TAEASS403

Participate in assessment validation

Learner guide

TAASS403

Explore a unit of competency

You should unpack a unit of competency and consider each part of the unit to form a picture of what a competent person looks like, how assessment should occur and what evidence is required.

The following table summarises the components of a unit of competency, as defined in the TAE Training and Education Training Package Implementation Guide.

Component feature	What it relates to
Unit of competency	
Title	The title describes the unit outcome.
Unit application	This field describes how the unit is practically applied, who would typically use it and the unit of competency's relationship to licensing, legislative or certification requirements.
Prerequisite units	This is an optional field that specifies any unit/s in which the learner must already be competent prior to achieving competency in this unit.
Unit Sector	This field is used to categorise units of competency in relation to industry sectors or types of work.
Elements of competency	Elements of competency describe the outcomes of the significant functions and tasks that make up the competency. Elements describe actions or outcomes that are demonstrable and assessable.
Performance criteria	Performance criteria specify the required performance in relevant tasks, roles, skills (including foundation skills) and the applied knowledge that enables competent performance.
Foundation skills	This field describes the language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills that are essential to performance.
Range of conditions	This is an optional field that specifies different work environments and conditions that may affect performance. Range is restricted to essential operating conditions and any other variables essential to the work environment, so it is quite different from the previous range statement.
Unit mapping information	This field specifies the code and title of any equivalent unit of competency.
Links	This field provides a link to the Companion Volume Implementation Guide.
Assessment requirements	
Performance evidence	Performance evidence, as the name implies, specifies what individuals must do to show that they satisfy the performance standards in the unit of competency.

Introduction
TAEASS403 Participate in assessment validation

What is validation?

Validation is a quality review process. Its purpose is to check that the assessment system and tools used in an assessment process produce evidence that is valid, sufficient, current and authentic so a reasonable judgment can be made as to whether the requirements of the relevant aspects of the training package or accredited course have been met. Validation may occur before, during or after assessment. The outcome of a validation should include recommendations for future improvements to the assessment instruments, methods and processes.

Validation panels may be set up by registered training organisations (RTOs) or businesses to validate their assessment methods and instruments as part of their continuous improvement cycle. A validation involves rigorous planning and preparation on the part of the validation coordinator to ensure there is a validation action plan and all participants receive the relevant units of competency, examples of assessment tools and samples of evidence. Those who are asked to participate in a validation also need to be well prepared; they need to understand the validation approach they will use to evaluate the assessment process and be ready to provide information when asked, offer suggestions and make decisions when required.

The term 'moderation' is used to describe the process of bringing assessment judgments and standards into alignment. Moderation is a process that ensures the same standards are applied to all assessment results within the same unit of competency.

What this unit covers

The unit of competency *TAEASS403 Participate in assessment validation* describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required by an assessor to participate in an assessment validation process. You will be guided in what to do by a validation facilitator, someone especially appointed to lead the validation process.

This learner guide focuses on the assessment validation activities that are undertaken by RTOs. However, you should note that organisations other than RTOs that perform assessment should also conduct continuous improvement activities as part of their quality management approach.

Although this type of assessment does not need to comply with the standards defined in the VQF/AQTF, the business may choose to use the validation model described in this learner guide for their quality review model.

Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

1A Discuss and confirm the approach to validation

1B Arrange materials for validation activities

1C Check documents used in the validation process for accuracy and version control

1D Analyse relevant units of competency and agree on the evidence needed to demonstrate competence

Prepare for validation

You will need to undertake a range of tasks prior to evaluating assessment processes and instruments as part of a validation team with your colleagues and other relevant stakeholders. This learner guide focuses on the assessment validation activities that are undertaken by RTOs.

Businesses that provide in-house training activities for their workers may assess workers at the completion of their training and issue certificates of completion. Although this type of assessment does not need to comply with the standards defined in the VET Quality Framework (VQF)/Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), the business may choose to use the validation model described in this learner guide for their quality review model.

