



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

# **HLTAHW304B Undertake basic health assessments**

**Release: 1**

## **HLTAHW304B Undertake basic health assessments**

### **Modification History**

Not Applicable

### **Unit Descriptor**

#### **Unit Descriptor**

This unit deals with the skills and knowledge required to undertake a range of basic health assessments as a supervised member of a multi-disciplinary team working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities

### **Application of the Unit**

#### **Application**

This unit may be applied by those working individually (e.g. in isolated practice) or as part of a team (e.g. in a clinic or hospital)

All work is to be carried out with guidance from and under supervision of a medical practitioner or other appropriate health care professional

It is imperative that cultural issues, including gender and kinship issues, are respected in the delivery, assessment and application of this competency unit

### **Licensing/Regulatory Information**

Not Applicable

### **Pre-Requisites**

Not Applicable

## Employability Skills Information

### Employability Skills

This unit contains Employability Skills

## Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Elements define the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.

The Performance Criteria specify the level of performance required to demonstrate achievement of the Element. Terms in italics are elaborated in the Range Statement.

## Elements and Performance Criteria

### ELEMENT

### PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

#### 1. Obtain *client information*

1.1 Seek to establish a relationship of trust with the client, through active promotion of and strict adherence to confidentiality

1.2 Obtain an *accurate history* from the client, using available information from verbal, written and non-verbal sources

1.3 Seek health related information from the client, their family and/or carer(s) and relevant community members

1.4 Consult relevant allied professionals and available documentation in relation to the health of the client

1.5 Identify self-management issues and assess and record these for clients with chronic conditions

**ELEMENT****PERFORMANCE CRITERIA****2. Undertake basic physical examination**

- 2.1 Obtain permission from the client to conduct physical examination
- 2.2 Consider and respect Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community values, beliefs and gender roles when undertaking physical examination
- 2.3 Measure *vital signs* and identify significant variation from normal
- 2.4 Undertake physical examinations in line with organisation procedures and protocols
- 2.5 Conduct physical examinations in accordance with standard infection control and occupational health and safety requirements
- 2.6 Identify *non-clinical factors potentially responsible for any significant variation from normal* and make repeat assessments, if required
- 2.7 Use, maintain and regularly clean medical equipment in accordance with generic OH&S and Infection Control guidelines and organisation policies
- 2.8 Provide clients with information about each examination/test to be undertaken and the rationale for its use

**ELEMENT****3. Summarise and present findings****PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- 3.1 Accurately document client history and examination findings in the client's file in accordance with organisation policies and procedures
- 3.2 Present client history and findings of physical examination as determined by organisation policies and procedures
- 3.3 Identify *common uncomplicated health conditions* based on history, physical examination and available information about presenting problem
- 3.4 Promptly refer to senior health staff for advice about serious or potentially serious health problems as determined in organisation protocols
- 3.5 Provide client with information about findings of physical examination in line with organisation policies and procedures
- 3.6 Provide client with information relevant to promoting and maintaining health in a way they understand readily
- 3.7 Check client understanding of information through appropriate questioning
- 3.8 Provide health information to the client in appropriate language, supported by visual and other aids as required
- 3.9 Support clients to take a self-care approach to health in line with individual needs and organisation and community requirements
- 3.10 Identify issues requiring mandatory notification and report to supervisor and/or an appropriate authority
- 3.11 Report notifiable diseases identified to supervisor and/or an appropriate authority in line with jurisdictional requirements
- 3.12 Identify key barriers to management or self-management of chronic diseases as clarified with client, family and carer

## Required Skills and Knowledge

### REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

This describes the essential skills and knowledge and their level required for this unit.

#### *Essential knowledge:*

The candidate must be able to demonstrate essential knowledge required to effectively do the task outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage the task and manage contingencies in the context of the identified work role

This includes knowledge of:

- Organisation policies and procedures relating to:
  - client confidentiality
  - referral, including various levels of urgency
  - limits of own ability and authority
- Basic anatomy and physiology of:
  - circulatory system (including blood pressure, the pulse)
  - skeletal system
  - endocrine system
  - respiratory tract
  - male and female urinary and genital tracts
  - gastrointestinal tract
  - the ear
  - the skin
  - the eye
  - components of mouth and tooth structure
- Correct procedures and protocols used in the assessment of common client presentations
- 'Normal' range of test outcomes, including:
  - blood pressure (for adults and children)
  - temperature
  - pulse rate
  - respiratory and peak flow rates
- Common conditions and associated presenting problems, including:
  - respiratory conditions
  - genito-urinary conditions

## REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- gastrointestinal problems
- ear conditions
- eye problems
- sexually transmitted infections
- Basic knowledge relating to pregnancy and birthing, including:
  - basic mechanics of pregnancy and birthing
  - impact of smoking and alcohol in pregnancy
  - recognition of common or potentially serious pregnancy problems (e.g. premature labour, bleeding, high BP)

*continued ...*

### *Essential knowledge (continued):*

- Basic knowledge of reproductive health, including:
  - physiology of conception,
  - recognition of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
  - contraceptive options
- Links between environment and health, including:
  - crowding
  - clean water
  - sanitation
  - food contamination
  - insect vectors
- Basic nature of common diseases, including:
  - cardiovascular diseases
  - rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease
  - diabetes
- Key elements of accurate reporting via radio/ telephone, in writing and during case discussion
- Important elements of self-management and supporting client self-management of chronic conditions, including an understanding of:
  - attributes of self-management
  - behavioural change

### *Essential skills:*

It is critical that the candidate demonstrate the ability to:

- Develop and apply knowledge of anatomy and physiology in undertaking clients

## REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

observations, questioning and measurements to assess health status

- Use medical equipment safely and correctly
- Identify significant variations from normal
- Summarise and communicate health assessment findings

In addition, the candidate must be able to effectively do the task outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage the task and manage contingencies in the context of the identified work role

This includes the ability to:

- Conduct, interpret, document and report findings of simple routine assessments, including:
  - use a structured approach to assessment
  - take and record relevant details of client's history, including body language
  - observe and assess client's health in line with guidance
  - use correct procedures and protocols to examine common client presentations
  - use medical equipment correctly
  - take standard precautions for infection control
  - summarise and report findings in line with organisation procedures and protocols
- Accurately differentiate between urgent and non-urgent situations
- Confidently recognise common uncomplicated health conditions from clinical features
- Identify situations when assistance is required
- Communicate effectively and establish a relationship of trust with clients and significant others
- Elicit relevant information from client or documents
- Clearly explain examination procedures and protocols to client
- Contribute effectively to the preparation of client centred care plans (including self-management care plans for clients with chronic conditions)
- Make appropriate referrals, providing accurate and relevant details to clients and referral agencies
- Reflect on and improve own level and application of skills and knowledge to achieve desirable outcomes and maintain own capabilities

## Evidence Guide

### EVIDENCE GUIDE

The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the



## EVIDENCE GUIDE

Performance Criteria, Required Skills and Knowledge, the Range Statement and the Assessment Guidelines for this Training Package.

*Critical aspects of assessment:*

- The individual being assessed must provide evidence of specified essential knowledge as well as skills
- Consistency of performance should be demonstrated over the required range of situations relevant to the workplace
- Where, for reasons of safety, space, or access to equipment and resources, assessment takes place away from the workplace, the assessment environment should represent workplace conditions as closely as possible

*Conditions of assessment:*

This unit includes skills and knowledge specific to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture

Assessment must therefore be undertaken by a workplace assessor who has expertise in the unit of competency or who has the current qualification being assessed and who is:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander him/herself

or:

- accompanied and advised by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person who is a recognised member of the community with experience in primary health care

*Context of assessment:*

Competence should be demonstrated working individually, under supervision or as part of a primary health care team working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients

Assessment should replicate workplace conditions as far as possible

## EVIDENCE GUIDE

### *Related units:*

This unit may be assessed independently or in conjunction with other units with associated workplace application

## Range Statement

### RANGE STATEMENT

The Range Statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Add any essential operating conditions that may be present with training and assessment depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts.

### *Cultural respect*

This competency standard supports the recognition, protection and continued advancement of the inherent rights, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

It recognises that the improvement of the health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must include attention to physical, spiritual, cultural, emotional and social well-being, community capacity and governance

Its application must be culturally sensitive and supportive of traditional healing and health, knowledge and practices

### *Community control*

Community participation and control in decision-making is essential to all aspects of health work, and the role of the health worker is to support the community in this process

## RANGE STATEMENT

### *Supervision*

Supervision must be conducted in accordance with prevailing state/territory and organisation legislative and regulatory requirements

References to supervision may include either direct or indirect supervision of work by more experienced workers, supervisors, managers or other health professionals

A person at this level should **only** be required to make decisions about clients within the organisation's standard treatment protocols and associated guidelines

### *Legislative requirements*

Federal, state or territory legislation may impact on workers' practices and responsibilities. Implementation of the competency standards should reflect the legislative framework in which a health worker operates. It is recognised that this may sometimes reduce the application of the Range of Variables in practice. However, assessment in the workplace or through simulation should address all essential skills and knowledge across the Range of Variables

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health workers may be required to operate in situations that do not constitute 'usual practice' due to lack of resources, remote locations and community needs. As a result, they may need to possess more competencies than described by 'usual practice circumstances'

