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DEFENCE FORCE SCHOOL OF SIGNALS (DFSS)

STANDING INSTRUCTION

SI 7.12 – Conduct of Assessment

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APPROVER	CO DFSS
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AMENDMENT LIST

NO	DATE	DETAILS
V1.0	02 Jul 20	Conversion from SOP 39 to SI 7.12
V2.0	13 Jan 21	Update CO signature block. Reword para's 16 and 17 to clarify the use of C/NYC and S/NYS terminology.
V3.0	01 Nov 22	Updated for AMC and AEP conduct. Assessment debrief timeframe mandated. Sections added for Assessor Qualifications and Assessment Sequence. Validations moved to SI 7.10 but Moderations retained. Other updates to sequencing for readability.
V4.0	20 Sep 23	Update Recognition - Assessment only Pathway
V5.0	07 Oct 24	Update to reflect release of ATM Chapters and define Unacceptable Academic Behaviour (UAB) procedures, including the use of AI

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References:

- A. [ATI 1- 2 Army Instructor Qualification and Development](#)
- B. [ATM Part 2 Chapter 10 Design and Develop Individual Training and Assessment](#)
- C. [DFSS SI 7.15 Course Session and Learner Record Information Management](#)
- D. [DFSS Generic Joining Instruction V2.0 of 07 Oct 24](#)
- E. [DFSS SI 1.02 Incident Management and Reporting](#)
- F. [DFSS SI 1.11 Discipline](#)
- G. [ATM Part 3 Chapter 23 Implement Army Individual Training and Assessment](#)

Background

1. Assessment is a fundamental component of individual training in the Australian Defence Force (ADF). The purpose of conducting assessment activities is to determine learning against workplace-derived standards to ensure learners are workplace ready.

Aim

2. The aim of this Standing Instruction (SI) is to define the conduct, recording and reporting of assessments by DFSS. It describes the overall philosophy of assessment, provides a broad description of the administrative issues to be addressed and sets the procedures designed to achieve valid, fair and reliable assessments within DFSS.

Scope

3. This SI applies to all personnel, both staff and learners, within DFSS.

Instructor and Assessor qualifications

4. All instructors and assessors must be qualified to instruct and assess, must be qualified on the subject they are assessing, or be supervised by another member who is qualified as the SME on that subject.
5. Ref A provides the respective qualification required to instruct at DFSS. This includes pathways for all Services, APS and persons engaged in contract to achieve Foundational Instructor status. Any member without these qualifications are not to instruct or assess until they are qualified IAW Ref A.
6. Instructor qualifications for all DFSS Defence members, must be listed in the DFSS Instructor Register by WSMs, as evidence of instructor qualifications.

Develop-Prepare for Assessment

7. Assessments are developed from the Learning Management Package (LMP) using the relevant Assessment Criteria (AC) and guidance. IAW Ref B, assessment materials must only assess objectives specified by the AC, nothing more. Learners need to be made aware of the points in which they will be assessed during a learning event, afforded time to prepare for their conduct, be completely aware of all assessment requirements and conditions and must be provided feedback on conclusion of an assessment.

