

TAEASS402

Assess competence

Learner guide

TAASS402



What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Prepare for the assessment	1.1 Interpret assessment planning documentation and applicable organisational, legal and ethical requirements for conducting the assessment, and confirm with the relevant people	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1.2 Access and interpret units of competency that are to be used as benchmarks for assessment, and the nominated assessment tools, to confirm the requirements for the evidence to be collected	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1.3 Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and document any changes to the assessment instruments, where required	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1.4 Determine opportunities for evidence-gathering in actual or simulated activities, through consultation with the candidate and relevant personnel	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1.5 Conduct a candidate briefing and explain, discuss and agree on the details of the planned assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1.6 Arrange identified material and physical resource requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1.7 Identify any specialist support requirements for the assessment, and organise if necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2: Gather quality evidence	2.1 Use agreed assessment methods and tools to gather, organise and document evidence in a format suitable for determining competence	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2.2 Apply the principles of assessment and rules of evidence in gathering quality evidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

Overview:

Understand vocational education and training

There is a great deal more to the VET system and the delivery of training and assessment than the information provided in this Overview. Each learner guide for the units offered in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment provides activities and examples to demonstrate the application of your VET knowledge.

To work effectively in the vocational education and training (VET) system, you need to understand its essential components, particularly training packages and how to use them in a training delivery and assessment role.

VET develops skills and knowledge for work through a national training system that seeks to provide consistent training across Australia. The primary purpose of VET is to equip people with the skills, knowledge and attributes they require to be 'work ready' and to operate effectively in employment. The Australian VET system comprises two fundamental elements that help ensure quality and consistency in training: training packages and the VET Quality Framework (VQF), which includes the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Training packages

Training packages are the foundation of Australia's VET system. A training package is a set of nationally endorsed qualifications, units of competency and assessment requirements developed for a specific industry, sector or workplace. Copies of individual training packages can be viewed at: <http://training.gov.au>.

Training packages also provide the structure for competency-based training. A competency-based approach judges outcomes against specific standards established in the endorsed components of a training package. Endorsed components are the various units of competency, the qualifications within which they sit and assessment guidelines that describe the industry's desired approach to assessment and qualifications.

Training packages are developed by Service Skills Organisations (formerly by Industry Skills Councils) to meet the training needs of an industry or group of industries. Training packages are maintained in line with the National Skills Standards Council's Standards for Training Packages to ensure training packages are of high quality and meet the workforce development needs of industry, enterprises and individuals. These standards apply to the design and development of training packages for endorsement by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (formerly the role of the now dissolved National Skills Standards Council (NSSC)).

Units of competency

Units of competency are the nationally agreed statements of the skills and knowledge required for effective performance in a particular job or job function. In other words, a unit of competency is a set of skills and knowledge that form part of a person's job role, and represents a discrete workplace outcome.



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Interpret assessment planning documentation, and organisational, legal and ethical requirements for conducting assessment**

- 1B Access and interpret units of competency and the nominated assessment tools**

- 1C Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and document changes to assessment instruments**

- 1D Determine opportunities for evidence-gathering in consultation with the candidate and relevant personnel**

- 1E Explain, discuss and agree on the details of the planned assessment**

- 1F Arrange identified material and physical resource requirements**

- 1G Identify and organise specialist support requirements for the assessment**

Prepare for the assessment

Assessment, whether conducted formally or informally, is a crucial aspect of any learning program as it lets the learner know how they have performed.

In Australia, formal assessment is regulated by the VET Quality Framework. Registered training organisations (RTOs) providing national qualifications must have an effective assessment system with comprehensive policies and procedures to ensure they comply with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 and provide quality assessments.

Assessment also represents an important investment in time and effort on the part of candidates and their employers. Candidates expect that the RTO, which is responsible for judging their competence and awarding qualifications, supports them in gathering evidence that demonstrates their competence to perform at the standard prescribed in the units of competency that underpin competency-based training.

