

Name: Assessment Policy and Procedures
Endorsed by: Continuous Improvement Committee
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PURPOSE

This policy and procedure ensure that Benchmark College's assessment policy and procedure meets the requirements of all relevant endorsed Training Packages and outcomes specified in Nationally Recognised Qualifications and units of competency.

This document outlines Benchmark College's assessment practices and ensures that they are in accordance with regulatory requirements, guidelines and policies issued through ASQA and assessment criterion contained within the relevant National Training Packages.

SCOPE

The Assessment Policy and Procedure is applied to all qualifications and units of competence listed under Benchmark College's Scope of Registration and is relevant to all staff involved in the design, implementation, documentation and recording of assessment tasks and evidence to offer assessment opportunities to enrolled students.

This policy and procedure specifically covers;

- Assessment activities being conducted against nationally recognised units of competence.
- Assessment Tools developed by Benchmark College to meet the requirements of a units of competence.
- Recognition of Prior Learning.

It provides guidelines for Benchmark College and its assessors to;

- Meet regulatory compliance including the Standards as specified by the National VET Regulator.
- Provide a standardised and systematic process to managing Benchmark College assessment processes.
- Meet student services standards and the principles of access & equity.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Competency Mapping Template
- Access & Equity Policy & Procedures
- Validation Policy and Procedures
- Validation and Moderation Tool
- Student Handbook and Course Guides
- Training and Assessment Strategy Policy and Procedures
- Training Package Transition Policy and Procedures
- Recognition Policy & Procedures
- Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures
- Assessment Tools and Recognition Kits
- Verification Consent & Credit Transfer form
- Student Handbook
- Quality Training & Assessment Policy
- VET Trainer and Assessor profile

RELEVANT STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

This Assessment Policy and Procedure document addresses assessment requirements of Standards 1 and 2 of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 and the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

- Smart and Skilled Contract Terms and Conditions (current)
- Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines (current)

DEFINITIONS

Assessment	Assessment means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace, as specified in a training package or VET accredited course ¹ . Assessment methodology may include but is not limited to question and answer tasks, observational assessment, analysis of case studies, workplace assessment, research and project tasks.
Assessment Tool	Assessment components which include: the context and conditions for the assessment, the tasks to be administered to the learner, an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the learner and the evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance (i.e. the assessment decision making rules). It also includes the administration, recording and reporting requirements.
Assessment System	Assessment system is a coordinated set of documented policies and procedures (including assessment materials and tools) that ensure assessments are consistent and are based on the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence ² .
Quality Assessment	Quality assessment is the collection and evaluation of evidence to ensure that a student's competency is assessed according to the 'rules of evidence'.
UoC	Unit of Competence

¹ Commonwealth of Australia *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 - Glossary*

² Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 - Glossary

POLICY

1 Assessment System

Benchmark College recognises that assessment is a core service offered to our students (learners) and is at the centre of our operation as a Registered Training Organisation to provide quality training and assessment. Benchmark College implements an assessment system (including recognition of learning) that ensures that the skills and knowledge of students are assessed using the following determinants:

- That the assessment system complies with the assessment requirements of the relevant training package or VET accredited course.
- Assessment methods and practices are relevant to the needs of industry and informed by industry engagement.
- Assessment meets the Principles of Assessment.
- Evidence submitted for assessment is guided by the Rules of Evidence prior to marking.
- Assessment is conducted by qualified Assessors.

2 Quality Assessment

Assessment involves collecting and interpreting evidence submitted by a student in order for a qualified assessor to make a decision to determine current competency. *Quality assessment* is the collection and evaluation of evidence to ensure that a student's competency is assessed according to the 'rules of evidence' and using the following guidelines:

- That assessment is conducted in accordance with the Principles of Assessment.
- That evidence submitted for Assessment is guided by the Rules of Evidence.
- That evidence is evaluated in terms of the four dimensions of competency - task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills.
- That assessment decisions are based on the competency requirements, addressing the applicable Unit of Competence, including knowledge and performance evidence and in accordance with assessment conditions.
- If applicable, target industry or enterprise requirements are contextualised and integrated within the assessment itself.