Responsibility to check and validate

It is poor practice to source an assessment instrument from a printed book or the internet and rely on the mapping information provided by the developer as evidence that the assessment satisfies the RTO's requirements. More is required of an RTO and the assessors that it employs.

Necessity to record

It is the responsibility of the RTO to validate the assessment instrument and record the outcomes. The validation record serves as evidence of the RTO's compliance with VQF/AQTF standards during an audit. Any revisions made to the assessment instrument after validation contributes to the RTO's evidence of continuous improvement practices.

Check assessment bank tasks

When you use an assessment instrument from an RTO's assessment bank, you should check whether validation has already occurred. Read the record of validation to identify how recently the validation was completed and whether the unit of competency and evidence requirements have changed from those that were used in the validation. You may need to coordinate for a new validation to be conducted.

Graded results

In some cases, RTOs choose to provide candidates with a graded result. This means that in addition to being recorded as 'competent' or 'not yet competent' the candidate receives formal advice that describes their performance standard. It is essential that where candidates are to receive a graded result, a marking scheme should be included with the assessment instrument. Validation of assessment instruments provides an opportunity for assessors to interpret the marking scheme and agree on the dimensions that represent different levels of performance.

Understand assessment system policies and procedures

When participating in a validation process, you must follow the relevant policies and procedures that have been developed for your workplace.

VQF/AQTF requirements ensure that RTOs keep written policies and procedures for providing quality training and assessment consistent with its scope of registration and scale of operations.

An assessment policy underpins quality assessment by the RTO. It provides a framework of terminology, rights, responsibilities and obligations, and objectives. The RTO's approach to assessment validation must be detailed in its assessment policy, which must be readily available to the RTO's employees and should be regularly reviewed and revised where necessary as part of the organisation's continuous improvement system. While individual RTOs are empowered to develop and implement assessment policies that address their specific operational requirements, it is essential that assessment policies are also designed to satisfy VQF/AQTF obligations.
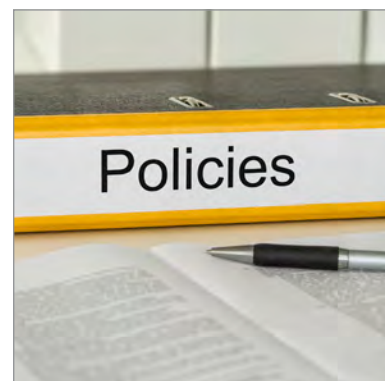
Confirm how the validation procedure will be conducted

The validation may be conducted:

▶ face to face

▶ electronically using conference telephone calls or electronic collaboration tools, such as online meetings or forums.

Confirm the assessment tools and methods to be validated

Panel members require the most recent version of each of the assessment tools and methods that are to be included in the validation. The validation coordinator may also ask assessors to provide judged evidence for validation.

Identify the method for sampling

The RTO will use a representative sample of assessment instruments and methods for assessment validation purposes based on the risk they pose to the RTO in terms of quality and compliance.

Confirm records management

You should confirm what records will be created, how to maintain confidentiality and the duration of retention; for example, you may need to:

▶ create a hard-copy file for each validation activity

▶ use specific forms or templates that have been designed to schedule appointments, record key points from conversations, record the minutes of meetings, maintain a communication log or gather feedback from stakeholders.

Identify continuous improvement methods

Confirm how improvements will be made to both assessment instruments and validation procedures; for example, the validation team will need to know if they are to revise assessment instruments during validation sessions or if they are to prepare a report making recommendations for changes.

Ensure compliance with work health and safety (WHS) legislation

Before conducting any assessment validation activity, you should conduct a WHS risk assessment. During the validation process, you must be alert to any WHS hazards and take appropriate steps within your level of authority to minimise or eliminate the hazards. This may require you to bring your concerns to the attention of the validation coordinator, training and development manager, HR manager or WHS representative. Your workplace policies and procedures should include information that will be useful to you in reporting and controlling risk, both in your workplace and when conducting off-site assessments.