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Assessment Types

8. There are six types of assessment that are utilised. They are as follows:
 - a. recognition
 - b. barrier assessment
 - c. diagnostic assessment
 - d. formative assessment
 - e. summative assessment
 - f. workplace assessment.
9. **Formative assessments.** Formative assessment (FA) occurs progressively throughout the training and confirms progress towards meeting workplace requirements. These assessments support training by monitoring a learner's progress towards a learning outcome and, ultimately, competency. The results of this assessment provide feedback to the learner, instructor and assessor on what further development activities are needed to achieve outcomes IAW LMP.
10. Formative assessment are to be assessed as Ready (R) or Not Yet Ready (NYR).
11. **Summative assessment.** Summative assessment (SA) should be linked closely to the workplace performance requirement. A SA should determine whether a learner has assimilated the content effectively and been able to demonstrate the prescribed performance standard to the required detailed in the LMP. The conduct of SA must follow the assessment direction contained in the LMP.
12. All summative assessments must use the terminology Satisfactory (S)/ Not Yet Satisfactory (NYS). The exception to this is when a training activity (e.g. course) has only one summative assessment. Summative assessment determinations must use the terminology Satisfactory (S)/ Not Yet Satisfactory (NYS) or Demonstrated (D) /Not Yet Demonstrated (NYD). This allows for partial re-assessment to occur for those criteria assessed as NYS/NYD.
13. Learners final result listed on the Record of Attainment (ROA) are to be termed 'Competent' (C) and 'Not Yet Competent' (NYC). This final result as 'Competent' (C) or 'Not Yet Competent' (NYC) must also be recorded on the Determination of Competency Summary Sheet (DCSS). These terms are not to be used to describe individual summative assessment performance.
14. DCSS - Learners must achieve 'Yes' against all assessment criteria in all summative assessments to be deemed competent overall against the course outcomes.
15. Further information on assessment types can be found at Ref B.

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Principles of Assessment

16. Assessing is the process of judging demonstrated performance against workplace performance criteria. This is achieved through abiding by the principles of assessment:

- a. **Fairness.** The assessment places all learners on equal terms and accommodates individual needs
- b. **Flexibility.** The assessment accommodates (where practical) a variety of training delivery and assessment requirements
- c. **Validity.** The assessment assesses what it claims to assess in order to inform a final decision
- d. **Reliability.** The assessment consistently results in assessors reaching the same decision, under the same conditions, based on the evidence collected/observed.

Dimension of competence

17. **Competency** means the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

18. The dimensions of competence are as follows:

- a. **Task skills.** The ability to perform tasks to the required standard.
- b. **Task management skills.** The ability to coordinate a number of tasks to achieve a work outcome.
- c. **Contingency management skills.** The ability to respond to irregularities, equipment failures or other unexpected occurrences.
- d. **Job/role environment skills.** The ability to deal with responsibilities and expectations of the work environment, including working with others.

Assessment administration

19. **Summative Assessment recording requirements.** Individual summative assessment (SA) results are to be listed on the **Determination of Competency Summary Sheet (DCSS)**. The purpose of this document is to confirm that learners have achieved all assessment events and met the requirements of all assessment criteria from a particular course of training.

20. **Assessment Tools.** Only those assessment tools produced as part of an approved LMP are to be used to assess a training activity. Organisations delivering training are not to change assessment tools in any way without the approval of the LMP owner. Additionally, all assessment tools are not considered to be restricted documents and should be marked as 'Official'.

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21. All **assessment documentation** is to be stored in Objective IAW Ref C.