2.1 Principles of Assessment³

In the delivery of assessment services, Benchmark College applies the Principles of Assessment:

- **Validity.** Any assessment decision made by Benchmark College is justified, based on the evidence of performance of the individual learner.

Validity requires:

- assessment against the unit/s of competency and the associated assessment requirements covers the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance;
- assessment of knowledge and skills is integrated with their practical application;
- assessment to be based on evidence that demonstrates that a learner could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations; and
- judgement of competence is based on evidence of learner performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency and associated assessment requirements.

³ Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, Standard 1, Clause 1.8

- **Reliability.** Evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.
- **Flexibility.** Assessment is flexible to the individual learner by:
 - reflecting the learner's needs;
 - assessing competencies held by the learner no matter how or where they have been acquired; and
 - drawing from a range of assessment methods and using those that are appropriate to the context, the unit of competency and associated assessment requirements, and the individual.
- **Fairness.** The individual learner's needs are considered in the assessment process.
 - Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied by Benchmark College to take into account the individual learner's needs.
 - Benchmark College informs the learner about the assessment process, and provides the learner with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be reassessed if necessary.

2.2 Rules of Evidence⁴

In collecting evidence, Benchmark College applies the rules of evidence to inform the learning and assessment strategy. Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

- **Sufficiency.** The assessor is assured that the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence enables a judgement to be made of a learner's competency.
- **Validity.** The assessor is assured that the learner has the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements.
- **Authenticity.** The assessor is assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work.
- **Currency.** The assessor is assured that the assessment evidence demonstrates current competency. This requires the assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past.

⁴ Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, Standard 1, Clause 1.8

2.3 Competency based assessment

Benchmark College utilises competency-based assessments. Competency based assessment is a system of collecting evidence about a person's performance to a pre-set standard and forms the framework for quality assessment. The emphasis is placed on what a person can do (outcome), rather than comparing a person's achievement to others. There is no concept of pass or fail, only competent (C) or not yet competent (NYC). The training is focused and allows for greater participation of the client in the assessment process.

Competency based assessment can occur at different prescheduled intervals throughout the assessment process.

- *Diagnostic* also known as pre-assessment provides information about prior knowledge and skills. This baseline information may diagnose a problem or training requirement.
- *Formative* assessment assists and supports training by monitoring and advising clients of their performance and rate of progress against the training outcomes. This provides feedback to the client, supervisor and trainer on what development activities are needed to achieve the required competencies.
- *Summative* assessment is cumulative evaluation of achievement of the Training outcome. Often conducted in the workplace, summative assessment confirms achievement of the competency requirements which will result in the Statement of Attainment or Qualification.

2.4 Industry Consultation

Benchmark College is well placed to leverage off current industry associations to incorporate industry requirements into the assessment process. Consultation with enterprises or industry will provide information about assessment requirements relevant to workplaces. Regulatory requirements that relate to specific units of competence will be incorporated to ensure our students are well prepared for their workplace duties.

2.5 The Assessor

The primary role of the assessor is to objectively assess and judge a Student's knowledge and evidence of competence against a set of standards. In essence, an assessor must:

- Ensure the safety of the personnel involved in the assessment activity is maintained at all times
- Interpret and understand the performance criteria and evidence guides
- Select appropriate assessment methods
- Select and/or develop appropriate assessment materials
- Ensure that evidence meets the UoC requirements
- Ensure that the evidence is valid, authentic, consistent, current and sufficient
- Make fair and objective judgements

2.5.1 Competence of Assessors

In accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, assessors are required to hold the assessor credentials and the vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed⁵:

Benchmark College's Training and Engagement Manager ensures that each assessor is appropriately qualified as prescribed in the Standards for RTO's 2015 Clause 1.13, 1.14 and Schedule 1.

Further information can be found in Benchmark College's Staff Recruitment Policy and Procedure and Quality Training and Assessment Policy.

⁵ Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, Standard 1, Clauses 1.13 – 1.25

2.5.2 Assessment on behalf of Benchmark College

Benchmark College is ultimately responsible for ensuring quality of assessment within the organisation and scope of registration, regardless of any third-party arrangements where assessment is delivered on Benchmark's behalf⁶.

