academic Governance<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic Management<br><input type="checkbox"/> Operational Management   |  |                                |
| <b>Administrator:</b>                      | Quality Advisor   |  |                                |