It is essential that you remember you have a duty of care to the panel members, and must take all reasonable steps to ensure their health and safety during the assessment validation process.

1D Analyse relevant units of competency and agree on evidence needed to demonstrate competence

Assessment is the process of gathering evidence and making judgments on whether the candidate has demonstrated they can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed in the units of competency in a relevant training package or the learning outcomes of an accredited course.

An understanding of assessment underpins learning in this unit. You will be required to demonstrate your application of this required knowledge as an aspect of assessment of your competence for the unit TAEASS403 Participate in assessment validation.

You need to know:

▶ how to determine the evidence needed to demonstrate competence in a competency-based environment

▶ the critical aspects of validation, including validation of assessment processes, methods and products.

Types of assessment

Here are terms for various types of assessment methods described below. Competency-based assessment is evidence-based, although it has similarities to criterion-referenced and standards-based assessment when a candidate's ability to meet performance criteria is being assessed. While an understanding of evidence requirements is crucial to developing and validating assessments, in VET the term 'competency-based assessment' is used more often than the term 'evidence-based assessment'.

Criterion-referenced assessment and standards-based assessment

These types of assessment assess against fixed criteria or standards. Fixed standards or performance criteria are a set of established benchmarks, which could include:

▶ units of competency from relevant training packages

▶ national assessment requirements of relevant training packages

▶ performance standards and evidence requirements of learning and development activities

▶ requirements of legislation, codes of practices, standards and guidelines

▶ organisational requirements or product specifications.

Evidence-based assessment

Evidence-based assessment uses units of competency described in relevant training packages and involves gathering sufficient evidence to make a judgment about whether the specified standards have been met.

Norm-referenced assessment

Norm-referenced assessment judges candidates against others in the cohort. Those with the best performance receive the highest grades. Norm-referenced assessment is not suitable for use in competency-based training as it does not measure a person's performance against a standard or criterion.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is the term used to describe assessment conducted throughout the learning process. These can include the activities you provide learners with during each session to allow them to practise skills or apply knowledge, or they may be discrete tasks that learners need to successfully complete before they can move on to the next stage of learning.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment is used to determine the learner's skills and knowledge in a comprehensive manner; i.e. it will take into consideration the entire learning program rather than a single part of it. Summative assessment is the final assessment on which an assessor will determine the learner's competence or successful completion of the learning.

This kind of assessment generally occurs at the very end of a learning program.

Confirm assessment requirements and benchmarks

Once you have established the RTO's approach to validation, you need to work closely with your peers to analyse relevant benchmarks that will be used to judge the candidate's competence for assessment. You should use your teamwork, communication and planning skills to work collaboratively and effectively with your validation partners.

The benchmarks you refer to when judging evidence for assessment will be determined by your employment situation. If you are employed by an RTO, you will generally judge competence in relation to the assessment requirements of the units of competency. Assessment requirements consist of the performance evidence, knowledge evidence and assessment conditions in a unit of competency. Before training packages were streamlined, the term 'critical aspects of assessment' was used.

If you are not employed by an RTO, you may be asked to assess the candidate's performance against the learning outcomes or performance criteria that are identified in course curricula, enterprise or industry standards, or product specifications. In these situations, unless your employer partners with an RTO, the candidate will not receive a formal qualification or statement of attainment. Workplace policies and procedures should provide information to help you determine the benchmarks you need to use for assessment.

Confirm types of evidence

Assessment tools are used to gather evidence from candidates. Evidence takes three forms: direct, indirect and supplemental. Your validation team needs to confirm the types of evidence the candidate must provide in order to demonstrate competence.

The distinguishing features of each type of evidence are summarised in the following table.

Direct evidence
Direct evidence is anything that the candidate has either produced themselves or which they have been primarily responsible for.   Forms of evidence include: ▶ audio-recording or podcast   ▶ audiovisual recording using DVD, video or YouTube   ▶ correspondence (letters, memos, fax messages and emails) composed by the candidate   ▶ demonstrations of skill   ▶ diary extracts or learning journal entries   ▶ materials or tools used to perform work   ▶ observation by an assessor or workplace supervisor   ▶ photographs   ▶ published works, such as operational manuals   ▶ samples of work   ▶ workplace policies and procedures written by the candidate.