2.6 Assessment Information

Assessment information is the information provided to both learners and assessors to guide the required resources, conduct of the assessment and the completion of assessment activities. This information is used to draw out a response from a learner.

Examples of assessment information include:

- Instructions to set the framework for the activity such as who, what, where, when and how.
- The expected outcomes refer to the 'what' and it is critical that from reading the assessment information, the required (expected) outcome is straight forward and in line with the learner's preparation during learning or through other competency development pathways.
- Scenario information includes information that sets the context for a simulated assessment activity. This may be a simple case study or a deep scenario which requires analysis and interpretation. It is important to note that the higher the AQF qualification level, the greater the requirement to analyse and apply cognitive skills to produce workplace outcomes. Scenario information used to support assessment at a Diploma level, for example, should be relatively deep and complex to allow the learner to exercise their analytical skills and produce viable workplace products and outcomes.
- Industry information includes items such as codes of practice, policies and procedures, legislation and regulations. Whilst this may not be provided in hard copy to every learner, they should be provided contacts, web sites or hyperlinks to access this information. Electronic copies of industry information are also acceptable.

Benchmark College staff will prepare the assessment information for all assessment activities to provide to the Assessor and Student. These assessment activities are consistently validated according to Benchmark College's *Validation Policy and Procedure*.

At Benchmark College the assessment activities are to be supported by clear assessment instructions and information to maintain a reliable, valid and authentic assessment. Ultimately, the quality of assessment outcomes produced by a student will be directly affected by the quality of the information provided at the commencement of the activity.

2.7 Assessment Tools

Assessment tools are the collection of methods (electronic or hard copy) used to assess a student knowledge and skill and gather evidence about a student's competence against a unit of competency. All developed assessment tools support the principles of assessment and rules of evidence.

Assessment strategies and tools are developed in consultation with industry, including validation processes. Each Assessment tool is developed and mapped to meet the requirements of industry Training Packages and fit with the requirements of the target industry and enterprise.

When units of competence are associated with licensing requirements, Trainers and Assessors will inform students verbally and in writing of the additional requirements this imposes prior to commencing the unit.

⁶ Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, Standard 2

The following are examples of assessment tools which may be incorporated into an assessment strategy to meet the Training Package and industry requirements, the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment:

- Multiple Choice questions
- Case studies, simulation exercises or role-plays
- Portfolios, for example collections of work samples by the student
- Third Party Reports
- Written questions
- Projects
- Observations
- Journal/log books

This list of assessment tools identifies only a small number of assessment tools which are in use in the VET sector today. These are, however, the more common tools and support holistic assessment methods favoured by Benchmark College.

2.8 Assessment Context

Benchmark College recognises the importance of establishing the context for students during their assessment. Assessment context refers to both the physical and non-physical environment, in which skills and knowledge are assessed. This may be a workplace or simulated workplace environment, such as an office setting or a manufacturing workshop. The non-physical environment refers to things such as workplace policy and procedure, workplace culture and equipment and workplace staff. Many units of competence may be applied in any workplace such as skills and knowledge relating to workplace safety or leadership.

Students are to be provided with the right context to undertake their assessment activities. To achieve this, we will apply the following strategies:

- If possible incorporate the student's own workplace policies and procedures into an assessment.
- Conduct the assessment in the student's workplace whilst performing workplace tasks, using equipment and interacting with other staff, which are relevant to the unit of competency.
- Integrate relevant industry codes of practice, charters, and other industry information into the assessment.
- Incorporate relevant job descriptions and workplace procedures and forms for students to align with situations within case studies and simulated workplace scenarios.
- Provide a realistic simulated workplace situation within Benchmark College facilities.

3 Recognition

3.1 Recognition of Prior Learning

Benchmark College offers each student the opportunity to access and seek recognition of their prior learning. Further information is available from Benchmark College's *'Recognition Policy and Procedure'*.

3.2 Credit Transfer

Benchmark College offers each students the opportunity to apply for credit transfer for previous units of competency attained from other RTO's. Further information is available from Benchmark College's *'Recognition Policy and Procedure'*.

4 Reasonable Adjustments to assessment

Students have the right to apply for and receive adjustment to assessment activities to accommodate individual/special needs. Applications for adjustment can be provided at enrolment and/or submitted to the Training and Engagement Manager prior to the commencement of any unit of competency.