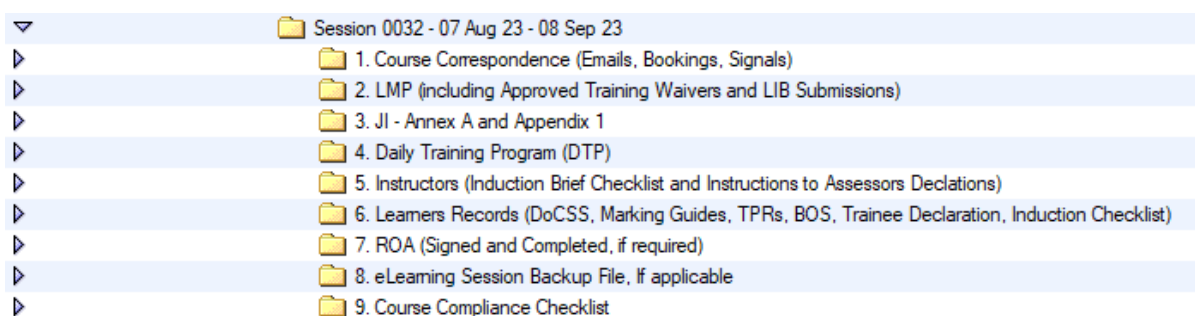


Figure 1: Storage of Assessment documents

Assessment - Instructions to Candidates and Instructions to Assessors

22. Instructions to Candidates (ITC) and Instructions to Assessors (ITA) are to be read and signed by all DFSS learners undertaking assessments and DFSS assessors. These documents cover critical information in regards to assessments.
23. Both the ITC and ITA only need to be read and signed once, at the beginning of each course session. Course Managers are responsible for ensuring the signed ITC and ITA are stored in the correct OBJ file structure IAW Ref C.
24. Each individual assessment requires a one-page cover sheet or embedded ADELE information specific to that assessment, listing all assessment conditions (ie this assessment is a closed book assessment).
24. DFSS templates of the ITC and ITA can be found at the [DFSS Training Systems](#)

Reasonable adjustment

25. It is a fundamental principle of learning, education and training that all learners are treated with respect and their needs accommodated in the assessment process. Where necessary, instructors have the ability to adjust the manner of assessment to suit individual needs as long as the conditions and standards, detailed in the LMP, are not diluted.
26. Adjustments are considered 'reasonable' if they do not impose an unjustifiable hardship upon Army or DFSS and do not alter assessment standards or outcomes.
27. The principle of reasonable adjustment requires modification of the assessment process to ensure that the applicant is not disadvantaged. However, the principle relies on the modification of the type of evidence requirements for assessment, not the modification of the Learning Outcomes (LO) being assessed. The LO must remain unchanged.

Assessment judgements

28. The assessor should be a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the capability being assessed. Assessors are expected to use their professional judgement for form a conclusion about the competence of a learner undergoing assessment.

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29. There may be circumstances where a gap occurs between the learners performance and the required level. In such instances, the assessor may interview/question the learner to confirm a particular aspect of the assessment without the need for the learner to repeat the entire activity.

30. The application of professional judgement is important in determining some of the more intangible aspects of performance – behaviour, attributes, mastery and ethos.

31. SharePoint site.

Unacceptable Academic Behaviour (UAB)

32. As per Ref D, Unacceptable Academic Behaviour (UAB) include plagiarism, collusion, fabrication, cheating and academic misconduct. This includes using AI generated content (ie Chat GP) to generate assessment material.

33. DFSS has a zero tolerance to UAB. UAB is considered to be a notifiable incident and will be dealt with by disciplinary/administrative actions.

34. IAW Ref E, Wing SIs are to report all unacceptable academic behaviour incidents to the [Incident Management Team](#) as soon as practicably possible, via email and Signal app message.

35. If there are allegations or suspicion of unacceptable academic behaviour, Wing SIs are to ensure initial investigations are conducted, and information is updated to the IM team. Records of Conversation (ROC) are not to be initiated until the IM team confirm they are required.

36. Wing SIs are to gather enough information to make a justifiable decision in regards to allegations or suspicion of UAB. This could include counselling, fact finding, disciplinary and/or administrative action.

37. Wing SIs are to consult Ref E and F and contact the DFSS IM team if further guidance is required for notifiable UAB.

Assessment debrief

Assessment debriefs are to include an explanation of the marking guide and assessment checklist. Regardless of the type of assessment, are to be conducted immediately following the assessment activity.

Immediate re-assessment

38. If a candidate does not achieve the assessment criteria during the conduct of the assessment, the assessor may provide the candidate with the option to be immediately re-assessed.

39. The assessor is to provide feedback to the learner on the not achieved component and offer the opportunity for immediate reassessment during the conduct of the assessment, or to be retrained and reassessed at a later date.

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40. The learner's decision to be immediately reassessed or reassessed at a later date is to be recorded in the overall assessor feedback to learner section of the marking guide.
41. If the learner does not achieve the task on the immediate reassessment they will be required to undertake further training prior to retraining/reassessment as reflected in the paragraph below.