Indirect evidence
Indirect evidence consists of work that can be reviewed or examined by assessors that was gathered off the job, including: ▶ accredited courses or qualifications they have been completed   ▶ budgets prepared or implemented by the candidate   ▶ the candidate's curriculum vitae (CV) or rèsumè   ▶ the candidate's performance appraisal   ▶ certificates of achievement (this could be for non-accredited training)   ▶ formal certificates or results of relevant training that has been completed   ▶ job specifications or position descriptions   ▶ letters of appreciation from customers, suppliers or work colleagues   ▶ membership of professional associations   ▶ minutes of meetings that contain information on your participation and performance in specific activities   ▶ presentations or written speeches   ▶ references from previous employers   ▶ letters of support   ▶ workplace awards and certificates   ▶ a written test of underpinning knowledge.

Example

Analyse relevant units of competency and agree on the evidence needed to demonstrate competence

Josh is a trainer/assessor at an RTO that offers training and assessment of units of competency in the SIS Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package.

He will deliver training and conduct assessment for the SIS30315 Certificate III in Fitness on-site to a group of employees at a large fitness centre. The RTO's quality manager will be coordinating a validation process to review the quality of the assessment instruments and RPL process that have been developed for Certificate III in Fitness.

The process followed by Josh and repeated by the quality manager to agree on evidence needed to demonstrate competence is outlined below.

Obtain documents

Josh needs to understand the benchmarks that he will use to judge the performance of candidates enrolled in *SISFFIT002 Recognise and apply exercise considerations for specific populations,* Release 1. He obtains a copy of the unit of competency and assessment requirements documents from training.gov.au.

Read 'Application' section

Josh begins by reading the 'Application' section of the unit of competency, which describes the work activity and relevant work roles. He notes that there are no licensing requirements and that the unit does not apply to the provision of exercise to high-risk clients.

Read elements

He uses the elements to understand the outcomes that workers performing this activity are expected to achieve.

Analyse assessment requirements

Josh reads the assessment requirements of the unit.

The performance evidence section describes the required performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element. Knowledge evidence requirements specify what candidates must know in order to complete the tasks outlined in the element and their performance criteria. The knowledge evidence requirements of this unit of competency specify the legislation, regulations, risk management strategies, organisational policies and procedures, knowledge of anatomical and physical considerations, roles of relevant professionals and symptoms of physical distress that a candidate must demonstrate knowledge of.

The assessment conditions include relevant information, such as the requirement that candidates must demonstrate skills through assessment activities that allow them to develop a variety of exercise programs for specific population clients over a period of time, ensuring adequate time to allow for the implementation of required modifications.

Consult workplace assessment policies

John is aware from discussions with colleagues that it is essential that assessors gather clear evidence of the application of skills and knowledge detailed in the unit of competency. His workplace has developed a policy that requires him to use questioning to gather evidence of the knowledge component of the unit, and observation for the performance evidence component.

Summary

1. Assessment validation is a quality review process rather than a single activity. You will need to undertake various tasks prior to any assessment validation session in order to maximise your personal contribution to the improvement of the assessment system.

2. RTOs must comply with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (the Standards) in order to be registered. Validation activities examine whether assessment is be conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence, and comply with the assessment requirements of the relevant training package or VET accredited course, as required by Clause 1.8 of the Standards.

3. VQF/AQTF requirements ensure that RTOs keep written policies and procedures for providing quality training and assessment consistent with its scope of registration and scale of operations. An assessment policy underpins quality assessment by the RTO. It provides a framework of terminology, rights, responsibilities and obligations, and objectives. General quality assurance policies and procedures and reporting procedures also apply to validation activities.

