

**Taet 3**

**Certificate IV Training and Assessment**

**(TAE40116)**

**TAEASS402 Assess Competence**

**Learner Guide**

| Unit Requirements | |
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| ELEMENT | PERFORMANCE CRITERIA |
| Elements describe the essential outcomes. | Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element. |
| 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  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  1.3 Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and document any changes to the assessment instruments, where required  1.4 Determine opportunities for evidence-gathering in actual or simulated activities, through consultation with the candidate and relevant personnel  1.5 Conduct a candidate briefing and explain, discuss and agree on the details of the planned assessment  1.6 Arrange identified material and physical resource requirements  1.7 Identify any specialist support requirements for the assessment, and organise if necessary |
| 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  2.2 Apply the principles of assessment and rules of evidence in gathering quality evidence |
| 3. Support the candidate | 3.1 Discuss and guide candidates in gathering your own evidence to support the recognition of prior learning (RPL).  3.2 Use appropriate communication and interpersonal skills to develop a professional relationship with the candidate that reflects sensitivity to individual differences and enables two-way feedback  3.3 Make decisions on reasonable adjustments with the candidate, based on the candidate’s needs and characteristics  3.4 Access specialist support, if required, in accordance with the assessment plan  3.5 Address any workplace health and safety (WHS) risk to a person or equipment immediately |
| 4. Make the assessment decision | 4.1 Assess the collected evidence, and to evaluate whether it reflects the evidence required to demonstrate competence  4.2 Use judgement to infer whether competence has been demonstrated, based on the available evidence  4.3 Make the assessment decision in line with agreed assessment procedures and according to the agreed assessment plan  4.4 Provide clear and constructive feedback to the candidate regarding the assessment decision, and clearly document follow-up, if required |
| 5. Record and report the assessment decision | 5.1 Record assessment outcomes promptly and accurately  5.2 Complete and submit required assessment documentation, according to assessment procedures and confidentiality conventions  5.3 Inform other relevant parties of the assessment decision, according to confidentiality conventions |
| 6. Review the assessment process | 6.1 Review the assessment process in consultation with candidates and other relevant people to improve future practice  6.2 Document and record the review according to relevant assessment system policies and procedures. |

**Performance Evidence:**

* assessment of at least five candidates within the vocational education and training (VET) context against at least one endorsed or accredited unit of competency according to the organisation's assessment processes and practices.
* using recognition of prior learning (RPL) processes in the assessment of at least one candidate (which may be one of the five candidates above)
* making reasonable adjustments in the assessment of at least one candidate.

**Knowledge Evidence:**

* competency-based assessment, including:
* VET as a competency-based system
* how competency- based assessment differs from other types of assessment
* competency standards as the basis of qualifications
* structure and application of competency standards
* the principles of assessment and how they are applied
* the distinction between assessment tools and assessment instruments
* the rules of evidence and how they are applied
* the range of assessment purposes and assessment contexts, including RPL
* different assessment methods, including suitability for gathering various types of evidence, suitability for the content of units, and resource requirements and associated costs
* reasonable adjustments and when they are applicable
* types and forms of evidence, including assessment instruments that are relevant to gathering different types of evidence used in competency-based assessment, including RPL
* The training and assessment strategies, including policies and procedures established by the RTO:
* RPL policies and procedures
* cultural sensitivity and equity considerations in assessment activities
* current legislative requirements relevant to the assessor and the assessment process – EO, Confidentiality, Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) responsibilities associated with assessing competence, including requirements for reporting hazards and incidents, emergency procedures, use of personal protective equipment and sources of WHS information.

**Introduction**

The critical focus of this unit is on how the assessor:

* interprets the collected evidence and makes a judgement of competence against the specified competency standards
* applies the principles of assessment and rules of evidence.
* demonstrates the professional relationship between assessor and candidate/s
* demonstrates the skills needed to support this relationship.
* follows the RTO’s policies and procedures

The competency standards for assessment describe the skills needed by assessors. The Code of Practice describes the ethics that are needed. Ethics deals with issues like confidentiality, support, discrimination, appeal mechanisms and objective judgements. Consider the following questions:

1. How can an assessor ensure objectivity in the assessment process?

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1. Who should have access to the assessment results?