Retraining/Reassessment

42. All candidates assessed as Not Yet Competent (NYC) / Not Yet Satisfactory (NYS) / Not yet Demonstrated (NYD) are entitled to retraining and reassessment. Course Managers and assessors are to ensure that learners are provided sufficient retraining time and resources are allocated within a DTP.
43. All learners are to be counselled about the assessment decision, afforded feedback on their performance and if below standard, advised of any retraining and reassessment times and dates.
44. The reassessment must replicate the standards and conditions of the original assessment but may be a different assessment task from that originally attempted.
45. The reassessment may address that part where the candidate was deemed NYR or NYS, or require a full reassessment as determined by the assessor and DFSS Training Systems.
46. The aim of the formative assessment is to ensure the learner is ready to be formally assessed. The aim of the Summative assessment is to ensure the learner is 'workplace ready' and can apply all the required skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours required of their rank in the workplace. DFSS conducts Competency Based Training and Assessment (CBTA) where upon successful completion of a course the learner is deemed 'workplace ready' (competent). If it is identified during the holistic assessment that the learner has not achieved the required assessment outcomes and is **not** workplace ready, the TE (DFSS) may retrain and reassess the member on any/all associated topics. This includes any training delivered by external contractors, except if it is aligned to a national Unit of Competency.

Assessment Decision Review Process (Appeals)

47. IAW Ref G, learners can request a review of an assessment decision, in writing to the Chief or Senior Instructor (CI/SI) within seven business days of notification of the assessment result.
48. Upon receipt of a written request to review an assessment, the CI/SI is to appoint a reviewing officer who must complete the review of the assessment decision and provide recommendation to the CI/SI within seven business days. If appropriate, the CI/SI can act as the reviewing Officer.
49. An Assessor that has not been involved in the initial assessment decision will be engaged to review the original assessment decision.

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50. The learner is to be informed of the outcome via email and debriefed of the review process within two business working days of the request.
51. A learner is unable to request a Redress of Grievance if they disagree with the assessment decision. The highest level of review a learner can request is in writing to the CI/SI.
52. Evidence of all assessment decision review documentation (including emails) are to be stored in Objective under the learners file, IAW Ref C.

Automatic Assessment Decision Review

53. In the instance where 25 percent or more of candidates receive an NYR or NYS during an assessment event, an automatic review of that assessment decision is to be initiated. The Course Manager is to advise DFSS Training Systems of the result and DFSS Training Systems is to conduct a review of the assessment material.
54. Once a review has commenced all results and subsequent Training Progress Report (TPR) actions are to be suspended until the outcome of the review is known. The review is to be finalised as soon as practicable with a maximum time limit of five working days: or no later than the scheduled end of course. The assessment review may encompass the following areas:
- a. contents of the assessment tools and LMP requirements
 - b. course conduct leading up to the assessment
 - c. results of previous related assessments
 - d. result statistics (if theory assessment)
 - e. results from previous sessions and modules of the course
 - f. interaction with staff and learners by DFSS Training Systems.
55. Outcomes of the review may include the following:
- a. The assessment results may be upheld. In this case, TPR and retraining activities will recommence.
 - b. The assessment results may be overturned due to clearly identified shortfalls within the assessment material or training. New assessment tools may need to be developed and administered after any necessary retraining occurs.
 - c. The assessment results may be overturned due to other factors:
 - (1) time constraints
 - (2) resources availability/serviceability
 - (3) assessor/instructor shortfalls/constraints.

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Assessment Validation and Moderation

56. **Validation.** Validation involves the periodic review of training and assessment materials, processes and results. Validation are required to ensure the training and assessment materials align to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the LMP. Simply put, assessment validation is to do with the ‘what’ i.e. what tool is being used and is it valid to assess the competency/learning outcome IAW the LMP.