4. Assessment validation activities may be conducted before, during or after an assessment tool has been implemented.

5. Participants must agree on an interpretation of the elements and performance criteria in the unit of competency and share an understanding of the assessment requirements. They need to know:
    ▶ how to determine the evidence needed to demonstrate competence in a competency-based environment
    ▶ the critical aspects of validation, including validation of assessment processes, methods and products.

6. All documents used in the validation process must be checked for accuracy and version control.

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

2A Actively participate in validation sessions and activities using appropriate communication

2B Apply principles of assessment and rules of evidence

2C Check that assessment instruments conform to requirements

2D Review and use assessment maps to determine the validity of assessment instruments

Participate in the validation of assessment tools

Well-developed communication, teamwork and planning skills are essential for you to actively participate with your validation colleagues as part of a validation workshop or panel session. You need to be organised and well prepared so that you can contribute to an informed discussion about:

▶ benchmarks for assessment

▶ decision-making rules

▶ assessment tools, including the clarity of instructions

▶ recording mechanisms

▶ samples of evidence collected

▶ training package requirements.

Validation responsibilities

When actively participating in validation sessions, you will need to apply your understanding and a broad range of your skills to tasks that have some complexity. Relevant skills include analysis, interpretation, communication, collaboration, organisation and prioritisation. You need to analyse and interpret relevant policies and procedures, benchmarks and validation materials, and identify and evaluate options against agreed criteria.

Another responsibility involves coming to a shared understanding of what evidence is required, based on the evidence guide in the unit of competency. Ask yourself: what evidence would a competent person be producing in the workplace? Relate this to the assessment requirements. In some cases the assessment requirements will be quite restrictive, and stipulate the amounts and types of evidence that must be presented for assessment. However, in many instances assessors will need to use their professional judgment to interpret the evidence guide information and decide on the appropriate evidence needed.

Responsibilities of a validation panellist are described here.

Unpack unit of competency

Panellists must agree on an interpretation of the unit of competency, especially about the assessment requirements.

Determine AQF level

You need to develop an understanding of the AQF level of the person performing the role by identifying how much autonomy, support, guidance, initiative or experience a worker performing these tasks as part of their job needs to have.

Examine assessment tools

Review and evaluate each part of the summative and formative assessment tools and methods to confirm whether they:

▶ will achieve what is intended
▶ are appropriately designed to gather evidence that assessors can use to make a judgment of the candidate's competence.

Apply principles of assessment

Apply the principles of assessment to ensure assessments are fair, flexible, valid and reliable.

Apply rules of evidence

Apply the rules of evidence to ensure assessments are valid, authentic, sufficient and current.

2B Apply principles of assessment and rules of evidence

As an assessor, and during the validation process, you have a responsibility to evaluate the assessment methods and instruments used (collectively referred to as assessment tools) to ensure they comply with the specified assessment guidelines, and satisfy the rules of evidence and principles of assessment. Assessment processes, methods and tools, the collected evidence leading to assessment decisions and assessment decisions themselves must all be reviewed in relation to these.

You may find that assessment instruments that seek to gather evidence of competence for several units of competency (integrated assessment) present additional challenges in clearly identifying the link between various parts of the assessment instrument and the performance evidence requirements.

In the introductory part of any formal validation session or activity, the validation leader should remind participants that the purpose of validation is to review assessment tools to ensure that the tools:

▶ gather evidence that will lead to a candidate's competence being assessed against the relevant assessment requirements

▶ are appropriate to the context and methods of assessment identified in the unit of competency.

Required skills

Your RTO should support you in developing your competence to participate in validation activities. Your study of this unit, *TAEASS403 Participate in assessment validation*, is an important part of your professional development as an assessor. However, you should continue to participate regularly in learning and development opportunities that demonstrate your commitment to lifelong learning and expand your range of skills and knowledge. You will benefit from watching experienced assessors in validation sessions and asking for their advice and guidance; you may also like to have a mentor to support you.

Problem-solving skills

Problem-solving skills enable you to identify and deal with information that is inconsistent, ambiguous or contradictory.