Effective assessment begins with thorough and careful planning. You need to consider what actions you are required to take to implement the RTO's quality training system.

1A Interpret assessment planning documentation, and organisational, legal and ethical requirements for conducting assessment

Your role as an assessor requires you to review a range of evidence presented by an assessment candidate. You must make a judgment as to whether this is sufficient, valid, current and reliable evidence of their competence.

Quality assessments are based on rigorous planning processes to ensure that all those involved in assessing a candidate know what they are assessing and what is expected of them. The basis for their work is the assessment plan.

Participation in assessment involves a commitment of resources by the RTO, the candidate and, in many cases, the candidate's workplace. Being well organised and prepared helps to ensure these resources (such as time, personnel and materials) are used effectively.



Understand the assessment plan

Your starting point to prepare for assessment is to source the relevant assessment plan that outlines the assessment of each unit. The overall assessment strategy will have come from the RTO's training and assessment strategy document.

An assessment plan documents each step in the process of assessing a candidate's performance. The assessment plan has usually been prepared using a template or form that has been developed for this specific purpose in your workplace, and may be stored in a printed or electronic format.

You need to be able to read and interpret the information correctly. If you are uncertain about any aspect of the assessment plan, such as terminology used or a particular method you are unfamiliar with, ask your supervisor or talk to an experienced assessor.

In some circumstances you may be asked to develop the assessment plan yourself or assist in its development. Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Assessment plan'; Aspire has included relevant templates in its *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

Example

Interpret assessment planning documentation and organisational, legal and ethical requirements for conducting the assessment

The format of the assessment plan may differ between organisations. The following example shows how an assessment plan may look for a group assessment. This assessment plan has been developed for units of competency from BSB31215 Certificate III in Library and Information Services.

Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Assessment plan'.

Assessment Plan	
Unit code/s and title/s of competency: <i>BSBLIB303 Provide multimedia support and BSBWHS302 Apply knowledge of WHS legislation in the workplace</i>	
Training organisation name: Respected Training	
Purpose of assessment/s: For newly enrolled students to obtain a qualification	
RPL assessment: No applicants in this group	
Target group details (candidates)	See candidate profile notes (attached)
Candidates' names and contact details (add list if applicable)	See attached list
Names and contact details of assessor/s	Amy Reynolds amyreynolds@plan.com
Other party details (e.g. workplace supervisor), if applicable	n/a
Date, time of assessment/s	10 weeks. Assessment in week 11.
<p>Assessment conditions</p> <p>See individual units of competency:</p> <p>Assessment must be conducted in a safe environment where evidence gathered demonstrates consistent performance of typical activities experienced by individuals carrying out WHS duties in the workplace and include access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ organisational policies, standard operating procedures, procedures and plans with information on compliance requirements ▶ relevant acts, regulations, codes of practice, licensing requirements and standards ▶ guidance materials and alerts issued by the relevant WHS regulator ▶ relevant WHS data files ▶ appropriate office equipment and resources. <p>Assessors must satisfy NVR/AQTF assessor requirements.</p> <p>Assessment must be conducted in a safe environment where evidence gathered demonstrates consistent performance of typical activities experienced in the library – multimedia technology field of work and include access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ current range of multimedia equipment, programs and associated software applications ▶ audiovisual equipment. <p>Assessors of this unit must satisfy the requirements for assessors in applicable VET legislation, frameworks and/or standards.</p>	

Activity 1

This activity is designed to provide you with an opportunity to practise interpreting an assessment plan and identifying the organisational, legal and ethical requirements for conducting assessment with relevant people.

1. Use an assessment plan you have sourced or the example assessment plan provided to complete this table.

Assessment plan	Summary
What is to be assessed?	
When is assessment to take place?	
Where is assessment to take place?	
How is assessment to take place?	

2. Review the assessment plan used above to complete this table, indicating how the RTO's organisational, legal and ethical requirements have been met. You may need to access the RTO's assessment framework, policies and procedures, links to legislation, etc.