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1. What rules and procedures must the assessor follow during the assessment process and whilst collecting evidence of competence?

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### **Code of Practice for assessors**

The Code of Practice detailed below supports professionally responsible and ethical assessment practice and to guide assessors in the responsibilities of their work. This code is loosely based on an international code developed by the National Council for Measurement in Education. The code reinforces the performance outcomes of the Training and Assessment Training Package (TAE40116) assessment units.

The differing needs and requirements of the candidates, the local enterprise/s and/or industry are identified and handled with sensitivity.

Potential forms of conflict of interest in the assessment process and/or outcomes are identified, and appropriate referrals are made, if necessary.

All forms of harassment are avoided throughout the assessment process and in the review and reporting of assessment outcomes.

The rights of candidates are protected during and after the assessment process.

Candidates are made aware of their rights and processes of appeal.

Personal or interpersonal factors that are irrelevant to the assessment of competence must not influence the assessment outcomes.

Evidence is verified against the rules of evidence.

Assessment decisions are based on available evidence that can be produced and verified by another assessor.

Assessments are conducted within the boundaries of the assessment system policies and procedures.

Formal agreement is obtained from candidates and the assessor that the assessment was carried out in accordance with agreed procedures.

Assessment systems and tools are consistent with equal opportunity legislation.

Candidates are informed of all assessment reporting processes prior to the assessment.

Candidates are informed of all known potential consequences of assessment decisions, prior to the assessment.

Confidentiality is maintained regarding assessment decisions/outcomes and records of individual assessment outcomes which identify personal details are only released with the written permission of the candidate/s.

Assessment outcomes are used consistently with the purposes explained to candidates.

Self‑assessments are periodically conducted to ensure current competence against the Training and Assessment Training Package (TAE16) competency standards.

Professional development opportunities are identified and sought.

Opportunities for networking amongst assessors are created and maintained.

Opportunities are created for technical assistance in planning, conducting and reviewing assessment practice and participating in validation.

As an assessor you may find yourself in difficult situations where you feel you are in a position of power and can manipulate others, or equally others may try and manipulate you.

**Learning Activity 1.**

**Respond to the following ethical dilemmas faced by assessors. What ethical issues arise**?

1. Mary is someone you have worked with before. You know her to be competent and efficient in her work. Your boss has told you she doesn't like Mary and does not want her to progress higher through the company as he doesn’t believe that she has the necessary interpersonal skills to be a supervisor. The assessment system is linked to promotion and pay rises. You have been appointed by the Interstate Manager to assess Mary.

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1. You have always found Alex to be a very friendly enthusiastic work mate. You have been assigned to conduct Alex's assessment for promotion. He does however make mistakes which often go unnoticed by management.

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1. There is a great deal of uncertainty in the organisation about a management decision which the union is disputing. You are about to assess John who represents the views of the organisation. You are strongly aligned with the union’s viewpoint.

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**Learning Activity 2.**

**Overview of the process: These are the basic steps for carrying out an assessment.**

Give feedback

Brief the candidate

Conducting assessments

Gather evidence

Make decision

Evaluate evidence

1. What does the assessor have to do at each step? What information does the assessor need for each step?

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**Information for the candidate**

What information are you obliged to provide to the candidate prior to the assessment? There are certain documents and issues that need to be raised with the candidate, so they know exactly what to expect. As it is a participatory process, the candidate must have access to all information up front.

1. Why should the candidate have access to information other than the time and place of the assessment?

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1. What information do you need to provide to the candidate? List as much as you can think of in terms of the planning, conducting and reviewing of the assessment process.

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1. Why should a review/appeal mechanism exist in the organisation conducting the assessment? What should its responsibilities be?

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**Learning Activity 3.**

**What does the candidate need to know about the assessment?**

A workplace assessment requires good planning and organisation, and part of that planning is that the candidate knows exactly what is going to happen before, during and after the assessment.

What should be included in the briefing session for the candidate?

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Learning Activity 4 Communication

In the briefing session the assessor needs to:

* Encourage participation from the candidate
* Explain the process carefully
* Put the candidate at ease
* Explain the purpose, context and process of the assessment

1. What do you think is the most important thing to communicate to the assessment candidate? How will you communicate this?