57. **Moderation.** Assessments must be valid, reliable, fair and flexible. Moderation is a form of validation that involves instructors and assessors collectively discussing, comparing, practising and agreeing on assessment methods, tools and expected outcomes. It is a process that ensures the same standards are applied to all assessment results. Simply put, moderation is to do with the ‘who’ i.e. who is undertaking the assessor role and have they been moderated in terms of a consistent assessor approach.

Assessment Validations and Moderations Responsibilities

58. **DFSS Wings** – IAW Ref G, incorporating validations and moderations into Wing battle rhythms and updating the DFSS [validation and moderation tracker](#) is the responsibility of the Wing OCs.

59. **External units.** Units delivering (exported) training on behalf of DFSS are to undertake pre-assessment moderation and validation using the Assessment - Moderation and Assessment Validation Checklists located on the DFSS Collaboration Site under Training Systems and Compliance Templates and are to include evidence of this within the Learning Review Report. Templates can be accessed [here](#).

60. IAW Ref G, if learning and assessment materials are being implemented for the first time (trial course), Wings are to conduct a more thorough validation and moderation of materials, assessments and delivery.

Validation and Moderation Tracker

61. DFSS Validation/Moderation tracker is found [here](#). This document is the only source of truth for Validations/Moderations.

Assessment Validation and Moderation Application

62. **Validation.** A current and supported assessment validation needs to exist for every summative and formative assessment. Training compliance requirements indicate that a current assessment validation report for an assessment tool/instrument must exist and be stored on Objective. An existing assessment validation report is current when:

- a. the assessment validation report is completed within **24 months** of previous assessment validation
- b. the LMP version, assessment criteria, teaching points and/or assessment tools have not changed since the previous validation.

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63. **Moderation.** Each and every assessor is required to participate in a moderation activity at least twice per calendar year. Assessment Moderation must be conducted prior to the next assessment event/activity when:

- a. the current assessor team are not the same as the assessors previously recorded on the existing moderation report
- b. the assessment tool/s or LMP assessment criteria have changed
- c. the assessor team have not conducted at least two Assessment Moderations in the same calendar year
- d. the existing moderation report was conducted more than **six months** prior to assessment commencement.

Process for validation

64. DFSS Training Systems are to be engaged prior to conducting a validation activity. This will enable DFSS Training Systems to provide advice and guidance in the achievement of training and assessment compliance.

65. Key steps for the conduct of validation activities:

- a. convene a validation review panel consisting of the SME, Instructors and Assessors, and a DFSS Training Systems representative
- b. record panel findings using the [Assessment Validation Checklist](#)
- c. crosscheck that all assessment tools align with the Learning Management Package (LMP) using the Assessment Validation Checklist
- d. assign tasks to course staff as required as a result of the findings from the validation review.

66. Validations paperwork is to be stored in IAW Ref B.

Process for Assessor Moderation

67. DFSS Training Systems is to be engaged prior to conducting a moderation activity. This will enable DFSS Training Systems to provide advice and guidance in the achievement of training and assessment compliance.

68. The following list identifies the key steps for the conduct of moderation activities:

- a. a meeting is formed comprising of all assessors involved in a specific assessment activity, a lead assessor is to be appointed at this point in time
- b. the Marking Guide and scenario information relevant to the assessment is reviewed IOT ensure that all assessors are cognisant of the contents of the documentation, in particular the conditions and standards that must be met

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- c. variables such as night activities, assessment activity frequency, quantity of assessment activities required for a course session are to be discussed and agreed to
 - d. record the outcomes of the meeting using the [Assessment Moderation checklist](#).
69. Moderation paperwork is to be stored IAW Ref B.

External Assessors

70. Visiting Assessors are to be current in the assessor qualifications IAW reference A or should be utilised as an SME with QA support. Visiting Assessors are to participate in an Assessment Moderation activity prior to assessment conduct. This will ensure learners are not disadvantaged when assessments are delivered by various assessors.

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