Framework of organisational, legal and ethical requirements	Workplace policies and procedures you have to follow
VQF/AQTF	
Copyright and plagiarism/licensing	
Privacy and confidentiality	
Recording information	
Duty of care	
Anti-discrimination	
Workplace relations	
Industrial awards and enterprise agreements	

1D Determine opportunities for evidence-gathering in consultation with the candidate and relevant personnel

As previously discussed, the candidate needs to be informed about the assessment process. There may be a number of opportunities for collecting evidence, so you need to discuss with the candidate how and when you will gather different types of evidence so they know what methods you are using and can be prepared.

Coordinate assessment-gathering activities

Depending on the candidate's situation, some of the evidence may be collected in the workplace in real time, while other evidence may be gathered using simulated activities. Candidates who have applied for recognised prior learning (RPL) need to know how they are to present their evidence.

Discuss with the candidate the need for them to be observed on a number of occasions over a period of time or, if they are an RPL candidate, the need to answer additional questions or provide further third-party reports.



Identify opportunities

You should discuss the need to collect supplementary evidence if the candidate has not provided sufficient evidence of underpinning knowledge or has not provided evidence in regard to every performance criterion or authenticity of evidence.

For example, the candidate may need to provide a written report or answer questions that are designed to address the required knowledge competent of the unit of competency. Testimonials from employers may need to be obtained. You may arrange for several performance criteria to be assessed in the candidate's workplace, with supplementary evidence being gathered using a knowledge questionnaire. The assessment candidate may also need to produce some work samples to demonstrate their competence.

The following are some suggestions for identifying opportunities to gather the evidence:

- ▶ Set up simulated activities.
- ▶ Arrange specific simulated role-plays.
- ▶ Arrange to watch the candidate at work and ask questions either as they work (for example, while they are operating a piece of equipment) or after the activity (for example, after they have conducted a meeting).
- ▶ Identify projects that can involve a number of criteria.
- ▶ Organise a time for the candidate to make a presentation.
- ▶ Organise a meeting with the candidate and their workplace supervisor.

Example

Determine opportunities for evidence-gathering in consultation with the candidate and relevant personnel

Always discuss the type of evidence needed for assessment with the candidate. In this example, an assessor identifies an opportunity for a candidate to apply for RPL.

Janelle has recently enrolled in a business course with the goal of improving her technology and customer service skills following five years' absence from the paid workforce. She has previously worked for eight years as a receptionist in a real estate office.

Ava, the trainer/assessor, believes that Janelle should consider applying for recognition of her current competence in relation to her communication skills. Ava and Janelle agree to meet the following week to review the RTO's recognition of prior learning candidate pack.

At the meeting, Ava explains the types of evidence that Janelle is able to provide for each of the assessment requirements. Ava tells Janelle that she should also complete a challenge test for the word processing unit to confirm that she satisfies the evidence requirements.

Ava and Janelle then work together to find opportunities to address the gaps in Janelle's performance. From this they develop a training plan.



Activity 4

Using the following guidelines, role-play with two other people; have one act as the candidate and the other as the candidate's supervisor. You can also use an assessment candidate you are working with as an example.

In the role-play:

- ▶ Use a unit of competency of your choice and identify the evidence you need to gather.
- ▶ With the candidate and their supervisor, discuss and agree on the opportunities for gathering evidence.
- ▶ Submit the benchmarks (unit of competency), the required evidence and the records of your consultation. Include the information provided to candidates on the criteria for the assessment so they know what will be assessed.