Under all circumstances, the employer must enable the worker to function within the prevailing legislative framework

## RANGE STATEMENT

- An accurate history may include:*
- History of the presenting problem (character, severity and duration of symptoms)
  - Client concerns and beliefs regarding their problems
  - Past medical history, including use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances
  - Medicines being taken
  - Allergies
  - Family and community circumstances, including identifying environmental health factors that may contribute to client's health problems
  - Basic dietary information, including diet history to determine food and drink intake
- Related health care providers may include:*
- Personnel internal to the service provider
  - External health care providers
  - Other service providers
- Client information may include:*
- Significant ongoing health problems
  - Current medications
  - Clinical progress notes relevant to the presenting problem
  - Record of allergies
  - Current support mechanisms
- Standing orders/written care protocols include:*
- Written guidelines or orders that support the clinical assessment and management of presenting health problems (e.g. CARPA)

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Medical equipment (to be **used**) includes:*

- Thermometers
- Stethoscopes
- Peak expiratory flow rate meters
- Eye scope (ophthalmoscope)
- Scales
- Blood glucose testing units
- Blood pressure testing unit (sphygmomanometer)
- Eye chart (Snellen or Bailey-Lovie chart)
- Tape measure (or stadiometer) for measuring height
- Length mat (for babies)
- Ear scope (otoscope)
- Metered dose inhalers and spacers and nebulisers

*Additional medical equipment that must be **recognised** includes:*

- Haemoglobin testing equipment
- ECG machine
- Spirometer (lung function tester)
- Tympanometer (middle ear function)
- Audiometer (hearing tester)
- Resuscitation equipment
- Retinal camera
- Audiology equipment

*Vital signs include:*

- Temperature
- Pulse
- Blood pressure
- Respiratory rate
- Blood sugar level

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Non-clinical factors responsible for abnormal readings may include:*

- Failure to properly shake down a mercury thermometer
- Effect of ingestion of hot or cold beverage on oral temperature measurement
- Differences in temperature measurements taken at sites (i.e. oral, axillary, ear)
- Effect of exertion and anxiety on pulse rate and blood pressure
- Impact of cuff size on the accurate measurement of blood pressure
- Faulty equipment
- Failure to correctly calibrate equipment
- Impact of environmental factors on equipment
- Effect of food and drink on blood sugar reading

*Common health conditions to be recognised include:*

- Upper respiratory tract infection
- Acute and chronic suppurative otitis media
- Hay fever
- Tension headache
- Constipation
- Uncomplicated gastroenteritis
- Impetigo (school sores) and boils
- Scabies
- Fungal skin infection
- Mild asthma
- Nappy rash
- Poor dental health (gingivitis, cavities, tooth loss, pain)
- Overweight and obese adults and children
- Poor growth in infants and children

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Clinical features suggesting potentially serious health problems include:*

- The 'unwell child'
- Features suggesting dehydration
- Chest pain, productive cough, haemoptysis, breathlessness or fast breathing
- Pelvic pain, pain passing urine or blood in the urine
- Abdominal tenderness or unexplained abdominal pain
- Fever among high risk persons (infants, elderly and clients with chronic disease, valvular heart disease or past rheumatic fever)
- Fever with features that might indicate serious infection (eg: abdominal pain, urinary symptoms, headache, productive cough, skin infection)
- Wounds or sores that are deep, extensive, on the face or on the extremities of clients with diabetes
- Unexplained weight loss
- Heavy vaginal bleeding
- Bleeding or pain in pregnancy

*Potentially serious or complicated health conditions to be referred may include:*

- Serious infections (pneumonia, blood poisoning, meningitis, endocarditis, kidney infection)
- Cancers (lung, bowel, throat, breast, leukaemia, prostate)
- Heart disease (heart attack, angina&heart failure)
- Asthma and chronic obstructive lung disease
- Sexually transmitted infections (gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis, HIV/AIDS, warts, genital herpes, pubic lice)
- Pregnancy complications (miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, placental abruption)
- Surgical causes of abdominal pain (appendicitis, pancreatitis, biliary colic, renal stones, gall stones)
- Stroke, spinal cord injury, intra-cerebral bleeding

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Clinical assessment must include all assessments relevant to job role.*