Adjustments to assessment cannot compromise the integrity of assessment, elements and performance criteria and assessment conditions of the unit of competency.

Adjustments to assessment will not provide an unfair advantage / disadvantage to students.

5 Assessment Validation

Benchmark College will facilitate regular assessment validation opportunities to maintain quality assessment practice and methods and to continuously improve assessment strategies. Further information is available from Benchmark College's 'Validation Policy and Procedure'.

6 Assessment Preparation

Prior to the conducting of an assessment, students are informed of the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process itself. This includes informing the student about the number and types of assessments, the assessment method(s) and alternative assessment methods which are available, to provide fairness and flexibility to students with special needs. Information will also be included at the start of each unit or course as to the assessment processes, number of assessments, types of assessment and the individual weighting of each assessment, if applicable.

All assessments are subject to a risk assessment process. Where applicable, Safe Work Method Statements or other controls to mitigate risk to any health and safety hazards which may affect the students or assessor may be implemented.

7 Assessment Submission

All assessments submitted must include a completed student submission sheet and assessment record sheet, for the purposes of student identification, assessment methods and declaration.

8 Assessment Marking

When marking assessments, Assessors will make comments, provide genuine feedback for the entire assessment are marked in order of submission date.

Assessment outcomes are recorded as one of the following:

- i. Partially Completed - Student is deemed Partially Completed when they have submitted a portion of the Assessment tasks required for a unit of competency.
- ii. Competency Achieved - Student is deemed 'competent' when they have consistently demonstrated their skills and knowledge to the standard required in the workplace, for a full unit/module.
- iii. Competency Not Achieved – Student is deemed 'Competency Not Achieved' when they are unable/have not demonstrated appropriate competence in accordance with the minimum performance standards for a full unit.

9 Feedback

Students will be given feedback from their assessor on the outcomes of assessment . Trainers and Assessors provide formal and informal feedback to students about the assessment processes used throughout its qualifications, courses and units of competency.

10 Assessment Attempts

Student's tuition fees include two assessment attempts. This means if a student is found Not Yet Satisfactory (NYS) for an assessment task, a student can re-submit this assessment task a second time without charge. Further assessment attempts will incur a fee for each assessment re-submission. Refer to the Benchmark College Fees and Charges Policy for more information.

11 Re-assessment

When a student's submitted assessments are marked as 'Not Satisfactory', students will be provided feedback by their Assessor on the parts of the assessment which need to be reviewed and addressed.

Students are supported and given feedback by the Assessor in order to address the gaps and develop their skills and knowledge in preparation for resubmission. This will be undertaken within the scheduled training plan or may be completed under alternative arrangements agreed between the student and the assessor.

In all circumstances, the re-assessment is to be a planned activity that is conducted in accordance with the assessment procedures, unit assessment requirements, principles of assessment and rules of evidence.

In the event that all options are exhausted, Benchmark College will record the unit of competency as not yet competent against the student's enrolment record.

12 Plagiarism, Collusion and Cheating

Students cannot submit any piece of work for assessment that is not entirely their own work. Students cannot submit the same piece of work for assessment as another Student.

The cases of plagiarism, cheating and collusion will be treated in a serious matter and will be reviewed and treated on a case by case basis by the Training and Engagement Manager. When investigated any incidents, student's records will be noted and the following actions may occur:

- i. Verbal or written warning
- ii. Receiving a "Not Yet Satisfactory" result for the assessment task
Suspension from the course

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

The following procedure is applied for conducting assessments:

Step 1: Prepare for assessment.

The assessor:

- Establishes the context and purpose of the evidence to be collected.
- Identifies and analyses the unit(s) of competency, Training Package and the Benchmark College assessment strategy to identify the evidence requirements.
- Reviews the assessment tools and confirm their currency and adequacy in meeting the rules of evidence.
- Informs and encourages student(s) to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Credit Transfer (CT) where relevant.