Summary

1. Assessment is the process of gathering evidence and making judgments on whether the candidate has demonstrated that they can perform to the standard expected in the workplace expressed in the units of competency in a relevant training package or the learning outcomes of an accredited course.
2. Your starting point in preparing for assessment is to source the relevant assessment plan that has been developed by the RTO. An assessment plan documents each step in the process of assessing a candidate's performance.
3. You need to understand the organisational, legal and ethical requirements that govern assessment, and ensure that the information in the assessment plan meets these requirements.
4. The foundation of Australia's VET system is competency-based training. This approach relies on outcomes that are judged against specific standards which are established in the various units of competency that comprise training packages.
5. You need to prepare a checklist that identifies the materials you need to assemble prior to assessment. The information comes from various sources, such as workplace policies and procedures, assessment plans, assessment tools, workplace supervisors, regulatory authorities, professional associations and industry bodies.
6. An assessment tool includes the instrument and the procedures for gathering and interpreting evidence in accordance with designated assessment methods. It also includes the instructions that must be given to assessors and candidates.
7. Your workplace policies and procedures may include specific advice about the assessment methods that your RTO prefers to use in specific contexts of assessment. Your workplace may have a bank of assessment instruments that have been validated for specific assessment contexts.
8. The assessment conditions in the unit of competency and information in the assessment plan help you determine the physical resources that are required for assessment. The assessment conditions of most units of competency require assessment to be conducted in an actual workplace. Where this is not possible, a simulated work environment is appropriate.
9. You are responsible for analysing the information that has been gathered from candidates and identifying any specialist support they may require; for example, candidates who are in a remote location or require third-party assistance from a carer or interpreter. As an assessor, you may also require specialist support, such as a subject matter expert or technical expert.
10. Integrated assessment relates to holistic assessment (i.e. assessment that occurs within a unit by combining several elements or performance criteria) and co-assessment (i.e. assessment that assesses several units rather than assessing individual units or elements).
11. The RTO has implemented procedures that you must follow to explain, discuss and confirm the details of assessment with the candidate. The candidate must formally agree to the assessment plan. You may be required to have the candidate sign a form or send an email that confirms they have received information about assessment arrangements.



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Use agreed assessment methods and tools to gather, organise and document evidence**
- 2B Apply the principles of assessment and rules of evidence to gather quality evidence**

Gather quality evidence

Assessors are responsible for helping candidates gather quality evidence with the support of workplace supervisors and other people who can assist, such as technical experts, subject matter experts and other assessors.

Assessors need to prepare and implement assessment tools that address the individual needs of candidates, meet the objectives of the assessment plan and are appropriate for the context of assessment.

To assess effectively, you need to clearly understand the purpose of assessment in competency-based training, available sources of evidence and the attributes of quality evidence.

To select the most appropriate combination of evidence-gathering techniques, consider:

- ▶ the nature of the work activity
- ▶ the evidence requirements
- ▶ the individual characteristics of the candidate
- ▶ the assessment context and purpose.

Use assessment instruments

You must conduct assessment using the assessment instruments that have been selected for implementation by the RTO. The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 and the AQTF Standards do not prescribe a specific format for assessment instruments. It is up to the individual RTO to design assessment instruments that are effective in gathering the appropriate evidence.

The following table provides a summary of assessment instruments.

Assessment instruments and procedures	Type of evidence	Gathering the evidence
Profile of acceptable performance measures	<p>It is essential that the judgments of competence made by assessors are reliable and valid. This means that various assessors judging the same evidence must arrive at the same decision regarding competence.</p> <p>RTOs must, as evidence of their VQF/AQTF compliance, implement procedures that promote consistency in judgments of competence.</p> <p>RTOs develop profiles of acceptable performance measures as benchmarks that may be used as a reference when evaluating evidence.</p>	<p>▶ Evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Model answers - Solutions - Sample products - Sample portfolios - Marking rubrics - Assessment validation reports
Templates and proformas	<p>The RTO's assessment system includes various templates and proformas that have been developed for use by assessors, candidates, third parties and RTO administration staff. They are commonly used to record observations of the candidate's performance and the responses to knowledge questionnaires. They are useful as a tool for providing feedback to candidates and reporting assessment outcomes.</p>	<p>▶ Evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment plans - Observation checklists - Assessment outcomes - Candidate feedback - Third-party evidence forms - Workplace logbooks

The assessment method to be used may have been recorded on the assessment plan before you became involved in the assessment process. Alternatively, the RTO procedures may stipulate individual assessors to determine the assessment method they believe offers the best opportunity to gather evidence.