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**A participatory process**

In traditional assessment the candidate is told when they are going to be assessed and how they are to be assessed. They have no power over the process.

Competency based assessment is very different. It is not a test. It is meant to confirm that the candidate can do the job, that they are competent. That means that the candidate participates in the process they should not feel scared by the process.

1. What is the role of the assessor in a competency-based assessment?

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1. What is the role of the candidate in a competency-based assessment?

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**Learning Activity 5**

**Partner arrangements**

In order to make assessment work, Registered Training Organisations need to work with enterprises. Assessors need the skills to approach the workplace appropriately, follow the organisation’s requirements of competence, and incorporate the assessment into the job function of the candidate.

Read the following case study.

CASE STUDY

Francesca is going to conduct an assessment at a factory that produces steel piping. The candidate, Joel has let her know he is ready. Francesca arranges a date and time with Joel when she will come to conduct the observation portion of the assessment on the job. Joel mentions it to his boss who says that sounds fine, but does not follow up any more than that. Joel assumes that Francesca will organise the details as her Registered Training Organisation has been working in partnership with his company for a while.

On the day of the assessment, Francesca arrives at the designated time and meets Joel. They begin the observation portion of the assessment. Joel's boss walks by his desk at the time and asks what is going on. It is the middle of the observation and Francesca quickly explains, embarrassed and hoping the boss will go away. He does walk away, but he is very unimpressed, he had booked a meeting with a client and wanted Joel to attend, not knowing he was being assessed.

Joel is rattled by the boss appearing and makes a few mistakes in his performance. Francesca is embarrassed and annoyed that Joel did not organise things. After the observation she goes to explain to the boss that she thought Joel would organise his time better. The boss lets her know that the system needs to better organised, someone must take control of organising these activities, because it can't work otherwise.

Francesca discusses with Joel the results of the assessment, and they decide because of the interruption that they will re-do the observation in a few days. Francesca drives back to her office concerned by the events of the day, because forming these partnerships takes time, and when work is disrupted and things don't go well, it does not reflect well on the training organisation.

**Now please answer these questions:**

1. What should Francesca have done prior to the assessment?

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1. Whose responsibility is it to keep documentation of the assessment in a partnership arrangement?

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1. What would you have done if you were assessing Joel, to organise things better?

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Learning Activity 6

**Checking for understanding**

How do you know someone has understood an arrangement? Often you won't know they didn't understand until it is too late, until they have made a mistake, or not turned up and so on.

Remember that before an assessment, the candidate may be nervous and uncomfortable so you have to make sure that they have understood.

1. How can you check that the candidate understands the assessment arrangements, the methods to be used, the requirements of the individual and organisation and the resources required?

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* Did they know the time and the place for the assessment?
* Could they explain the methods and process for assessment?
* Were your instructions clear and specific?
* Is there anything you should have included but didn’t?
* What is the key to making your information and communication understood?

**Learning Activity 7**

**Creating a comfortable environment**

###### **How can you make the environment for assessment positive and supportive?**

###### Read this case study and answer the questions.

Larry has conducted some workplace assessments. He believes himself to be a good and fair assessor, and he regularly reviews his assessment methods and tools against the principles of assessment and evidence. He prefers not to engage in social chatting with the candidate, as he believes the assessment process is a serious one and should be treated as such. He keeps a certain distance from the candidate, thinking that he will distract them from the task if he takes too much time, or engages them in other activities or conversation. He also does not like to talk to the candidate much during the assessment and doesn’t let them know how they are going, because he does not want to give them the impression they are doing well or badly until they have completed all parts of the assessment.

Larry is surprised when his employer asks for a meeting with him saying that the evaluations of some of his candidates have been less than positive.

1. What do you think the evaluations might say?

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2. If you were Larry’s employer, what would you do to help him change his approach?

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3. How do you think Larry should behave when the candidate is undergoing the assessment?

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**Learning Activity 8**

**When is the candidate ready?**

Assessment for qualification purposes is about confirming competence. Ideally all assessments should be positive. If the candidate is not ready they should not complete the assessment. If they will never be ready they should be counselled into another position.