Planning skills

Planning skills are required to participate in validation activities within agreed time frames and be adequately prepared.

Communication skills

Communication skills enable you to actively participate and share information in validation meetings.

Access the relevant checklist

The RTO will have developed a checklist or form that the validation panel can use to ensure they evaluate each component of the assessment instrument and record their findings. Ask your trainer for a template sample 'Validation activity checklist' template.

Follow policies and procedures

Make sure you have access to any mapping documents that have previously been prepared for the unit of competency and assessment instrument. The mapping document forms an important component of the RTO's quality management system as it demonstrates that the individual assessment instruments are designed to satisfy the rules of evidence.

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

Use validation criteria

The validation panel will discuss the validation criteria specified on the RTO's checklist, form or template. While the criteria will vary to suit the RTO's policies and procedures, they are designed to guide the validation panel to discuss the following types of questions.

Method and process

▶ Is the assessment method appropriate for the AQF level of the unit of competency?

▶ Have assessment tasks been designed to allow holistic and integrated assessment of knowledge, skills and attributes?

▶ Was the assessment instrument developed in consultation with stakeholders?

▶ How can reasonable adjustment be made to the strategy to ensure equity for all candidates while maintaining integrity of the assessment outcomes?

Assessment instrument

▶ Is the assessment instrument based on realistic or authentic work activities and contexts?

▶ Where work samples are to be used as evidence, will candidates receive specific guidelines on requirements, including information about ensuring authenticity and the currency of the evidence?

▶ Are checklists and instructions to assessors for performing observations clearly mapped to the unit of competency?

▶ Does information to candidates include method, criteria, procedure, feedback and an appeal process?

▶ How does the assessment instrument cater for individual needs of candidates in regard to language, literacy and numeracy?

▶ Can the assessment instrument be adapted to meet the needs of all candidates and workplaces?

▶ Is the assessment instrument suitable to use in other contexts?

Evidence

2D Review and use assessment maps to determine the validity of assessment instruments

An RTO needs to have developed policies and procedures that describe the methods that assessment instrument designers should use to document the relationship between the assessment process and the assessment requirements (including required knowledge and foundation skills). The process they follow to identify and document these relationships is termed 'mapping'.

The mapping document forms an important component of the RTO's quality management system as it demonstrates that the individual assessment instruments are designed to satisfy the rules of evidence.

Assessment validation activities should include checking that assessment mapping has been completed correctly. During validation, assessment mapping that is confirmed as correct is used to assist in determining that the assessment process gathers evidence of each of the assessment requirements, including the knowledge evidence and performance criteria. Assessment instruments must do this in order to be valid.

Match to course requirements

Assessment instruments must be benchmarked against the relevant unit or units of competency or relevant organisational performance criteria. Ask your trainer for a sample 'Assessment mapping' template. By using such a template, trainers, assessors, candidates, managers, auditors and validators can see quickly where components of a unit of competency are being addressed by the assessment instrument.

The instrument should have been developed after the following components of the unit of competency have been taken into account.

Components of a unit of competency
▶ Application
▶ Elements
▶ Performance criteria
▶ Foundation skills
▶ Performance evidence
▶ Knowledge evidence
▶ Assessment conditions
▶ Dimensions of competency
▶ Implementation guide or companion volume for information on contextualising, foundation skills, etc.

Example

Review and use assessment maps to assist in determining the validity of assessment instruments

This assessment map shows that not all performance criteria that are part of Element 1 are being assessed. The assessment instrument is not a valid assessment of a candidate's competence until it can be changed to collect evidence that the candidate can 'collect relevant information from appropriate sources, and analyse and share with the work team to improve work performance'. What would you recommend if you were part of a validation panel examining the assessment instrument for this unit of competency?