If you have to select appropriate methods yourself, check your workplace policies and procedures for advice about the assessment methods to be used in specific contexts of assessment. Your workplace may have a bank of assessment instruments that have been validated for specific assessment contexts.

Assessment methods may include:

- ▶ direct observation
- ▶ structured activities
- ▶ oral and written questioning
- ▶ portfolios
- ▶ third-party feedback.

Factors to consider in assessment

Consider the following when selecting which assessment method to use.

1

Assessment requirements

Consider evidence requirements of the competency standards/benchmarks; for example, if the candidate has to operate a machine, direct observation is an appropriate method.

2

The candidate's location

For example, the candidate may be in a remote location, and the assessment may take place online.

3

Feedback

Feedback gathered from industry and enterprise representatives regarding workplace practices, culture, environmental issues, and emerging trends and technology helps you identify when a method may be inappropriate. For example:

- ▶ Workplace assessment may not be possible as the candidate's work role does not include the tasks that must be assessed.
- ▶ Assessors should consider whether appropriate technology is available to the candidate to support online assessment.

4

Opportunities for evidence-gathering

For example, you may have to advise a recognition of prior learning (RPL) candidate of the ways in which they can collect evidence and present a portfolio.

5

Legal and ethical considerations

Ensure you meet all legal, ethical and work health and safety (WHS) requirements; for example, you need to make sure the method you select is safe, does not require the candidate to do anything illegal and does not contravene any code of conduct.

6

Available resources

To determine RTO resources, consider the time available for assessment, costs of assessment and materials.



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Discuss and guide candidates to gather their own evidence to support the recognition of prior learning**

- 3B Use appropriate communication to develop a professional relationship with the candidate that reflects sensitivity to individual differences and enables two-way feedback**

- 3C Make decisions on reasonable adjustments based on the candidate's needs and characteristics**

- 3D Access specialist support in accordance with the assessment plan**

- 3E Address any WHS risk to a person or equipment immediately**

Support the candidate

Effective and successful assessment is candidate-centred. The assessment system and the various policies, procedures and assessment plans that the RTO implements as part of that system should be designed to support the candidate to present the best possible evidence of their competency against the relevant benchmarks. In your role as a professional assessor, you will meet a wide range of assessment candidates that vary significantly in the support and guidance they require.