1. What might cause a candidate to declare they are ready for assessment? For example, factors at work or in their personal lives which might make them eager to move through assessment rapidly.

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1. As the assessor, what will you do if someone tells you they are ready for assessment, but you don't believe they are?

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**Read the following example and answer the questions on the following page**.

EXAMPLE

Bianca has not attended any formal training in a classroom for years. She has been reluctant to go to the training for the new computer being installed in her office, but sees no alternative. As it turns out, she has excelled in the group, picked things up very quickly and is using her new computer every day. She has to be assessed using the computer to achieve the relevant qualification and therefore get a pay rise.

You are not concerned about assessing her as she is clearly so competent and you have had positive feedback from a number of people. The assessment process consists of an observation, some discussion and review of some documents previously prepared by Bianca coupled with a supervisor’s report. You are surprised when Bianca has still not approached you to organise the assessment three weeks after the course is finished.

You decide to go and talk to her about it and she insists she is just not ready, even though you can see from just looking at her desk that there are numerous documents produced by the very computer she will be assessed on.

Finally you manage to encourage her enough to undertake assessment. On the morning of your meeting set for that afternoon, Bianca calls to say she is not well and cannot do the assessment. This is very strange, as someone in the corridor had just mentioned seeing her and did not say anything about her being unwell. Something about the assessment is obviously bothering her a great deal.

1. What are you going to do?

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2. How should you approach Bianca and what will you say to help her?

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3. How far should an assessor go in encouraging a candidate to undertake assessment?

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**Learning Activity** **9 Mistakes assessors make**

When someone is judging information, it is very easy to make common judgement errors. Read the case study below and answer the questions.

**CASE STUDY**

Paul is assessing a group of workers at a manufacturing firm. When he assesses them, the following incidents occur:

1. Janet is working at the computer and accidentally prints out the wrong document. Paul is recording some information from a response to a question and does not notice and Janet doesn't tell him.
2. Paul is looking forward to assessing Selena as they get on well and are good friends, and he is sure she will do well. He has trained her in the past and found her to be very competent and she understood him easily. They run through the assessment quickly and Paul is happy that she did so well.
3. To save time, Paul decides to assess three of the candidates at once on a simple task they all need to carry out. He is confident that he can record all the results at the same time as it is a simple task which he has assessed several times before.

###### In each of these scenes it is possible that Paul has committed assessor errors. In each case what possible error could occur, such as failing to observe or record, making assumptions etc?

A)

B)

C)

**Learning Activity 10**

**Documenting the assessment**

1. It is important that you keep thorough documentation of how you reached an assessment decision. Why?

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The critical information that the RTO must record on their student data base on assessment is:

* The candidate’ details – first, middle and last name. Date of birth. Address, contact telephone numbers (email if required for communication of feedback).
* The units of competency being assessed – unit code.
* Qualification title and code that the assessment result relates to.
* Results of the assessment – Competency Achieved C.A. or not yet competent N.Y.C. and date of the assessment.
* Examples of evidence collected for a range of candidates should be kept by the RTO for validation exercises/meetings and compliance auditing,

2. Does the RTO have to keep hard copies of all the students’ assessments?

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3. RTOs have to retain records of the assessment for 30 years? Why so long?

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4. .Why is it recommended that students should acknowledge receipt of results by signing the assessment documentation as well as the assessor?

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**Learning Activity 11**

**What do you consider when you are making your decision?**

When you are weighing up all the evidence that you have gathered in the assessment, you are evaluating the evidence against several factors:

1. The performance criteria and elements of the competency standard
2. The required knowledge and skills of the competency standard
3. The dimensions of competency
4. The rules of evidence
5. The principles of assessment

If you can visualise it, you are overlaying all these factors affecting evidence over each other in order to reach an accurate conclusion about competence.