*These may include:*

- Assessment for signs and symptoms of serious underlying causes of fever, including:
  - general appearance (the 'unwell child')
  - history of pain, respiratory symptoms, urinary symptoms or abdominal symptoms
  - history of diabetes, rheumatic fever or valvular heart disease
  - respiratory rate and pulse rate
  - urinalysis
  - examination of skin for infection
  - examination of ears and throat
- Urine specimen collection using multi-reagent sticks and including:
  - mid-stream urine collection
  - first pass urine collection
  - paediatric bag collection
- Simple abdominal examination, including:
  - locating site of tenderness
  - simple tests for peritoneal inflammation
  - presence of abdominal masses
- Simple peripheral nerve examinations, including:
  - testing extremities (hands, feet) for light touch and sharp sensation
  - visible wasting of hand muscles
  - grip strength and finger abduction
- Assessment of adult height/weight (body mass index) and waist circumference using correct equipment
- Ear examinations, use of otoscope to identify abnormal appearance of tympanic membrane and/or ear canal
- Basic oral health assessment, including:
  - visual inspection of oral cavity, teeth and gums
  - palpation of gums and jaw-line for tenderness
  - identification of common dental variations from normal

*continued ...*



## RANGE STATEMENT

- Clinical assessment may include:*  
(continued)
- Clinical assessment of eye problems, including:
    - lid eversion
    - use of fluorescein staining
    - identification of the signs and symptoms of trachoma, using the WHO simplified trachoma grading system
    - screening for diabetic retinopathy
  - Visual acuity testing, including:
    - Snellen or Bailey-Lovie chart
    - E-chart
    - counting fingers
    - light perception
  - Examination of children for signs of trachoma
  - Respiratory assessments, including:
    - measurement of adult, child and infant respiratory rates
    - measurement of peak expiratory flow rate (adult, child)
    - recognition of signs of respiratory distress
    - spirometry
    - oximetry
  - Blood sugar level (BSL) tests (for clients with diabetes) and blood glucose level (BGL) tests (to diagnose clients with diabetes)
  - Examination of extremities, including:
    - feet of people with diabetes are examined for protective sensation, ulcers, calluses, infections, nail condition and peripheral circulation
    - extremities of clients with Hansen's disease are examined for ulceration and infection
  - Peripheral circulation problems.
  - Assessment of infant and child growth, including:
    - Measure, document and plot weight and height and Body Mass Index (BMI) (for children over 2 years)
    - Measure, document and plot head circumference
    - Measure haemoglobin
    - Compare growth with major developmental milestones and identify potential delayed growth
    - Identify overweight and obesity

**RANGE STATEMENT**

- Identify possible causes of delayed growth
- Identify symptoms of pregnancy and calculate expected date of delivery.
- Identify:
  - abnormal post-natal conditions
  - common or serious neonatal conditions.

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Information to promote and maintain good health may include:*

- Summary of test results and readings
- Information on links between heart disease and smoking, diet and physical activity
- Information on management of uncomplicated gastrointestinal conditions, such as:
  - constipation (i.e. eat more fibre, drink more water, appropriate use of laxatives)
  - gastroenteritis (i.e. maintain fluid intake, eat according to appetite, continue breast-feeding, handwashing and infection control)
  - indigestion and heartburn (e.g. trial of antacids, avoid late meals, identify other aggravating factors - alcohol, aspirin, anti-inflammatory medicines, smoking)
  - food handling and storage.
- Information on causes of health problems, such as:
  - ear problems (i.e. infection and relationship to poverty and crowding; traumatic and noise-induced deafness)
  - skin infections (i.e. crowding; poor access to water; high levels of scabies infestation)
- Information on strategies to manage health problems, such as diabetes, including:
  - physical activity, healthy diet (low fat, low sugar, high fibre carbohydrates, high vegetables and fruits), weight loss and foot care (e.g. appropriate footwear, regular foot self-care, ongoing review)
  - use of medicines
  - importance of regular health checks.
- Information on dental health, including:
  - link between dental health and diet (i.e. consumption of simple sugars and developing dental caries; specific risks such as lolly-pops and baby bottle with sweet drinks or cow's milk; suckling on breast all night)
  - chart showing oral assessment findings and teeth development
  - good dental hygiene practices (regular brushing and use of dental floss)
  - importance of regular dental checks, especially for clients with rheumatic heart disease

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Signs of respiratory distress include:*

- Raised respiratory rate
- Raised pulse rate
- Increased respiratory effort (use of accessory muscles, inspiratory in-drawing of soft tissues)
- Inability to speak through breathlessness
- Anxiety

*Presentations of common sexually transmitted infections include:*

- Male urethral discharge and/or dysuria
- Vaginal discharge
- Female pelvic pain
- Ulcerative genital disease
- Genital lumps

*Reasons for testing urine include:*

- Screening for urine infection
- Screening for kidney disease
- Assessment of possible renal trauma
- Ante-natal care

*Issues requiring mandatory notification may include:*

- Protection of children and others identified to be at risk
- Issues defined by jurisdictional legislation and/or regulatory requirements
- Issues specifically identified by the community or organisation policies

## Unit Sector(s)

Not Applicable