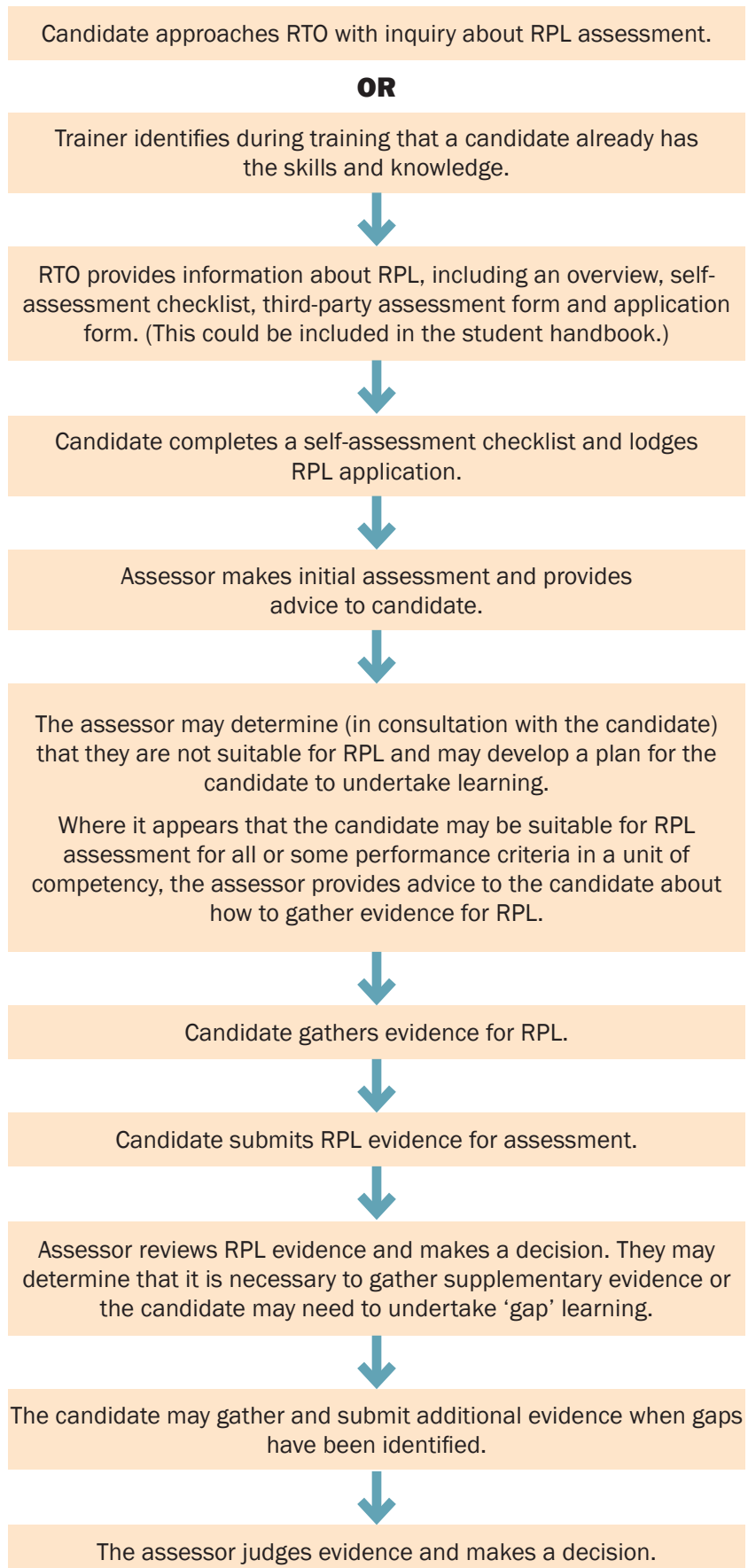
You must be equipped to support candidates with information about the RTO's policies and procedures for reasonable adjustment and recognition of prior learning (RPL). These areas are often particularly challenging for candidates, so you will need to provide them with clear and timely advice.

You also have an important role to ensure that assessment is conducted safely and that any risks or emergencies are managed in accordance with health and safety policies and procedures.

RPL processes

The following is an example of a typical RPL process; however, remember that each RTO may approach this differently.

RPL process



Summary

1. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is an assessment process that involves judging evidence provided by the candidate of the skills and knowledge they developed through previous informal and formal learning against learning outcomes or competency standards.
2. Your role as an assessor requires you to provide clear and accurate information on recognition entitlements to candidates.
3. Establishing a participative and collaborative relationship between the candidate and the assessor, which is based on confidentiality, accountability and sensitivity, builds confidence in assessment methods.
4. Explaining the process of assessment in language that is appropriate to the education and experience of candidates helps to build trust and rapport. Candidates need to feel that you are sensitive to their individual needs and current competency.
5. You are responsible for assessing candidates with a range of individual differences that you need to consider in order to support the candidate during the assessment process. Providing reasonable adjustment for learners is based on legislative and regulatory requirements, and on the purpose of the organisation providing vocational education and training.



Topic 6

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 6A Review the assessment process in consultation with candidates and other relevant people to improve future practice**
- 6B Document and record the review according to relevant assessment system policies and procedures**

Review the assessment process

As an assessor, you have a responsibility to be an active participant in your own professional development. You should maximise the opportunity that an assessment review process provides to gather feedback, reflect on your competencies, and plan future learning and development to improve the quality of your performance.