**This checklist will help you to focus on how you make an assessment decision.**

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| **Is the evidence that I have gathered:** | **YES** | **NO** |
| Assessing a broad and relevant range of knowledge and skills? |  |  |
| Demonstrating the workplace application of skills and knowledge? |  |  |
| Sufficient and gathered on a number of occasions and in a range of contexts? |  |  |
| Focusing on the appropriate areas of competence and skills, and AQF level? |  |  |
| Provided through assessment of realistic workplace experiences? |  |  |
| Demonstrating the ability of the candidate to transfer skills to other situations? |  |  |
| Gathered from clearly stated criteria that is followed during the assessment? |  |  |

**Learning Activity 12** **Feedback**

Assessment should be a confirmation of competence. If the process has been planned adequately, ideally no-one should be found not to be competent. If the candidate is not ready they should have more time, if they will never be ready, they should be counseled and directed to another competency. However, it often does not work that way and the assessor has to be able to convey negative feedback in a positive way.

Consider this case study and answer the questions:

CASE STUDY

Rebecca is an assessor who is new at the job. She has just assessed Rupert who she thinks is a young, nervous man, recently employed in the company. She really likes him and wants him to do well. He has made it quite clear that the assessment is the most terrifying thing he has had to do, but Rebecca has found him not yet competent on their first competency standard. She is nervous about telling him and unsure as to what his response might be.

She hopes she did not give him the wrong impression when she was being positive about his work, she did not want to discourage him. She has organised a meeting with him to tell him what the outcome of the assessment has been. She has observed him at work, collected third party reports and reviewed a portfolio of products that he has supplied. Unfortunately, only the performance of the task was adequate, so the other parts need to be re-assessed following some training.

Rupert was really nervous about the assessment and is relieved at having completed it. He really got the impression from Rebecca that he had been found competent. They have scheduled a meeting to discuss the outcomes of the assessment, and he is convinced he will have been found competent and Rebecca will tell him so. He absolutely cannot do the assessment again, it was too nerve racking, he just wants to get back to work.

**Learning Activity 12 Cont’d**

1. How is this meeting likely to progress? What will be Rupert's reaction to Rebecca's news?

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2. How should Rebecca tell Rupert what has happened and what will happen to overcome the gaps in competency?

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1. What could Rebecca do differently next time to make this process less painful for both of them?

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Learning Activity 13

**What do you do if the candidate is not yet competent?**

During the planning of the assessment, you should have provided the candidate with information about what happens if they are not yet competent. Depending on the skill or job being assessed, it is possible that the person will not have to be re-assessed on the entire assessment, just the portion that they did not complete properly.

For example, if someone is being assessed driving a taxi, and they have competently driven the taxi to standard, and can clearly handle it in different conditions, but they did not recognise all the street signs correctly, how would you reassess them?

The following examples are of candidates who have been found not yet competent in an assessment. In each one, do you think just the portion could be re-assessed or does the whole assessment need to done again?

1. If someone is being assessed using a computer to produce documents, and they are found not competent in printing out the document, but everything they did on the computer was correct, do you assess the whole process or just the printing?

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1. Being assessed against a Frontline Management competency standard, the candidate provides an adequate portfolio of evidence, amongst other pieces of evidence, but one of the reports is unclear and you cannot find them competent on all aspects of the competency, do you re-assess the whole portfolio, or just a portion?

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1. Someone driving a forklift can turn it on, operate the safety equipment, drive it forward, load a pallet competently. However, when they have to reverse it, they crash into a pile of bins. Do you assess the whole performance again, or just the reversing?

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**Learning Activity 14**

**Analysing reasons for non-competence**

It is possible that you might have a candidate who repeats the assessment for a competency a number of times but is never competent.

1. What should you do in these situations?

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2. What reasons might exist for a candidate to not achieve competency in an area of assessment?

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3. Think about all the factors that might contribute, for example, Language Literacy & Numeracy (LL&N), the assessor characteristics, inappropriate assessment methods and so on.

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**Learning Activity 15**

**Appeal and review processes**

If a candidate has been found not yet competent and they feel the assessment was unfair, or not correct then they have the right to make an appeal.

All Registered Training Organisations need to have an established appeals process.

It is your responsibility as assessor to inform the candidate of the processes available should they feel that the assessment did not meet the principals of assessment or that the assessor did not comply with the Code of Conduct for Assessors.

1. Who do you think should be involved in an appeals/review mechanism?

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1. What information should be provided for the appeal/review group?

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1. Who should present the information and in what format? What are the steps in the appeals process in your organisation? If you don’t’ have one, what should the steps be?

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