BSBLDR402 Lead effective workplace relationships	Learner guide	Knowledge evidence questions	Workplace Project	Third-party (supervisor) checklist
Collect, analyse and communicate information and ideas				
Collect relevant information from appropriate sources and analyse and share with the work team to improve work performance				
Communicate ideas and information in a manner which is appropriate and sensitive to the cultural and social diversity of the audience and any specific needs	✓		✓	✓
Lead consultation processes to encourage employees to contribute to issues related to their work, and promptly relay feedback to the work team in regard to outcomes	✓		✓	✓
Seek and value contributions from internal and external sources in developing and refining new ideas and approaches	✓	✓	✓	
Implement processes to ensure that issues raised are resolved promptly or referred to relevant personnel as required	✓	✓	✓	

Activity 8

Obtain an example of an assessment tool that consists of at least two assessment activities that can be used to assess a current unit of competency. Ask your trainer for a sample 'Assessment mapping' template.

Map performance criteria, performance knowledge evidence, assessment conditions, dimensions of competency and foundation skills for an assessment tool. You will need to discuss and clarify how to do this in relation to some components. For example, knowledge evidence may include knowledge how the following legal and ethical considerations are applied in the workplace: codes of practice, human rights and informed consent. Each of these should be mapped separately, as below.

Knowledge evidence	Assessment 1 Questions	Assessment 2 Case study	Assessment 3 Practical placement
Knowledge of codes of practice and how they are applied in the workplace	Q7	CS5	
Knowledge of human rights and how they are applied in the workplace	Q9		PPL 8
Knowledge of informed consent and how it is applied in the workplace	Q10	CS2	PPL 5

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

3A Discuss validation findings to support improvements in the quality of assessment

3B Discuss, agree on and record recommendations to improve assessment practices

Contribute to validation outcomes

It is the role and responsibility of validation panel members to interpret the data that is gathered when various components of the RTO's assessment approach and methodology are reviewed. The aim is to identify and record any issues or shortcomings in the quality of assessment and formulate recommendations for remedial action. Panel members should use group problem-solving and decision-making processes to develop their recommendations.

Assessment validation is also an opportunity for those who conduct assessment to reflect on their assessment practice and learn from their validation colleagues' experience. As a professional assessor, you have a responsibility to be an active participant in your own professional development, and should maximise the opportunity provided by validation activities to gather feedback, reflect on your competencies, and plan future learning and development to improve the quality of your performance.

Improvements represent an investment of your time and energy in effecting the changes. You may find that the actions you need to take to improve your performance are already available to you. For example, you may need to revise the instructions given to candidates, or review the information you give them about recognition of prior learning pathways. You may already have the skills and knowledge required to implement these improvements.

Contribute to an effective discussion

Effective group discussions during the final stages of an assessment validation session require communication and team-working skills. Here is a summary of the key skills that are required. You should use this information to reflect on your current competence and, where necessary, plan how you could undertake appropriate professional development.

Professionalism

Assessment validation panels comprise members of various professional backgrounds and levels of experience. You should support your validation colleagues by willingly sharing your experience, knowledge and observations; adopting a positive attitude to validation processes; and demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement and quality management.

Ethical behaviour

During assessment validation sessions, you may have had access to commercially sensitive information, such as problems with assessment instruments. You must comply with the RTO's policies for confidentiality by ensuring that validation records are secured correctly and that you do not discuss commercial information inappropriately, particularly with external parties.

Conflict resolution

You may find that in some cases, validation panels cannot reach consensus on validation findings. For example, several members of the panel may believe that the process for recognition of prior learning does not satisfy the rules of evidence because assessment candidates are not asked to authenticate the evidence they present for assessment. You must use appropriate skills to hear the objections raised by other panel members, and work cooperatively to find areas of mutual agreement and a way forward. The validation coordinator will have primary responsibility to resolve conflict between panel members.

Empathy

Individual validation panel members will have different stakes in the validation process. When examining an assessment instrument, you may participate in a panel that includes the assessor who designed the assessment instrument. In this situation, the assessment instrument designer may resist making changes to the assessment instrument. You will need to reflect on how you can give constructive feedback, and promote the value of innovation and change during validation sessions.