You must also support the RTO's continuous improvement system by identifying and promoting opportunities to enhance assessment processes.

Aspects of assessment	Reflective questions
Collected evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What findings were there in regard to satisfying the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment? ▶ Do you over-assess? For example, do you use assessment instruments that gather evidence which far exceeds the amount of evidence required? ▶ Are you consistent with other assessors in the amount and types of evidence you collect using assessment instruments?
Organisational requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Do you follow the assessment plan? ▶ Do you consistently apply the organisation's policies and procedures for assessment? ▶ How effectively do you give feedback to candidates?
Benchmark solutions and marking guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How effective are the RTO's benchmarking solutions? ▶ If you are responsible for developing benchmarking solutions, how do your procedures compare with other assessors? ▶ Do your benchmark solutions promote reliability and consistency? ▶ What method do you use to ensure that you continually improve your benchmark solutions? ▶ How do you manage version control of benchmark solutions?
Assessment judgments and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What feedback do you receive about your assessment judgments? ▶ What activities do you use to ensure you are consistent within your judgments and with other assessors? ▶ What trends or patterns do you find in complaints or appeals about your assessment judgments?

Consult with relevant people

Assessment is never performed in isolation. You are required to interact with various people at each stage of the assessment process. Each person you interact with forms a view of your performance and, as such, is a potential source of information you can use to critically reflect on your assessment practice.



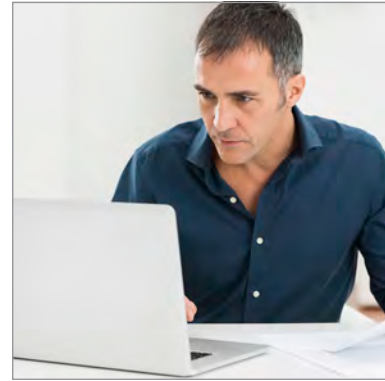
Your workplace policies and procedures may include advice on the process you should follow when contacting people external to the RTO, such as specialist service providers and workplace supervisors. Make sure you follow these instructions.

Carefully prepare for debriefings, meetings, interviews or discussions in which you are seeking feedback from other people. Identify your objectives and the aspects of your performance that you are most concerned with. You may wish to prepare a checklist or form to send in advance of your consultation meeting to let the other person know your purpose in meeting with them and encouraging them to be open and frank in their feedback. It would be helpful if you could send them a form or checklist to record their thoughts prior to your meeting. You can use the form or checklist to structure your meeting.

6B Document and record the review according to relevant assessment system policies and procedures

The RTO is required to regularly review the quality of its assessment processes (including assessment tools and instruments) to maintain its registration. You are expected to maintain appropriate records of the review and continuous improvement of assessment processes as evidence of the RTO's compliance regime. This may include documenting:

- ▶ the results of a validation of the RTO's assessment processes
- ▶ findings from the review of your own assessment practices.



The RTO's assessment process

Managers are generally responsible for preparing and reviewing reports of the assessment process. It is essential that they clearly identify any gaps in assessment practice and the specific actions that should be taken to address these gaps. Make sure you are familiar with the report's recommendations for improvement, and are able to identify where they apply to you.

The manager or panel representing the training and assessment team may formulate recommendations such as:

▶ additional professional development for assessors	▶ additional or enhanced engagement with industry and enterprises
▶ making changes to assessment instruments based on student feedback	▶ improving evidence collection processes
▶ revising the RTO's assessment policy to reflect the needs of industry and workers, and ensure compliance with relevant standards	▶ revising information for assessors
▶ making systematic improvements to the record-keeping system	▶ revising information for candidates or third parties
▶ reviewing learning and assessment resources from student evaluations	▶ engaging with subject matter experts
▶ making changes to assessment system procedures	▶ implementing technology improvements.