Step 2: Prepare the Student

The assessor meets with the student and:

- Explains the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process.
- Explains the unit/s of competency to be assessed and the evidence to be collected.
- Outlines the assessment procedure and the preparation the student should undertake and answer any questions the student may have.
- Assesses the needs of the student and, where applicable, negotiate reasonable adjustment for assessing people with disabilities without compromising the competency outcomes.
- Seeks feedback regarding the student's understanding of the unit/s of competency, evidence requirements and assessment process.
- Determines if the student is ready for assessment and, in consultation with the student, decide on the time and place of the assessment.

Access and Equity Guarantees

In accordance with the Access and Equity Policy, Benchmark College operates without bias, discrimination or harassment, and expect the same from all participants in our courses. More information can be found in the Student Handbook and Benchmark College's Access and Equity Policy and Procedure.

Step 3: Plans and prepares the evidence-gathering process.

The assessor:

- Establishes a plan for gathering sufficient quality evidence about the student's consistent performance in order to make the assessment decision.
- Ensures evidence collection methods meet qualification and UoC requirements.
- Sources or develops assessment materials to assist the evidence-gathering process.
- Maps evidence collection methods to UoC and qualification requirements.
- Organises equipment or resources required to support the evidence-gathering process.
- Coordinates and brief other personnel involved in the evidence-gathering process.
- Ensures assessment is conducted within program timeframes.

Step 4: Collect the evidence and make the assessment decision.

The assessor:

- Establishes and oversees the evidence-gathering process to ensure its validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility.
- Collects appropriate evidence against the elements, performance criteria, performance and knowledge evidence in the relevant units of competency.
- Ensures assessment is conducted according to the Assessment Conditions for the relevant unit/s of competency.
- Evaluates evidence in terms of the four dimensions of competency - task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills.
- Incorporates allowable adjustments to the assessment procedure without compromising the integrity of the competencies.
- Evaluates the evidence in terms of validity, consistency, currency, authenticity and sufficiency.
- Consults and works with other staff, assessment panel members or technical experts involved in the assessment process.
- Records details of evidence collected; and makes a judgement about the student's competence based on the evidence and the relevant unit(s) of competency.

Step 5: Provide feedback on the assessment

The assessor provides advice to the students about the outcomes of the assessment process. This includes providing the student with:

- Clear and constructive feedback on the assessment decision.
- Information on ways of overcoming any identified gaps in competency revealed by the assessment.
- The opportunity to discuss the assessment process and outcome.
- Information on reassessment and the appeals process if applicable.

Step 6: Record and report the result

Benchmark College has responsibility for recording assessment outcomes and for maintaining and securing assessment records in a permanent and accessible system. Assessment records are processed in accordance with Records Retention; Privacy; and Issuing of Qualifications Policies.

To record and report the result the assessor:

- Records the assessment outcome according to the policies and procedures of Benchmark College.
- Maintains records of the assessment procedure, evidence collected and the outcome according to the policies and procedures of Benchmark College.
- Maintains the confidentiality of the assessment outcome.
- Where a NYC result is recorded offer students the opportunity to be reassessed. See Step 8.
- Ensures the appropriate evidence is passed on to administration to organise the issuance of statements of attainment or qualifications according to the policies and procedures of Benchmark College.

Step 7: Review the assessment process

On completion of the assessment process, the assessor:

- Reviews the assessment process.
- Reports on the positive and negative features of the assessment to those responsible for the assessment procedures.
- If necessary, suggests to appropriate Benchmark College personnel ways of improving the assessment procedures through raising a Continuous Improvement Report or by providing input to the next scheduled assessment validation.

Step 8: Participate in the reassessment and appeals process

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Despite the best efforts of Benchmark College to provide quality services and outcomes to its students, a complaint may occasionally arise that require formal resolution. The '*Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedures*' provides students the opportunity to formally appeal an assessment decision, with a process to ensure a fair and equitable appeal outcome.

The Assessor:

- Provides feedback and counselling to the student, if required, regarding the assessment outcome or process, including guidance on further options.
- Provides the student with information on the reassessment and appeals process.
- Reports any assessment decision that is disputed by the student to the Training and Engagement Manager
- Participates in the reassessment or appeal according to the policies and procedures of Benchmark College.

The Training and Engagement Manager/Chief Executive Officer:

- Reviews the assessment decision.
- Facilitates a sample size for the moderation of student's assessments.
- Provides feedback to the student on the outcome of the assessment moderation.